unit

1 Reading to Write

1 Focus on Active Reading 3

PREVIEW

In this chapter, you will learn to

- use active reading strategies before you read (1a).
- use active reading strategies as you read (1b).
- use active reading strategies after you read (1c).
- write a response paragraph (1d).

Most of the writing you do in your college courses will be in response to reading. The reading you do in college is different from the reading you do on your own. In college, you read a lot, and you read for a reason. For example, you might be asked to read a news article, a short story, a textbook chapter, or an article in a professional journal. You might then be expected to write an informal response to a writer's ideas or to write a research paper that incorporates information from several sources and blends them with your own ideas. Thus, reading is an important preliminary step in the writing process.

Because reading is essential in all of your college courses, you need to get as much as you can from what you read. A good way to accomplish this is to approach the texts you read—books, articles, web pages, blogs, and so on—with a critical eye. **Reading critically** does not mean challenging or arguing with every idea; rather, it means considering, commenting, questioning, assessing, making connections, and drawing conclusions. Most of all, it means being an active rather than a passive reader.

Being an **active reader** means participating in the reading process: approaching a reading assignment with a clear understanding of the strategies you can use *before* you read, *as* you read, and *after* you read.

1a Before You Read

Before you even begin reading a text, you should be aware of some preliminary active reading strategies that will help you when you read. These strategies include *creating a reading schedule*, *assessing prior knowledge*, *understanding your purpose*, and *previewing*.

Creating a Reading Schedule

As a college student, you have a lot to do, so planning your reading and study time is very important. One useful time-management strategy is creating a **reading schedule** that maps out how many pages you will read and when you will read them.

For example, if you are assigned to read thirty-six pages in your biology textbook, and the time you have available is between 3 p.m. Monday and 11 a.m. Wednesday, you could map out a reading schedule like the following one.

36 pages/3 days = 12 pages per day

Monday: Read pages 1–12 (7:30–8:45 p.m.)

Tuesday: Read pages 13–24 (3:15–4:30 p.m.)

Wednesday: Read pages 25–36 (7:30–8:45 a.m.)

TOTAL PAGES = 36

Teaching Tip
Refer students to pages 9–10 for more on time-management strategies.

When creating your reading schedule, be sure to specify exact times for your reading. If you have blocked out specific times, you will be less likely to procrastinate. Also, be realistic about the number of pages you will read each time, and give yourself more time than you think you will need.

PRACTICE 1-1

For practice, create a reading schedule like the one illustrated above for an assignment in one of your classes.

FYI

Preparing to Read

Active reading requires your full attention. Following these guidelines will help you focus as you read:

- **Find a quiet place to study.** If you will be constantly interrupted in your home or dorm room, find an alternative spot, such as the college library, your local public library, a coffee shop, or a bookstore.
- **Read in the same place and at the same time each day.** Block out regular times for reading, and then list your assignments for each week. Once you develop a routine of reading in the same place and at the same time, you'll find it easier to focus, and concentrated reading will become a useful habit.
- **Read when you are alert.** Choose a time of day when you're not hungry or tired.

(Continued)

- **Avoid distractions.** Turn off the television. Silence your cell phone; ignore texts; and resist visiting Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, or Twitter. Every time you look at your cell phone, you'll lose your concentration.
- **Break readings into manageable chunks.** Don't try to finish a long reading in one sitting. Instead, try breaking a chapter into sections and stopping at the end of each section to make sure you have understood what you have just read. Be sure to reread any passages you find confusing.
- **Build in breaks.** Stop at the end of a chapter, a long section, or an article to stretch your legs, get coffee, or take a short walk.
- **Build in rewards for completing assignments.** Once you've completed your reading for the day, reward yourself. For example, text with a friend or order pizza.

Assessing Prior Knowledge

WORD POWER

assessing measuring; determining the value, extent, or significance

prior preceding in time or order

Before you begin a reading assignment, you might want to **assess your prior knowledge**—that is, ask yourself what you already know about a subject and what you still need (or want) to know about it. Assessing your prior knowledge will help you to decide how much time you will need to read and which specific reading strategies to use. For example, if you already know a good deal about animal and plant cells, reading a chapter in your biology textbook about them may not be very difficult for you. However, if you have no idea how animal and plant cells are different, you will probably have to spend more time reading the chapter in your biology textbook.

Questions for Assessing Prior Knowledge

To assess your prior knowledge, start by asking the following questions:

- Can you predict what the reading material will be about?
- What do you already know about the subject?
- How is the text similar to (or different from) other texts you have read?
- Is there anything in your background that helps you relate to or understand the material?
- How interested are you in this subject?
- What do you hope to learn from your reading?

