

Reading and Annotating for

Claim

Make sense of the most challenging informational texts.

Every text is arguing something. Read to find the topic and claim about the topic, and you can unlock the most challenging texts.

Beginning	Read the Beginning to Identify the Topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start with the title, blurb, and the first paragraph(s) — carefully read and annotate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the speaker and any obvious bias Jot the topic and specific genre in the margin after 1-2 paragraphs; be specific as possible Jot the opening claim once you’ve found it
Middle	Read the Middle for Sub-Claims & Contrasts Annotate words/lines that develop the initial claim and/or establish additional claims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annotate arguments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underline sentences that make a “how” or a “why” claim (esp. at beginning of paragraphs) Circle key words that signal arguments and author’s perspective (e.g. “similarly,” “in other words,” “surprisingly,” rhetorical questions, charged diction, “I” statements) Jot a claim note next to key claims, sub-sections and charts/graphs Annotate shifts in thinking/transition words: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circle words that show a shift in thinking (e.g. “however,” “although,” “despite this,” “in fact”) Circle phrases that signal the author is addressing counterarguments (e.g. “critics say,” “some might argue,” “while many people believe”)
End	Generate an End Note that Captures the Claim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your annotations: How do all of my notes connect to reveal the author’s claim about the topic? Write a final end note: What is the claim about the topic that this text makes (the central idea)? Check your end note for precision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does it articulate the author’s perspective on the topic? Does it synthesize all the key sub-claims you annotated?

When You Struggle, Level Up	
If the paragraph or sentence is challenging	Anytime you Struggle with a Paragraph or Sentence, Move to Level 2 Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow down and reread—increase your annotations to every 2-3 lines Paraphrase the most difficult lines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify subjects & verbs (particularly when there are unclear pronouns and/or multiple subjects) Chunk a sentence into smaller parts and try to paraphrase each Unpack challenging vocabulary—use context clues to define terms or for connotation Review the surrounding text for phrases that provide additional context Skip ahead and come back later <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn the future content and use it to come back and understand
If the whole passage looks challenging	Scan to the End [difficult texts only] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shorter text: read the final paragraph & opening/closing sentences of each paragraph to ID key claims Longer text: read the final section, subheadings, and the end of each section to identify key claims Gut Check your Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask yourself: does this text assume I know something I don’t? If so, look it up.

A quick guide to reading for

Claim

**Every text is arguing something.
Do you agree with what you're
reading?**

Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the title, blurb, and first few paragraphs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jot the topic. ○ Jot the specific genre. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>e.g., speech, article, expository/textbook, biography, science journalism, historical account</i> ○ Jot the “opening claim” – what is the argument so far?
Middle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle clue words and phrases – they mean a claim is nearby <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ But, however, despite, although ○ In other words, similarly, in conclusion ○ I language or charged language (“I am outraged that...”) ○ Rhetorical questions (“But is year-round school really a good idea?”) • Underline any claims you find • Jot a margin note (just a few words) to capture each major claim
End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jot a final endnote that summarizes all the claims you found.

When You Struggle, Level Up

Struggling with an important part?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow down and reread—annotate more often • Paraphrase the most difficult lines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify subjects & verbs (particularly when the sentence looks complex). ○ Chunk a sentence into smaller parts. ○ Review the surrounding text for clues.
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