

Writing in the Margins: Six Comprehension Strategies

Name: _____ Subject: _____ Date: _____

This table provides six strategies that help readers understand texts. While making connections, clarifying information, or doing other work defined on this page, write down your thoughts in the margins of the text, on sticky notes, or in your Cornell notes.

<p>Visualize</p> <p>Visualize what the author is saying and draw an illustration in the margin. Visualizing what authors say will help you clarify complex concepts and ideas.</p> <p>When visualizing, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this look like? • How can I draw this concept/idea? • What visual and/or symbol best represents this idea? 	<p>Summarize</p> <p>Briefly summarize paragraphs or sections of a text in the margin. Summarizing is a good way to keep track of essential information while gaining control of lengthier passages.</p> <p>When summarizing, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is this paragraph/section about? • What is the author doing in this paragraph/section? • What key terms and/or ideas should be included?
<p>Clarify</p> <p>Clarify complex ideas presented in the text. Readers clarify ideas through a process of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Pausing to clarify ideas will increase your understanding of the ideas in the text.</p> <p>To clarify information, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What terms are important here and what do they mean? • What do I need to reread to make sure I understand? • What are the important ideas here and how do I know they are important? • What can I paraphrase or summarize to see if I understand what the author is saying? • What examples of figurative language do I need to figure out? 	<p>Connect</p> <p>Make connections within the reading to your own life and to the world. Making connections will improve your comprehension of the text.</p> <p>To make connections, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this relate to me? • What does this remind me of? • What does this make me think about? • How does this idea relate to other ideas in the text and to other texts? • How does this relate to the world?
<p>Respond</p> <p>Respond to ideas in the text as you read. Your responses can be personal or analytical in nature. Thoughtful responses will increase engagement and comprehension.</p> <p>When responding, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is interesting to me and why? • How is the author using language or images in interesting ways? • How do I feel about the ideas here? (link to emotions) • What do I agree or disagree with? • What is the author trying to convince me of? • What facts, data, and other evidence is the author using, and do they persuade me? 	<p>Question</p> <p>Question both the ideas in the text and your own understanding of the text. Asking good questions while reading will help you become a more critical reader.</p> <p>To question, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What am I confused about? • How would I explain the important ideas? • Do I understand what the author is saying? • Do I understand what the author is doing? • What questions would I like to ask the author? • What does this make me question about my life or world? • What questions do I have about how the author wrote this piece? (writing strategies, style)