Understanding Your Purpose

Before you begin to read, you should make sure you have a clear understanding of your **purpose** for reading. For example, are you reading to study for a test or quiz? For a research project? To locate information? To complete an assignment? Understanding your purpose, like assessing your prior knowledge, can help you to decide how much time you will need and what reading strategies you will use. For example, if you are reading to prepare for an informal discussion with your study group, you will not need to read as carefully as you might if you were studying for an exam.

Questions for Understanding Your Purpose

To understand your purpose for reading, ask the following questions:

- Why are you reading?
- Will you be expected to discuss what you are reading? If so, will you discuss it in class? In a conference with your instructor?
- Will you have to write about what you are reading? If so, will you be expected to write a brief informal response (for example, a journal entry) or a longer, more formal one (for example, an essay)?
- Will you be tested on the material?

Previewing

Once you have set up a reading schedule, assessed your prior knowledge, and established your purpose for reading, you are ready to **preview**, focusing on *skimming* and *scanning* the text.

Teaching Tip
Explain to students that previewing a textbook chapter is different from previewing an essay because a textbook chapter is generally longer and has certain elements (headings, bulleted lists, boxed information, and so on) that don't often appear in other kinds of writing.

Skimming

When you **skim** a text, you read it quickly, to get a sense of the writer's main idea and key supporting points. This strategy is particularly useful when you need to read many pages in a short amount of time. (Skimming can also help you determine if a text will be useful to you.)

As you skim, you look at the text's **visual signals**: the title, the author's name, the first paragraph (which often contains a thesis statement or overview), and the last paragraph (which often contains a summary of the writer's points). You might also look at each paragraph's first sentence, which often states the paragraph's main idea. As you skim, you should also look at other visual signals for clues to content and emphasis—for example, headings, boxed text, and images. (Later on, as you read, you will look at **verbal signals**—the words and phrases the writer uses to indicate which points are emphasized and how ideas are arranged.)

Teaching Tip
Refer students to page 15 for a list of verbal signals.

Guidelines for Skimming

When skimming a text, look for these visual signals:

- The title
- The author's name
- The opening paragraph, searching for the sentence that best expresses the main idea
- The closing paragraph, searching for a summary of the writer's ideas
- The first sentence of each of the other paragraphs
- Headings and subheadings
- *Italicized* and **boldfaced** words
- Numbered lists
- Bulleted lists (like this one)
- Graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, photographs, and other visuals
- Any information that is in color

Teaching Tip
Remind students that looking at each paragraph's first sentence might not always work for a long textbook chapter. It might be better to focus on headings and visuals and to read the first and last paragraph of each section of the text.

Scanning

Scanning is a purposeful, focused way of looking at a text to locate specific information—often to enable you to answer specific questions about the material. For example, if you need to prepare for a quiz or answer questions on a worksheet, you would scan the text, looking only for specific words and phrases that will give you the information you need.

Guidelines for Scanning

When scanning a text, look for the following elements:

- Bulleted or numbered lists that might enumerate the writer's key points
- **Boldfaced** or *italicized* words
- Organizational words such as *first*, *second*, *third*, *next*, and *finally*
- Proper nouns (capitalized)
- Numbers
- Words set in quotation marks
- Specific words or ideas related to information you are looking for

WORD POWER
enumerate to name one by one

When you have finished previewing a text, you should have a general sense of what the writer wants to communicate.

PRACTICE 1-2 Below is a discussion of time management from a first-year college textbook. In preparation for class discussion and other activities that will be assigned throughout this chapter, **skim** the textbook passage. As you skim, try to identify the writer's main idea and key supporting points and perhaps jot them down for future reference.

TIME-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Learning to manage your time is very important for success in college. Here are some strategies you can adopt to make this task easier:

1. ***Use an organizer.*** New electronic tools are constantly being developed to help you stay organized. For example, Schoolbinder, a free online organizer, can help you manage your time and create a study schedule. If you have trouble blocking out distractions when you are studying, a site like StudyRails can be helpful. For a small monthly fee, this site will help you plan a study schedule and alert you to when it's time to focus on schoolwork. It can also be programmed to block your go-to recreational sites during hours when you should be studying.

   You can use the calendar function on your smartphone or tablet to keep track of deadlines and appointments. At the beginning of the semester, enter key pieces of information from each course syllabus—for example, the date of every quiz and exam and the due date of every paper. (Set the alert function of your calendar two or three days in advance so you have enough time to prepare.)

