

Faculty of Community Services

Academic Support & Resource Centre

Preparing to Read

When practicing any active skill, it is important to “warm up” or prepare for the task at hand; below are strategies you can use to begin critically approaching texts.

Brainstorming:

- Examine the title of the selection you are about to read
- List all the information that comes to mind about this title
- Use these pieces of information to recall and understand the material

Group discussions:

- Group discussions inside and outside of class will help you to discover what you bring to your reading, what your fellow students bring to their reading, as well as help you focus on shared and different experiences

Concept or mind mapping:

- This is a type of brainstorming where you place the title/subject as the main idea, then develop a "mind map" around it; it can be an effective practice undertaken either in a group or by yourself

Pre-questions:

- Often, chapters in texts (especially textbooks) provide organizing questions
- You can also write out a series of questions you expect to be answered when reading; for example:

Definition	Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What is...?</i>• <i>Where does...fit?</i>• <i>What group does...belong to?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How would I describe...?</i>• <i>What does...look like?</i>• <i>What are its parts?</i>
Examples	Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What is a good example of...?</i>• <i>What are similar examples that share attributes but differ in some way?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What experience have I had with...?</i>• <i>What can I imagine about...?</i>

Visual Aids:

- Pictures and other visual material can activate your prior knowledge. Use the Internet to search for pictures related to your title/topic to give you visual images of what you are about to read