

# BEING ACTIVE READERS BY APPLYING CRITICAL READING TECHNIQUE

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## **Abstract**

*Critical reading is a reading technique that encourages the students to have deeper comprehension on the materials they are reading. Analyzing and evaluating the reading materials by proposing several critical questions to the writer, known as ‘reading between the lines’, can direct the reading to ‘advance’ level. Consequently, the students do not just take for granted what they are reading. However, to become a critical reader is not easy since there are some potential obstacles that the reader might encounter. Consequently, they have to be able to deal with the obstacles and therefore become critical and active readers.*

**Key words:** critical reading, critical readers, critical thinking, and active readers

## **INTRODUCTION**

**R**eading, in simple meaning, is a process of getting information from written materials. The readers do not just read but should get understanding from what they read. Students of elementary until high schools learn integrated English. It means that they learn all English components and skills in one time without separate them into some special subjects. So, there is no subject for reading. While, university students learn the English components and skills one by one. There is reading comprehension subject that should be taken by all English students. The subject is divided into reading comprehension I, II, and III (based on curriculum 2004).

The students start their understanding in reading by learning how to understand the sentences, paragraphs, and passages and also their parts (bottom-up and top down). They also

need to be able to get comprehension explicitly and implicitly; read in the line, read between the lines, and read beyond the lines. When the students can get the answer from the texts, it means that they read in the line. If the students are able to get the topic and main idea of passages, it means that the students read between the lines. And if the students can infer the text and identify the purpose of the writers in writing the passages, it means that the students read beyond the line. The last statement is well known as “critical reading”, one of techniques in reading that the writer is interested in to be discussed in this paper.

According to Harmer (2001: 210), “to get maximum benefit from their reading, students need to be involved in both extensive and intensive reading.” In extensive reading, a teacher encourages students to choose for themselves what they read and to do so for pleasure and general language improvement, and in

intensive reading a teacher usually choose, direct and design what the students read to enable students to develop specific receptive skills. The choosing of texts can influence the students' purpose in reading. It is not enough to tell students to "read a lot", it is needed to offer them a program which includes appropriate materials, guidance, tasks, and facilities. In order to get students to read enthusiastically in class, it is needed to work to create interest in the topic and tasks.

University students read many kinds of material: research articles, essays, critiques, reports and analyses. The students are expected to be able to do much more than understand and remember the basic content. They should read critically, interpreting, evaluating, and reacting to assigned readings. According to McWhorther (1994: 54), in critical reading, the readers need to annotate as they read, analyze and evaluate what they have read, and draw comparisons among several works. So, a critical reader should start being critical before, while, and after reading. When she or he does this, she/he becomes an active reader.

However, this does not run well in a real reading activity. Most of students choose to read and get anything they have read. They do not want to do analysis deeply on the text. For them, getting information and new knowledge is enough without knowing the background why the author writes the article and whether the information is right and can be proved or just an opinion. It means that the students just act as "save readers". Of course, it is not expected from university students. As it has been mentioned above, they should be active and critical in order to get more valuable knowledge.

## **DEFINITION OF CRITICAL READING**

Critical reading activity helps the readers to become critical or active readers. Whatever the materials they read, they do not only "read it", but also get in it. Critical reading is a procedure to analyze and evaluate reading material. Students need to observe details as they read and recall facts after they have completed assigned readings. College-level reading material will present complex issues and arguable claims about which students will have to advance conclusions, synthesize new material with previous knowledge, identify relationships to other information, or determine their agreement or disagreement with a writer's position.

To non-critical readers, texts provide facts. They gain knowledge by memorizing the statements within a text and is satisfied with recognizing what a text says and restating the key remarks. To the critical readers, any single text provides but one portrayal of the facts. Critical readers thus recognize not only what a text says, but also how that text portrays the subject matter. According to Kurland (2000: 2), critical reading has three steps of analysis; what a text says (restatement – talks about the same topic as the original text), what a text does (description – discusses aspects of the discussion itself), and what a text means (interpretation – analyzes the text and asserts a meaning from the text as a whole). The readers need to be active and creative when reading. They have to ask some questions and think about the text.