   As the semester progresses, continue to add assignments and deadlines. In addition, enter information such as days when a class will be canceled or will meet in the computer lab or in the library, reminders to bring a particular book or piece of equipment to class, and appointments with instructors or other college personnel. (If you'd like, you can also note reminders and schedule appointments that are not related to school—for example, changes in your work hours, a dental appointment, or lunch with a friend.) Some students also like to keep a separate month-by-month "to-do" list. Deleting completed items can give you a feeling of accomplishment—and make the road ahead look shorter.

2. ***Use a calendar.*** Buy a large wall calendar, and post it where you will see it every morning—on your desk, on the refrigerator, or wherever you keep your phone, your keys, and your ID. At the beginning of the semester, fill in important dates such as school holidays, work commitments, exam dates, and due dates for papers and projects. When you

Teaching Tip
Ask students to evaluate the previewing strategy they used here. Did skimming help them to find the information they needed? If so, how? If not, why not? Ask them how they could change their previewing process to make it more useful.

return from classes each day, update the calendar with any new information you have entered into your organizer.

3. ***Plan ahead.*** If you think you will need help from a writing center tutor to revise a paper that is due in two weeks, don't wait until day thirteen to make an appointment; all the tutoring slots may be filled by then. To be safe, make an appointment about a week in advance.
4. ***Learn to enjoy downtime.*** When you have a free minute, take time for yourself—and don't feel guilty about it.

PRACTICE 1-3 Look once again at "Time-Management Strategies." This time, **scan** the passage to look for the following details, noting where you found each piece of information:

- Examples of electronic tools that can help you stay organized
- Suggestions for the best places to put a calendar
- How far in advance you should make an appointment with a writing center tutor

1b As You Read

Once you have finished previewing a text, it is time to begin reading. Two active reading strategies—*marking* up a text and *annotating* a text—can aid your comprehension as you read. In addition, at some point in this stage of the reading process, you will find it helpful to **TEST** the text you are reading.

TESTing a Text

WORD POWER
acronym a word formed from the first letters of a series of words

The letters that spell **TEST** form an acronym for the four basic elements of an essay: **Thesis** (main idea), **Evidence, Summary,** and **Transitions.** **TEST** is a reading strategy that you can use to help you identify these elements in the professional essays and other texts you will encounter in your college courses. As you will discover in Chapters 2 and 13, **TEST** is also a writing strategy that you can use to help you take inventory of the elements in the paragraphs and essays you compose. Using **TEST** to survey a text will help you to get a general idea of what you are reading; it can also help you to see the logic of the writer's discussion and the relationship between the key ideas and the evidence that supports them.

T **Thesis**—Look for the thesis or **main idea**, which is sometimes stated directly, often (but not always) in the opening paragraphs and often, but not always, in a single sentence. Try to decide why the writer placed the main idea where it is. If the main idea is **implied** (suggested), think about why it is not explicitly stated. If no thesis is included, try to write a sentence that states the main idea in your own words.

E **Evidence**—Look for the evidence that supports the writer's main idea. This evidence can be in the form of facts, examples, statistics, anecdotes based on the writer's observations or experiences, or the opinions of experts. Think about why the writer chose these types of evidence rather than others. Consider whether different evidence or additional support is needed and whether any evidence is irrelevant or unnecessary. Also, ask yourself what information the writer might have omitted, and why. Finally, think about what you can **infer** from the evidence presented.

S **Summary**—Look for a statement that lists or summarizes the writer's key points or the essay's main idea. (Often, this summary appears in the closing paragraphs.) If no summary is included, write a sentence that could serve as a summary statement.

T **Transitions**—Look for transitional words and expressions that connect ideas within and between paragraphs. How do these transitions help you to understand the writer's ideas and follow his or her train of thought? Look for **transitional paragraphs**, paragraphs whose purpose is not to supply evidence but rather to move readers from one section of the essay to the next.

When you read essays by professional writers, you should always look for the four TEST elements. In some cases, however, you may not be able to easily identify these elements. For example, professional writers may imply a thesis instead of stating it directly or suggest, rather than explicitly summarizing, their main points. In a long or complex professional essay, particularly one whose main idea is controversial, the main idea may appear at the end instead of near the beginning. In addition, the conclusion may not include a summary statement; it may simply suggest the main idea and not summarize it at all.

Despite these variations, looking for the four TEST elements as you read is important because it will help you to identify the main idea and the evidence that supports it. This in turn will aid your comprehension and enable you to respond in writing to the writer's ideas.

In the following essay, "What American Citizenship Makes Possible," by Colin Powell, the TEST elements have been identified for you.

