**Strategic Reading**

**What strategic reading is NOT:**

Strategic reading is not just decoding1 the words. D-O-G spells dog

Strategic reading is not just about comprehending2 (understanding) the main point.

Strategic reading is not just summarizing3 the key details.

Strategic reading is not just about skimming4 through a reading to answer worksheet questions.

**Definition of strategic reading:**

Strategic reading is about getting the IDEA5 of the reading so that you can USE6 it to DO something.

**Four Steps to strategic reading:**

Step 1: Identify the Purpose7

Step 2: Demonstrate comprehension8

Step 3: Exhibit Critical Insights9

Step 4: Apply the Reading10

**You can do these 4 steps if you adopt two habits of highly successful strategic readers**

1. Read as a writer and write as a reader11
2. Be an active reader12

**Identify the Purpose:**

Every author worth your time reading had a reason to write. Authors write because they have something to say. This is the reason they put pen to paper. You don’t think this is true because most, if not all, of your writing is enforced assignments about topics you that you don’t choose to find a way to care about. As a result, much of your writing has at best the purpose of ‘getting an A’ and at worst the purpose of just taking up space on a page.

Why does a reading exist?

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Real authors wish to bring new ideas to light, to communicate information, to convey an insight about the human condition, to teach, to persuade, to satirize, or just to make light. Real authors write with a purpose and it is your job as a real reader to identify the purpose of a reading.

The purpose of a reading is the reason the author wrote the reading. It is the author’s motive.14

But motives are tricky things. They come from deep within us and are shaped by who we are and the situation in which we find ourselves. Therefore good strategic readers find out about the author15 before they try to figure out the author’s purpose.

**To do this you need to identify three things: GAS**

1. **Genre** – This is the type of document created by the author16.

You are used to the existence of different genres of music. The genre of music determines how you dance to it. The genre of a document determines how you read it17. Knowing that Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* is a satire lets you understand that his purpose is to reject British colonial rule not to give advice on how best to eat babies. You read a textbook differently than you read a poem.

1. **Audience** – This is who the author is writing to18.   
   We all speak to different groups of people in different ways. I don’t talk to you like I do to my boss, my wife, my kids or my dog. You would explain a bad report card very differently to a parent than you would a peer. Knowing the audience
2. **Source –** Identifying the source means learning about the author, the date the document was created, and where the document was published19. It is much more than just the author’s name, especially when you don’t know anything about the author! Remember, you aren’t just doing this to fill in boxes. Don’t think the source matters? Think about texting with friends? Does the author of the text matter? Does it matter how quickly someone gets back to your text? Does a text about something private between the two of you matter if someone takes a screen shot and posts it to their public Instagram account?

**Step 2:** Demonstrate Comprehension by identifying the main point and supporting evidence.

**Step 4**

Apply the reading

**Step 1:** Identify Genre, Audience and Source

*Complete Step 1 at the end*

*by identifying the purpose.*

**Step 3**

Exhibit critical insights.

Do these three things (GAS) and then complete the rest of your strategic reading steps. Only then should you finally come back to where you started and try to finally comment on the author's purpose.