To read critically is to make judgments about how a text is argued. McWhorther (1980: 377) explains that critical reading means the careful and deliberate evaluation of ideas for the purpose of making a judgment about their worth or value. Readers should not read looking only for information and should read looking for ways of thinking

about the subject matter. When reading, avoid extracting and compiling lists of evidence, lists of facts and examples. Avoid approaching a text by asking "What information can I get out of it?" Rather ask "How does this text work? How is it argued? How does the text reach its conclusions?"

Next, in CSU writing@csuohio.edu, it is explained that in critical reading, a reader applies certain processes, models, questions, and theories that result in enhanced clarity and comprehension. A critical reading gets at "deep structure". It involves using logical and rhetorical skills. Start by identifying the author's thesis statement, and then find the supporting details that usually appear in the body of the text. The support for the author's claim is in the evidence provided to suggest that the author's intended argument is reasonably accepted. Critical readers need to be able to find the links of the author's thought in the texts by analyzing some evidence that support the main statement.

### HOW TO BE ACTIVE READERS?

Before starting reading one material, readers should state their purpose and know exactly what they want to get. Beside that, readers should also have strategies to help them better understand anything they read. According to Kinsella (2000: 2), when you use a reading strategy, you become an active reader. You respond to what you read with questions, ideas, and opinions. Readers need to do deep analysis on what they are reading about. For that, they should be active and critical.

McWhorther (1994: 48) states that readers need to evaluate what they are reading by asking several questions that are called **critical reading techniques**. The questions are as follow:

1. Is the author a qualified expert?

Not everything that appears in print is accurate and competently reported. Readers should assess whether the material they are reading is written by an expert in the field who can knowledgeably and accurately discuss the topic. For example, a writer who writes an article about economics should be someone who has studied about it. Authors also may establish their expertise or experience in the field within the material itself.

So, first point that should be analyzed by readers is who writes the articles/essays they are reading. Usually, a good author writes footnote or summary about his/her credentials at the end of the work.

For example: An article on a newspaper entitled "Xinran: Lessons for Living" is talking the life of a woman who is passionate about cooking. The author is Janet Deneffee who is the owner of Casa Luna and Indus Restaurants and also the author of *Fragrant Rice*.

This information about the author is gotten at the end of the article.

2. What are the facts and what are the opinions?

*Facts* are statements that can be tested as true or false. There are some evidences that follow them. The evidence given by the author should convince the readers about the information they got. Oshima and Hogue (1999: 72) explain, "facts are objective statements of truths." The more specific the evidence given by the author, the better.

For example: - Soekarno died in 1970.

- Birth rates declined from 1960 to 1979.

*Opinions* are statements that express feelings, attitudes, or beliefs that are neither true or false. The author can say anything to attract readers' attention

and it is not needed to be proved at all because the opinion itself is very objective.

*For example:*

- Parenthood is the most rewarding human experience.
- United States is the most powerful country nowadays.

As readers read a work, it is essential to distinguish between fact and opinion. Factual statements from reliable sources can be accepted and used in drawing conclusions, building arguments, and supporting ideas. Opinions, however, are one of person's point of view that readers are free to accept or reject.

### 3. What is the author's purpose?

As readers read an article, ask themselves, "Why did the author write this? In academic reading, readers will most often find that the author's purpose is either to inform (present information) or to persuade. Readers need to know which is the author's primary purpose, since it will determine how they read and what critical questions they ask. Actually, the author does not have single purpose, but readers should be able to identify the most dominant one. McWhorther (1986: 223) explains that in some cases the authors have clear purposes, however, in many types of writing, authors have varied, sometimes less obvious purposes. In these cases, an author's purpose must be inferred. It can be said that authors give their purposes directly and indirectly.