What American Citizenship Makes Possible

Colin Powell

MANDEL NGAN/Getty Images

Taking the Oath of Allegiance to the U.S., June 20, in Washington, DC.

T Thesis
E Evidence
S Summary
T Transitions

1 Many years ago, after I had become a four-star general and then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The Times* of London wrote an article observing that if my parents had sailed to England rather than New York, "the most they could have dreamed of for their son in the military was to become a sergeant in one of the lesser British regiments."

2 Only in America could the son of two poor Jamaican immigrants become the first African-American, the youngest person and the first ROTC graduate from a public university to hold those positions, among many other firsts. My parents arrived—one at the Port of Philadelphia, the other at Ellis Island—in search of economic opportunity, but their goal was to become American citizens, because they knew what that made possible.

T Thesis

3 Immigration is a vital part of our national being because people come here not only to build a better life for themselves and their children, but to become Americans. With access to education and a clear path to citizenship, they routinely become some of the best, most-patriotic Americans you'll ever know. That's why I am a strong supporter of immigration-law reform: America stands to benefit from it as much as, if not more than, the immigrants themselves.

4 Contrary to some common misconceptions, neighborhoods with greater concentrations of immigrants have lower rates of crime and violence than comparable nonimmigrant neighborhoods, according to a 2015 report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Foreign-born men age 18–39 are jailed at one-quarter the rate of native-born American men of the same age.

5 Today's immigrants are learning English at the same rate or faster than earlier waves of newcomers, and first-generation arrivals are less likely to die from cardiovascular disease or cancer than native-born people. They experience fewer chronic health conditions, have lower infant-mortality and obesity rates, and have a longer life expectancy.

6 My parents met and married here and worked in the garment industry, bringing home $50 to $60 a week. They had two children: my sister Marilyn, who became a teacher, and me. I didn't do as well as the family hoped; I caused a bit of a crisis when I decided to stay in the Army. "Couldn't he get a job? Why is he still in the Army?"

7 We were a tightknit family with cousins and aunts and uncles all over the place. But that family network didn't guarantee success. What did? The New York City public education system.

8 I'm a public-education kid, from kindergarten through to Morris High School in the South Bronx and, finally, City College of New York. New York University made me an offer, but tuition there was $750 a year. Such a huge sum in 1954! I would never impose that on my parents, so it was CCNY, where back then tuition was free. I got a B.S. in geology and a commission as an Army second lieutenant, and that was that. And it all cost my parents nothing. Zero.

9 After CCNY, I was lucky to be among the first group of officers commissioned just after the Army was desegregated. I competed against West Pointers, against grads from Harvard and VMI and the Citadel and other top schools. And to my surprise, I discovered I had gotten a pretty good education in the New York City public schools. Not only in geology and the military, but also in wider culture. I had learned a little about music, about Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and theater and things like that. I got a complete education, all through public schools, and it shapes me to this day.

10 This amazing gift goes back to 1847 when the Free Academy of the City of New York was created with a simple mandate: "Give every child the opportunity for an education." And who would pay for it? The citizens and taxpayers of New York City and State. They did it and kept at it when the Academy became CCNY in 1866, because they knew that poor immigrants were their children. They were the future.

11 They still are. Today some 41 million immigrants and 37.1 million U.S.-born children of immigrants live in the U.S. Taken together, the first and second generations are one-quarter of the population. While some countries, like Japan and Russia, worry that population decline threatens their economies, America's economic future vibrates with promise from immigrants' energy, creativity, and ambition.

T Transitions

E Evidence

E Evidence

T Transitions

Evidence E

12 Every one of these people deserves the same educational opportunities I had. It wasn't, and isn't, charity to immigrants or to the poor. Those early New Yorkers were investing in their own future by making education and citizenship accessible to "every child." They knew it—and what a future it became!

13 We still have that model. But today too many politicians seem to think that shortchanging education will somehow help society. It does not. It hurts society. We need people who know that government has no more important function than securing the terrain, which means opening the pathways to the future for everyone, educating them to be consumers, workers, leaders, and citizens.

S Summary

14 We are all immigrants, wave after wave over several hundred years. And every wave makes us richer: in cultures, in language and food, in music and dance, and in intellectual capacity. We should treasure this immigrant tradition, and we should reform our laws to guarantee it.

15 In this political season, let us remember the most important task of our government: making Americans. Immigrants—future Americans—make America better every single day.

* * *

In this essay, retired general and former Secretary of State Colin Powell presents a powerful argument about the value of immigrants. Noting that he himself is the son of immigrants, he goes on to convince readers that his position is valid.

