



Breaking Down Your Reading Assignment!

Here are some steps you can take to make your reading, whether it's a novel, poem, or a research article, easier to understand. Once you're comfortable talking about your reading, you'll be able to better write about it.

First, don't worry about understanding everything! Your reading assignment may have been really difficult or boring at first. Here are some questions you can ask yourself to better discuss the text even when you feel like you don't understand it:

1. How do *I* feel about the *subject* of this book/poem/article?
2. Why do I feel that way?
3. Have I ever been in a situation like the book/article/etc. describes? How did I feel in that situation?

Now that you've personally reflected on the subject of the piece, let's look back and try to interpret the author's words:

1. How do I think the author feels about the subject? In other words, what's the author's *tone* in this piece?
2. What is the author's main message? What is he/she trying to say?
3. Do I agree or disagree with him/her?

4. How does this article relate to the other articles we read in class?
5. How does this article relate to the *main ideas* of the course?

Outlining Your Thoughts on Your Reading

Now that you've brainstormed some ideas about the reading, try condensing your thoughts into a format that will help you write a stellar paper:

List Four Main Ideas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Find Four Specific Quotes that Reflect these Main Ideas:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____