### 4. Does the author support his or her generalizations?

A *generalization* is a reasoned statement about an entire group based on known information about part of the group. It requires a leap from what is known to a conclusion about the unknown. The key to evaluating generalizations is to evaluate the type, quality,

and amount of evidence given to support them.

*Example:* Fast food lacks nutritional value.

The generalization, often, is made by an author based on his/her experience and he/she has strong belief in it. But, it cannot be accepted totally as a fact.

### 5. What assumption is the author making?

An assumption is an idea or principle the writer accepts as true and makes no efforts to prove or substantiate. Usually, it is a beginning or premises on which he or she bases the remainder of the work.

*For example:* An author may assume that television encourages violent behavior in children and proceed to argue for restrictions on TV watching.

### 6. Is the author biased?

If an author is biased, he or she is partial to one point of view or one side of a controversial issue. The author's language and selection of facts provide clues about his or her bias. Actually, a good writer should not be biased so he/she can give balanced information to the readers.

### 7. How strong are the data and evidence?

Many writers who express their opinions, state viewpoints, or make generalizations provide data or evidence to support their ideas. Critical readers should weigh and evaluate the quality of this evidence by concerning two factors: the type of evidence being presented and the relevance of that evidence. Various types of evidence include:

- Personal experience or observation
- Statistical data
- Examples, descriptions of particular events, or illustrative situations

- Analogies (comparison with similar situations)
  - Historical documentation
  - Experimental evidence.
- Acceptable evidence should directly, clearly, and indisputably support the case or issue in question.

The seven questions above are about the authors themselves that related to the reason or background why they write the articles or texts. In fact, that is the main point an active reader should do to analyze the text or article he reads.

Next, McWhorter (1994: 54) also states **three steps/techniques** how to answer the seven questions above, they are:

#### 1. Annotate as you read

Annotating, or making notes is a useful strategy in reading. Annotating is a means of keeping track of your impressions, ideas, reactions, and questions as you read. There are no fixed rules about how to or what to annotate. In general, try to mark or note any ideas about the work that come to mind as you read or reread. The annotations might include: questions; generalizations, assumptions, and other features; key points; ideas with which you disagree; good or poor supporting data or examples; inconsistencies; key terms or definitions; contrasting points of view; key arguments; words with strong connotations; and figures of speech (images that reveal the writer's feeling).

Whatever your purposes are for reading a particular piece, you have three objectives to meet as you read: to identify the author's most important points, to recognize how they fit together, and to note how you respond to them.

What's different in college is the complexity of the texts. Readers will probably need to annotate the text, underlining or highlighting passages and making written notes in the margins of texts to identify the most important

ideas, the main examples or details, and the things that trigger readers own reactions. But, be selective: the unfortunate tendency is to underline (or highlight) too much of a text.

Readers can annotate directly on the page: underlining key words, phrases, or sentences. Annotating is also an active reading process. It forces readers to monitor their comprehension, as well as react to ideas. McWhorter (1994: 232) mentions some types of annotation as follow:

- Circling unknown words  
Example:....redressing the apparent asymmetry of their relationship  
Readers can circle the word "asymmetry" because it seems unfamiliar.
- Marking definitions  
Example: To say that the balance of power favors one party over another is to introduce a disequilibrium.
- Marking examples  
Example: ...concessions may include negative sanctions, trade agreements...
- Numbering lists of ideas, causes, reasons, or events  
Example: components of power include 1self-image, 2population, 3natural resources, and 4geography
- Placing asterisks (\*) next to important passages  
Example: \* Power comes from three primary sources...
- Putting question marks next to confusing passages  
Example: ? → war prevention occurs through institutionalization of mediation
- Making notes to yourself  
Example: power is the ability of an actor on the internal stage to...

Readers can write a note beside the statement about what will he do to make himself sure about the information.

- Marking possible test items

Example: ↑ There are several key features in the relationship...