Instead of stating his thesis explicitly in a single sentence at the end of the first paragraph, a technique that serves beginning writers well, he presents his main idea in paragraph 3, after first introducing himself and establishing his status as a son of immigrants. Paragraph 3 then explains his main idea: that immigrants "become American" and thus become patriotic citizens—and that this in turn benefits the nation.

Powell's essay includes helpful transitions between paragraphs, such as "They were the future. They still are" (paras. 10–11), as well as a transitional paragraph (para. 7). He also includes a summary (para. 14) that stresses the importance of immigrants, and he closes with a strong appeal to his audience (para. 15).

Marking Up a Text

When you **mark up** a text, you use underlining and symbols to identify key ideas. This active reading strategy will help you to understand the writer's ideas and make connections among them when you reread. Be selective as you proceed. You will eventually be rereading every underlined word, phrase, and sentence—so set off only the most important information.

Marking Up a Text

- Underline key ideas—for example, topic sentences.
- Box or circle words or phrases you want to remember.
- Place a check mark (✓) or star (*) next to an important idea.
- Place double check marks (✓✓) or double stars (**) next to an especially significant idea.
- Draw lines or arrows to connect related ideas. ⟶
- Put a question mark (?) beside a word or idea that you need to look up.
- [Bracket] text you want to set off.
- Number the writer's key supporting points or examples.

Teaching Tip
Marking up a text is a particularly helpful strategy for students who are visual learners.

FYI

Knowing What to Mark Up

You want to identify what is important—but how do you *know* what is important?

- *Look for visual signals.* As a general rule, you should look for the same **visual signals** you looked for when you did your previewing. Many of the ideas you will want to set off will probably be found in material that is visually set off from the rest of the text—opening and closing paragraphs, lists, and so on.
- *Look for verbal signals.* At this stage, you should also look for **verbal signals**—words and phrases that often introduce key points. (These are listed in the box on page 15.)

Together, these visual and verbal signals will give you clues to the writer's meaning and emphasis.

Verbal Signals

As you read, look for the following verbal signals:

- Repeated words and phrases
- Phrases that signal emphasis ("The *primary* reason"; "The *most important* idea")
- Words that signal addition (*also, in addition, furthermore*)
- Words that signal time sequence (*first, after, then, next, finally*)
- Words that identify causes and effects (*because, as a result, for this reason*)

(Continued)

Teaching Tip
Tell students that many of these verbal signals serve as transitions.

- Words that introduce examples (*for example, for instance*)
- Words that signal comparison (*likewise, similarly*)
- Words that signal contrast (*unlike, although, in contrast*)
- Words that signal contradiction (*however, on the contrary*)
- Words that signal a narrowing of the writer's focus (*in fact, specifically, in other words*)
- Words that signal summaries or conclusions (*to sum up, in conclusion*)

Here is how one student used underlining and symbols to mark up an excerpt from the newspaper article "What American Citizenship Makes Possible" by Colin Powell.

We were a tightknit family with cousins and aunts and uncles all over the place. But that family network didn't guarantee success. What did? The New York City public education system.

I'm a public-education kid, from kindergarten through to Morris High School in the South Bronx and, finally, City College of New York. New York University made me an offer, but tuition there was $750 a year. Such a huge sum in 1954! I would never impose that on my parents, so it was CCNY, where back then tuition was free. I got a B.S. in geology and a commission as an Army second lieutenant, and that was that. And it all cost my parents nothing. Zero.

After CCNY, I was lucky ? to be among the first group of officers commissioned just after the Army was desegregated. I competed against West Pointers, against grads from Harvard and VMI and the Citadel and other top schools. And to my surprise, I discovered I had gotten a pretty good education in the New York City public schools. Not only in geology and the military, but also in wider culture. I had learned a little about music, about Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and theater and things like that. I got a complete education, all through public schools, and it shapes me to this day.

This amazing gift goes back to 1847 when the Free Academy of the City of New York was created with a simple mandate: "Give every child the opportunity for an education." And who would pay for it? The citizens and taxpayers of New York City and State. They did it and kept at it when the Academy became CCNY in 1866, because they knew that poor immigrants * were their children. They were the future.

The student who marked up the passage above was preparing to write an essay about whether public colleges should be free. Because the passage included no visual signals apart from the paragraph divisions, she looked carefully for verbal signals.

The student began by underlining the writer's main idea in the passage's first paragraph: that New York City public schools made him a success. She then circled the key terms *success*, *lucky*, *amazing gift*, and *opportunity*, which she thought conveyed a sense of the writer's impression of his public school education, and she drew lines to connect these related terms.

