

## General Preliminaries

You have learned to understand what the writer has literally stated by locating the main idea and supporting details as well as looking for the relationships between the main idea and supporting details to see how the text is organized. In other words you're probably already feeling a lot stronger in your basic reading skills. You have a clearer idea of what the basic reading skills are (topic, main idea, supporting details, and author's writing pattern) and how to apply them to a paragraph. You know how they are related to each other (for example, the topic must always appear in the main idea sentence; details support the main idea). You know that there are certain questions you can ask yourself and specific steps you can follow to determine each of these important elements of basic comprehension. You know that there are also clues, characteristics and formulas to help you apply the comprehension skills correctly and to check to see if you applied them correctly. You know that if you use these strategies, you will accurately comprehend the basic information in material you read.

Another important reading skill or advanced comprehension skill is the ability to **judge** or **evaluate** the way in which the writer presents his ideas. In other words, these are critical skills that go beyond the basic comprehension skills. You have to read critically i.e. "to **read beyond the lines.**" Beyond the **literal and interpretative levels** because they are advanced levels.

To do this, you pick up ideas that are not directly stated in what you are reading. These implied ideas are usually important for a full understanding of what an author means. Discovering ideas that are not

stated directly need critical comprehension, the advanced comprehension skills which comprise the level of understanding include **making inferences, making critical judgment, drawing conclusions and predicting outcomes, generalizing, evaluating ideas, distinguishing fact from opinion, the writer's technique such as style, tone, mood, purpose, attitude or bias, point of view and techniques that twist the truth or propaganda techniques.**

**Critical reading** demands that the reader evaluate and pass personal judgment on the quality, value, accuracy, and / or truthfulness of what is read. It ".....requires the reader to develop a set of standards or criteria on which to base evaluation. It involves the withholding of judgment, the sorting of argument, the weighing of evidence, and the ability to be flexible. "(Robinson, 1978, p.126). The list of questions below should help begin to guide readers in the development of criteria on which to base their critical reading (Smith, & Robinson, 1980, p.221)

### **Questions Needed for Critical Reading**

1. What is the source? Is it reliable? Is it up to date?
2. What is the author's purpose?
3. How does the author present his information?
4. What is the tone of the selection?
5. Does the author use emotional language?
6. Are the statements primarily facts, inferences or opinions?
7. Are there weaknesses in the author's reasoning? What are they?
8. Did the author change my way of thinking?
9. Did the selection interest me?

## Preview Test

Let's read through the following, then what do you gain at the end?  
(Please do not speak to anyone. Please do not look at anyone else's paper.  
Please work quickly – you have only four minutes) (Weinberg, 1978, p.254)

1. Read everything before doing anything.
2. Put your name in the upper right-hand corner of this paper.
3. Circle the word name in sentence two.
4. Draw five small squares in the bottom left-hand corner of this paper.
5. Put an "X" in each square.
6. Sign your name after the title "Reading"
7. After the title write, "Yes! Yes! Yes!"
8. Put a circle around each word in sentence number seven.
9. Put an "X" in the lower right-hand corner of this paper.
10. Draw a triangle around the "X" that you have just written.
11. Draw a rectangle around the word paper in sentence four.
12. Call out your name when you get to this point in the test.
13. If you think you have answered correctly up to this point, write 'Yes, I have'
14. On the back of this paper, add 8905 and 9805
15. Put a circle around your answer. Put a square around the circle.
16. Count out loud backwards from 10 to 1
17. Now that you have finished reading everything carefully, do only sentence two.