- Drawing arrows to show relationships

Example: ...natural resources...control of industrial manufacture capacity

- Writing comments, noting disagreements and similarities.

Example: war prevention through balance of power is...

Readers can write “can terrorism be prevented through similar balance? as his comment on the above statement.

- Marking summary statements

Example:

sum { the greater the degree of conflict, the more intricate will be...

All of the types of annotation above can be used by critical readers to assess their comprehension and strengthen their recall. However, there are some tips that should be followed by readers when they want to do annotating; 1) do not try to write notes while reading the material for the first time; 2) be alert for academic thought patterns; and 3) separate the topic, main idea, and details in outlining format.

## 2. Analyze and evaluate

After the readers have read (and perhaps reread) the work and made annotations, the final step is to review the annotations, to arrive at some conclusions and final impressions of the work.

The goal in reviewing is to re-examine the content, the structure, and the language of the article in more detail,

in order to confirm readers the sense of the author’s purpose and to evaluate how well they achieved that purpose. When reviewing a piece of writing, readers often start by examining the propositions (main points or claims) the writer lays out and the support he or she provides for those propositions, noticing the order in which these arguments and evidence are presented. Making an informal outline that lists the main points, mapping out the essay, is one very effective way of reviewing a text. A well marked text will really save the readers’ time. When analyzing a work, it may be helpful to write lists of words, issues, problems, and questions to discover patterns and evaluate the author’s bias. The following questions can be used to guide readers’ analysis:

- What did the author intend to accomplish?
- How effectively did he or she accomplish this?
- How worthwhile is the material? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

## 3. Comparing several works

The first step in making a comparison of several works is to read, annotate, and analyze each. Once you have studied each carefully, you are ready to discover the similarities and differences among them. Compare the works based on such factors as

- ✓ Overall theme or position
- ✓ Types and quality of supporting evidence
- ✓ Degree of bias shown in each work
- ✓ Authority of each author
- ✓ Author’s purpose
- ✓ Points of agreement and disagreement
- ✓ How each work approached the subject
- ✓ Effectiveness of each work in persuading or educating you
- ✓ Types of arguments used
- ✓ Style
- ✓ Intended audience.

In comparing several works, readers first should make notes as they study each work, both in the margins of the works themselves and on separate pieces of paper. Then study the annotation and notes, looking for similarities and differences. Readers should try to put into their own words what they discover. Writing is needed here to force readers to clarify their ideas rather than just think about the two works.

Beside the three steps above, there are some **other strategies** that can be applied in critical reading, they are:

1. *Previewing: Learning about a text before really reading it.*

Previewing is important because it enables readers to get a sense of what the text is about and how it is organized before reading it closely. It can be done by paying attention on the title, subtitle, chart, picture, margin, bold/italic words, etc. Previewing is needed to get impression about the text before reading it.

2. *Questioning to understand and remember: Asking questions about the content.*

These questions are designed to help the readers understand a reading and respond it more fully. They will understand the material better and remember it longer if they write a question for every paragraph or brief section. Each question should focus on a main idea, not details, and each should be expressed in readers' own words.

3. *Reflecting on challenges to readers' beliefs and values: Examining personal responses*

As readers read a text for the first time, they can mark an X in the margin at each point where they feel a personal challenge to their attitudes, beliefs, or status.

4. *Outlining and summarizing: Identifying the main ideas and restating them in readers' own words.*

These are helpful strategies for understanding the content and structure of a reading selection. Whereas outlining reveals the basic structure of the text, summarizing synthesizes a selection's main argument in brief. When making an outline, don't use the text's exact words. Summarizing begins with outlining and finally recomposes them to form a new text.

5. *Evaluating an argument: Testing the logic of a text as well as its credibility and emotional impact.*

An argument has two essential parts: a claim and support. The claim asserts a conclusion: an idea, an opinion, a judgment, or a point a view that the writer wants readers to accept. The support includes reasons (shared beliefs, assumptions, and values) and evidence (facts, examples, statistics, and authorities) that gives readers the basis for accepting the conclusion.