The student underlined sentences that supported the main idea, drawing an arrow to connect two related points ("I'm a public-education kid" and "I got a complete education, all through public schools, and it shapes me to this day.") She also bracketed an unfamiliar reference to desegregating the army and put a question mark beside it to remind herself to look it up.

Finally, she underlined and starred some of the passage's closing lines, which she thought summarized the main idea: that poor immigrants, like Powell himself, have benefited from their free education and owe their success to the New York City schools.

PRACTICE 1-4 Review the marked-up passage on pages 19 and 20. How would your own underlining and symbols on this passage be similar to or different from the sample student's? How does the purpose for your reading affect what you might set off?

PRACTICE 1-5 Reread "Time-Management Strategies" (pp. 9–10). As you reread, underline and star the main idea, box and circle key words, checkmark important points, draw lines and arrows to connect related ideas, and so on. Be sure to circle each unfamiliar word and put a question mark above it so that you will remember to look it up later on.

FYI

Using Context Clues

Before you turn to a dictionary to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word, see if you can figure out the meaning from context clues in the text.

Annotating a Text

Once you have marked up a passage, your next step is to *annotate* it. **Annotating** a passage means reading critically and making notes—of questions, reactions, reminders, and ideas for writing or discussion—in the margins or between the lines. (If you run out of room on the page, you can use sticky notes.) Keeping an informal record of ideas as they occur to you will prepare you for class discussion and for writing. This is the first step in engaging with the text on a deeper level, one in which you analyze and evaluate it.

Questions for Annotating

As you read, keeping the following questions in mind will help you make useful annotations:

- What is the writer saying? What do you think the writer is suggesting or implying? What makes you think so?
- What is the writer's purpose (his or her reason for writing)?
- What kind of audience is the writer addressing?
- Is the writer responding to another writer's ideas?
- What is the writer's main idea? Is it stated or implied? Can you restate the main idea in your own words?
- How does the writer support his or her points? Does the writer use facts? Statistics? Expert opinion? Personal experiences or observations?
- Does the writer include enough supporting details and examples?
- How does the writer signal a shift from one point to the next?
- Does the writer summarize the main idea or key points? If so, where?
- What is the writer's main idea?
- Does the writer seem well informed? Reasonable? Fair?
- Do you understand the writer's vocabulary?
- Do you understand the writer's ideas?
- Do you agree with the points the writer is making?
- How are the ideas presented in this reading selection like (or unlike) those presented in other texts you have read?

Teaching Tip
As they read, students may find it helpful to consider how ideas are arranged in a text. For example, seeing that an essay is comparing two subjects or explaining a process will help them understand the writer's ideas and see how they are related. (Refer students to Unit 3 for more on patterns of essay development.)

FYI

Making Useful Annotations

As you annotate, remember that you should not write too much or too little; good annotations fit in the margins or on a small sticky note. You should *not* write your annotations on a separate sheet of paper. If you do, you will be tempted to write too much, and you can easily lose track of where a particular note belongs or what point it comments on. (Moreover, if you lose the sheet of paper, you will also lose all your notes and thoughts.)

Think of annotations as a study aid that you can consult when you return to the text a few days later. Brief, useful annotations will help you follow the writer's ideas and remember what is most important in the text.

The following passage, which reproduces the student's marked-up text (pp. 16–17), also includes her annotations.

We were a tightknit family with cousins and aunts and uncles all over the place. But that family network didn't guarantee success. What did? The New York City public education system.

I'm a public-education kid, from kindergarten through to Morris High School in the South Bronx and, finally, City College of New York. New York University made me an offer, but tuition there was $750 a year. Such a huge sum in 1954! I would never impose that on my parents, so it was CCNY, where back then tuition was free. I got a B.S. in geology and a commission as an Army second lieutenant, and that was that. And it all cost my parents nothing. Zero.

Is CCNY still free?

After CCNY, I was lucky to be among the first group of officers commissioned just after the Army was desegregated. I competed against West Pointers, against grads from Harvard and VMI and the Citadel and other top schools. And to my surprise, I discovered I had gotten a pretty good education in the New York City public schools. Not only in geology and the military, but also in wider culture. I had learned a little about music, about Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and theater and things like that. I got a complete education, all through public schools, and it shapes me to this day.

U.S. Army segregated until 1948 (through WWII)

Why is he surprised to find his education was good?

This amazing gift goes back to 1847 when the Free Academy of the City of New York was created with a simple mandate: "Give every child the opportunity for an education." And who would pay for it? The citizens and taxpayers of New York City and State. They did it and kept at it when the Academy became CCNY in 1866, because they knew that poor immigrants * were their children. They were the future.

In her marginal annotations, the student wrote a brief explanation of the reference to army segregation and asked two questions. She thought that answers to these questions would give her information that would help her develop ideas for her paper on whether public colleges should be free.

PRACTICE 1-6 Reread "Time-Management Strategies" (p. 9). This time, refer to the Questions for Annotating (p. 18), and use them to guide you as you write down your own thoughts and questions in the margins of the passage. As you read, you might note where you agree or disagree with the writer, and briefly explain why or briefly summarize any points you think are particularly important. Be sure to look up any unfamiliar words you have circled and to write brief definitions. Think of these annotations as your preparation for discussing the passage in class—and, eventually, for writing about it.

PRACTICE 1-7 Exchange books with another student, and read his or her highlighting and annotations on "Time-Management Strategies." How are your written responses similar to the other student's? How are they different? Do your classmate's responses help you to see anything new about the passage? Looking again at your own annotations, consider how you might use them to write a response to the suggestions in "Time-Management Strategies."

1c After You Read

After you finish reading, three additional active reading strategies—outlining, summarizing, and paraphrasing—will enable you to better retain and use the information you have acquired. Once you have a command of the material, you will be prepared to express your reactions by writing a *response paragraph.*

Outlining

Outlining is an active reading strategy that you can use to help you understand a text. Unlike a **formal outline**, which follows strict conventions, an **informal outline** is just a list of a passage's key ideas and supporting points in the order in which they are presented. After you have made an informal outline of a passage, you should be able to see which ideas are more important than others, as well as how the ideas are related.

Teaching Tip
Tell students that formal outlines can help them keep track of ideas in long essays or research papers. Refer them to 13f for an example of a formal outline.

FYI

Constructing an Informal Outline

To construct an informal outline, follow these guidelines:

1. Write or type the passage's main idea at the top of a sheet of paper. (This will remind you of the writer's focus and help keep your outline on track.)
2. At the left margin, record the most important idea of the first body paragraph or the first part of the passage.
3. Indent the next line a few spaces, and list the examples or details that support this idea.
4. As ideas become more specific, indent further. (Ideas that have the same degree of importance are indented the same distance from the left margin.)

Repeat the process with each body paragraph or part of the passage.

The student who marked up and annotated the excerpt from Colin Powell's "What American Citizenship Makes Possible" made the following informal outline to help her understand the writer's ideas.

Main idea: According to Colin Powell, he—like many other children from poor immigrant families—owes his success to the free public education he received.

- New York City public school experience
  - Attended free public elementary and high school
  - Attended CCNY
    - Free tuition
    - B.S. degree
    - Army commission
- Army experience
  - Became officer
  - Realized his education had been good
    - Geology and military
    - "Wider culture"

PRACTICE 1-8 Make an informal outline of "Time-Management Strategies" (p. 9). Refer to your underlining, symbols, and annotations as you construct your outline. When you have finished, check to make certain your outline accurately represents the writer's emphasis and the relationships among his or her ideas.

Summarizing and Paraphrasing

Once you have TESTed, marked up, annotated, and outlined a passage, you may want to *summarize* or *paraphrase* it to help you understand it better.

Summarizing

A **summary** is a brief restatement, *in your own words*, of a passage's main idea. A summary does not include supporting examples and details, and it does not include your own ideas or opinions. For this reason, a summary is always much shorter than the original passage—usually no longer than a few sentences.

Guidelines for Writing a Summary

To write a summary, follow these guidelines:

1. Reread your source, and review your outline.
2. Consulting your outline, restate the passage's main idea *in your own words*, using synonyms wherever possible and using your own syntax. If you decide to use a distinctive word or phrase from the original passage, put it in quotation marks.
3. To avoid accidentally using the exact same language as the original, do not look at the passage when you are writing your summary.
4. Be sure to identify the author and title of the source.
5. Reread your source to make sure you have accurately summarized the main idea and key supporting details and that you have not included any unrelated or unnecessary material. Also, check to make sure you have not accidentally used the source's exact wording or sentence structure. (If you have, you will have committed **plagiarism**. See 17c Using Sources Responsibly.)

The student who marked up, annotated, and outlined the excerpt from "What American Citizenship Makes Possible" wrote the following summary. Note that her summary includes the author's name and the title of the source.

In "What American Citizenship Makes Possible," Colin Powell attributes his success in life to the free public education he received from kindergarten through college and stresses the value of free college education, particularly for children of immigrants (like himself).

PRACTICE 1-9 Write a summary of "Time-Management Strategies" (p. 9). Use your informal outline to guide you, and keep your summary brief—no more than two or three sentences long.