Active readers can apply the techniques and strategies above when reading in order to enable them to *improve their comprehension, adjust their reading rate, and become skilled at reading critically*. While reading paragraphs, readers should be selective: sorting out what is important and focusing attention on it. They need to focus on three types of information for comprehension:

- The topic

According to McWhorter (1986: 74), topic is the one thing a paragraph is about. Every sentence in a paragraph in some way discusses or explains the topic.

- The main idea

The main idea is what the author wants you to know about the topic. The entire paragraph, then, explains, develops, and supports this main idea. Often, but not always, one sentence expresses the main idea. This sentence is called topic sentence. To find the topic sentence, search for the one

general sentence that explains what the writer wants you to know about the topic.

- Recognizing details

Supporting details are those facts, reasons, examples, or statistics that prove or explain the main idea of a paragraph. Details are divided into two:

- ✓ Primary details

Primary details directly explain the main idea. It is the most important one.

- ✓ Secondary details

Secondary details do not directly explain the main idea. It is less important details that may provide additional information, offer an example, or further explain one of the primary details.

Comprehension is needed when reading whatever material you read. How can readers find the author's purpose if they do not know what the author is explaining about in his article. So, identifying the three points above is the first step to read critically.

Next, *adjusting reading rate* is also important for readers to be able to read

critically. Before reading, they should know exactly what their purpose to read the material. Readers can read various reading materials and each text has different purpose in it. The purpose of reading a newspaper or magazine article is different from the purpose of reading a Biology or English textbook. Of course, the speed is not also same. But, surprisingly, many people do that. They read magazine at the same speed they read a Biology textbook.

In critical reading, readers are trained to be efficient readers. An efficient reader reads the newspaper more quickly and in a different way than he/she reads a biology textbook. The newspaper is usually easier to read, and you have a different purpose for reading it.

*Rate* and *comprehension* are the two main factors that must be kept in balance; as the reading rate increases, the comprehension may decrease. The following table 1 shows the level of comprehension required for various types of material and gives approximate reading rates appropriate for each level.

Table 1: Levels of Comprehension

Desired levels of Comprehension	Type of Material	Purpose in Reading	Range of Reading Rates
Complete 100%	Poetry, legal documents, argumentative writing	Analysis, criticism, evaluation	Under 200 wpm
High 80-100%	Textbooks, manuals, research documents	High comprehension, recall for exams, writing research reports, following directions	200-300 wpm
Moderate 60-80%	Novels, paperbacks, newspapers, magazines	Entertainment, enjoyment, general information	300-500 wpm
Selective below 60%	Reference materials, catalogs, magazines	Overview of material, location of specific facts, review of previously read material	600-800wpm

Source: McWhorter (1994:45)

The table above shows that critical reading activity needs 100% comprehension. It means that the readers become slow readers (under 200 wpm). So, if the readers know their purpose in reading they will be able to adjust their reading rate in order to get the comprehension. These steps will help readers much to become efficient, active, and critical readers. However, it does not mean that readers need to spend for hours to read an article. If they can apply the critical reading techniques well, they even can save their time and can read more articles.

### **PROBLEMS IN BECOMING ACTIVE READERS AND SOME TIPS TO SOLVE THEM**

Critical reading is really the same thing as critical thinking. It means reading-and thinking-with an open mind, not to agree or disagree, but to discover ideas and information. Seal (1997: 145) states that testing a key concept or hypothesis in a text can help you think critically about what you have read and help you develop a greater understanding of the concept. Readers are expected to focus to what they read and what for they read it. They do not need to find whether the material is right or wrong. The most important thing is readers do not only receive all information they got and know exactly that the material is the thought expression of authors that need to be evaluated and interpreted well.