Paraphrasing

When you **paraphrase**, you put a writer's words into your own, substituting different vocabulary and sentence structure for the writer's. The act of paraphrasing helps you to understand a text better because it requires you to think about exactly what the writer means to say and how he or she says it.

As is the case with summaries, paraphrases do not include your own ideas or your opinions of the writer's statements. Unlike a summary, however, a paraphrase can be the same length as (or longer than) the original.

Guidelines for Writing a Paraphrase

To write a paraphrase, follow these guidelines:

1. Read the passage carefully.
2. Draft your paraphrase, following the order and emphasis of the original. Be sure to include the passage's main idea as well as the key supporting examples and details. Use your own syntax, use synonyms wherever possible, and put any distinctive words you borrow in quotation marks.
3. Reread your paraphrase, comparing it to the original source to make sure it reflects its meaning and emphasis and does not include any of the source's distinctive wording or sentence structure.
4. Be sure to include an in-text citation that references your Works Cited List.

The student who summarized the Colin Powell excerpt paraphrased a few sentences to help her understand his ideas.

ORIGINAL EXCERPT

I discovered I had gotten a pretty good education in the New York City public schools. Not only in geology and the military, but also in wider culture. I had learned a little about music, about Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and theater and things like that. I got a complete education, all through public schools, and it shapes me to this day.

PARAPHRASE

Powell learned that his New York City public school education was better than he had thought, giving him a foundation in "wider culture" as well as in subjects such as geology and in military topics. He discovered he had also learned something about subjects such as music, literature, and theater. The public school education he received "shapes [him] to this day" (p. 13).

The student writer knew that she had to avoid using the original excerpt's distinctive words or sentence constructions. When she came across distinctive phrases that were hard to put into different words, she kept the original words but put them in quotation marks to indicate that they were used in her source. (When she had to change the source's *me* to *him* to make it fit into her sentence, she set *him* in brackets to indicate her change.) She was also careful to retain the meaning and emphasis of Powell's ideas. (For more information on writing summaries and paraphrases, see 17b Using Paraphrase, Summary, and Quotation.)

1d Writing a Response

After you have marked up and annotated a reading selection, you are ready to write a **response**, in which you record your reactions to the writer's ideas.

Because a response is informal, no special guidelines or rules govern its format or structure, and informal style and personal opinions are acceptable.

The student who marked up, annotated, outlined, summarized, and paraphrased material from "What American Citizenship Makes Possible," wrote the following response.

Teaching Tip
Remind students that contractions are acceptable here only because this is an informal paragraph.

In "What American Citizenship Makes Possible," General Colin Powell, former U.S. Secretary of State, discusses the ways in which immigrants enrich the United States. Summarizing his own experience as the son of poor Jamaican immigrants, Powell stresses the value of the free public education

he received not just in elementary and high school but also through college, and he identifies this education as the key factor that led to his professional success. This seems like an exaggeration. He probably had many other important personal experiences and professional interactions that could have led to his success. Besides, a private college—even one he had to borrow money to attend—might have provided an even better education. By stressing how fortunate he was and how greatly he benefited, Powell seems to suggest that the "amazing gift" he received from New York City should be widely available today to students like him. If it were, he believes, it would provide a valuable opportunity for immigrants who cannot afford private college tuition. However, immigrant children could fund their education at private colleges with the help of loans, work-study, and tuition scholarships. Thus, Powell's point—that the children of poor immigrants should have access to free public college education—is questionable. These children may be "the future" of our country, as he says, but that does not mean that their college education should be subsidized.

The process of writing this response was very helpful to the student. The questions she asked suggested some interesting ideas that she could explore in class discussion or in a more fully developed piece of writing.

PRACTICE

1-10 Now that you have practiced the complete active reading process with the textbook excerpt on page 9, "Time-Management Strategies," write a response that explains your thoughts about the time-management strategies presented in the excerpt. In your response, you can discuss why these strategies would (or would not) be useful to you, or you can write about strategies you already use to manage your time.

review checklist

- ✔ Being an active reader involves using strategies before, during, and after you read to help you retain and use the information in the text.
- ✔ Before you read, you should assess your prior knowledge, set a purpose for your reading, and preview the text. (See 1a.)
- ✔ As you read, **TEST** the text to help you identify its key elements. Also, mark up and annotate the text to help you identify the writer's key ideas. (See 1b.)
- ✔ After you read, outlining, summarizing, and paraphrasing can help you remember what you have read. (See 1c.)
- ✔ Once you have marked up and annotated a text, you can write a response paragraph to record your reactions to the writer's ideas. (See 1d.)