To be a critical reader does not mean criticizing. This concept is not adapted well yet by many readers. Many students or readers think that being critical readers mean they criticize writings and finally state it good or not, right or wrong. Everybody can express their feeling and thought freely to their writing. In order to get ideas and information, readers should read the

argumentative writing critically and ask some questions about what, why, how, and what for the author write it. This still becomes a serious problem for the readers. As consequence, they cannot act as critical readers and find the activity as a very difficult one.

In this article, the writer states several problems that are faced by readers to apply critical reading, they are:

1. Many readers do not read with a purpose  
State a purpose is very important. It means that the readers are active. But, many readers, especially students usually read because they have to, not because they want to. They have to do an assignment from the lecturers. In this case, the readers become passive. They read without retaining information and without determining why such information is crucial in a given course and to their education.
2. Lack of practice  
Because many readers do not have purpose when reading and just to complete a task, they do not take reading activity, especially argumentative writing/texts, as their habit. It is possible in some cases people like reading such as novels, newspapers (news and entertainment), comics, magazines and it becomes their habit. They enjoy it because it is only reading for pleasure. It will be different if reading for comprehension and even evaluation. If the readers find such argumentative essay in a newspaper, they tend to skip it over and do not read it. Or they read it and get the information without evaluating it first.
3. Misconception about critical reading  
Many readers do not know that when they practice critical reading activity, it does not mean that they should criticize someone's ideas that bring

them to final conclusion that the idea is not good or good, can or cannot be accepted, etc. Readers should be critical, so when they are reading they do not accept totally what the author says about and try to analyze why, how and what for the author writes it. Being critical does not mean that the readers have a special right to judge the author. To read critically is to make judgments about how a text is argued. This is a high reflective skill requiring you to “stand back” and gain some distance from the text you are reading. The key is this:

- Do not read looking only or primarily for information
- Do read looking for ways of thinking about the subject matter.

4. People/students think that critical reading process is too difficult and complicated.

For college students, critical reading skills are very helpful not only for their study but also for their future in the work field. It is important when college graduates are employed and expected to contribute meaningfully in the work place, to select political candidates for public office, to make informed decisions about medical or consumer matters, or other important decisions. Unfortunately, many students do not aware about the importance of critical reading. They also think that it is too difficult to do and so complicated because they need to have a high concentrate when reading. Beside that, for them, analyzing and evaluating texts make them cannot enjoy their reading activity. It is only be done at school when learning process and do not apply it when doing reading activity in their everyday life.

5. Many readers do not tend to try something new.

Mark the margins as you read instead of highlighting everything you see. Make a note while reading is something that is very rare for many readers to do. Actually, some sort of margin notation that corresponds to an item in the text is useful to draw your eye to that information. For example, use a triangle to indicate that a particular sentence contains a statement of opinion. Even though marking the sentences in the text is very useful, many readers still refuse to practice it.

6. Poor time management

Many readers still cannot time themselves while reading that make the reading activity becomes not effective and efficient. The length of the text should be considered and the rate of speed should be adjusted in order to get the purpose of the reading effectively. Readers seem not care how long they should read and complete the task. Readers often stop while reading to do something else and then go back to the reading material.

7. Difficult to focus

Focus or concentration is very needed in reading. If not, readers will lose the idea and need more time to read again and again. For that, readers should have good health (physic and mental) to support them to be active readers. Beside that, environment and time chosen to read also influence the readers' concentration to analyze the texts.

8. No various reading material

Actually, readers can vary their reading material by reading any kinds of texts from different background and difficulty level. But, most of them only choose the articles that they interest most. When they get difficulty to understand the texts, they tend to stop reading. They do not want to

take the challenge to conquer different sciences.

The problems above are only some of problems that occur to practice critical reading activity. The problems could be different for each person. But, the eight problems above are mostly faced by readers. To overcome the problems, readers should find some strategies or ways. Brown (2000: 113) explains "strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information". Strategies chosen should be based on the problem faced.

The following *tips* can be used to solve the problems above and also helpful to create critical and active readers:

1. Previewing and state the purpose of reading  
Learning about a text before really reading it. Previewing enables readers to get a sense of what the text is about and how it is organized before reading it closely. Readers can see the head notes, introductory material, and italic or bolds words/sentences and think what can be learned from it.  
In this step, the readers should have already had the purpose why they read the material and know exactly what to do and what to get. They know they will read the text critically and prepare everything to support the activity such as, pencil for annotating process, paper, and of course several questions in mind, etc.
2. Critical reading occurs after some preliminary processes of reading. Knott (2011: 2) explains that the activity can be done by skimming research materials first, especially introduction and conclusion, in order to strategically chooses where to focus your critical efforts. By skimming activity, readers learn to get understanding without reading the whole text. They just read the introduction

part, some sentences in the body of paragraph and also the conclusion. This technique is very helpful for the readers to get general information from the text.

3. Practice a lot by varying the types of text.

The types of text also influence the success of readers being critical. If they have background knowledge about the argumentative text they are reading about, it will be easier for them to get the point. Conversely, if they do not have knowledge about it, it will be difficult for them to get comprehension.

Readers can read English newspapers, magazines, and even textbooks and find several articles whether about economy, science, social, history, philosophy, biology, and so on. But, they have to be aware that different disciplines have different ways of arguing. By varying the types of text, readers can analyze in different ways. It is very helpful for them to be critical readers.

4. Consider the speed of reading  
Lots of reading will lead readers to manage their reading time effectively. As stated above, for comprehension readers need to read slowly. By slowing down, they will make more connections within the text. Beside that, once the readers start reading, they have to finish it without disturbing by other unnecessary activities. Slow down does not mean take a very long time to read, but really focus on the ideas given.
5. Prepare to read with an open mind  
Critical readers seek knowledge; they do not "rewrite" a work to suit their own personalities. Your task as an enlightened critical reader is to read what is on the page, giving the writer a fair chance to develop ideas and allowing yourself to reflect thought-

fully, objectively, on the text. Readers should not come to the text with personal and premature judgment about the text because they do not need to change anything on the text.

6. Prepare to become part of the writer's audience

After all, authors design texts for specific audiences, and becoming a member of the target audience makes it easier to get at the author's purpose. Learn about the author, the history of the author and the text, the author's anticipated audience; read introduction and notes. It will be very difficult for readers if they do not try to enjoy what they read and take it as an important thing.

7. Make notes

Jot down marginal notes, underline and highlight, write down ideas in a notebook, do whatever works for your own personal taste. Note for yourself the main ideas, the thesis, the author's main points to support the theory. Writing while reading aids your memory in many ways, especially by making a link that is unclear in the text concrete in your own writing.

Many readers claim this activity can waste the time, but actually, when it is done, it is very helpful to build a strong understanding about the content of the texts they read. This activity should be the only thing that can "disturb" the readers while reading.

8. Keeping a reading journal

In addition to note-taking, it is often helpful to regularly record your responses that thoughts in a more permanent place that is yours to consult. By developing a habit of reading and writing in conjunction, both skills will improve.

It is important for the readers to keep anything that they have done while reading as an effort to improve their ability in reading as well as in writing. It becomes a spirit to do more and better.

Readers can do many things to be active and critical. Whatever it is, one important point that every reader should have is his/her willingness to apply it in reading activity. Being active and critical readers can give some advantages for them and support their effort to have a good ability in reading and also writing.

## CONCLUSION

Being critical and active readers are very important and crucial for reading comprehension. A good comprehension can help people to be critical not only when reading but also in their life activities. Active readers will try to be closer to the author by analyzing the author's thinking even though they never meet or even know each other. To achieve that phase, readers should overcome all obstacles or problems that can slow them down and make them become passive readers. They can follow some tips and apply the critical reading techniques regularly and seriously.

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