

Tips for reading the *St. Petersburg Times*

Whether you are reading about Dalí and other famous folks or important news happening in your neighborhood, your *Dalí i Me Desktopper* can be used in a variety of ways to help you be a smarter reader! Just prop this topper on your desk and try some of the following suggestions the next time you read the *St. Petersburg Times* or any other text.

Digging for deeper meaning

Did you know that when you read, it is not enough to just know the words – you also have to be able to “infer” (make educated prediction about) the deeper meaning of the text?* Increasing how well you comprehend what you read will help you be super-successful in school and make reading much more fun!

A few tips to try each time you read to increase your understanding:

- Compose titles and headings in your head to go with what you read
- Ask yourself questions before, during and after reading
- Paraphrase ideas and concepts in your own words
- Relate what you read to your own personal experiences
- Make connections from other things you have read and knowledge you already have to the new text
- Look for examples of concepts from the real world
- Draw pictures, tables or graphs to illustrate what you are reading

*If students think and elaborate on the meaning, they will bring forth information not explicitly stated and therefore enhance the meaning of the text (Witrock, 1990).

Before you get started

Before you read an article in the *Times*, take a few minutes to read the headline, sub-heads and picture captions; look at any pictures or graphics and skim the first few paragraphs. Then see if you can answer the questions below. Asking yourself questions like this before you start to read is a good way to fire up the “spark plugs” in your brain so you can connect personally to the text and make reading the news a more enjoyable experience.

- Have you read or heard about this story or one similar to it?
- What is the general topic covered in this article?
- What information do you already know about this topic?
- What do you hope to learn from this article? Can you predict the ending?
- What images or pictures come to mind when you think about the issue(s) presented in this text?
- What do you think the writer/reporter wants you to learn, think, believe or do?

While you are reading, here are a few tricks to try:

Be an ACTIVE reader. One of the great things about reading the newspaper is that it is your personal text! You can write on it, use a highlighter, or clip out your favorite parts! One reading expert, Cris Tovani, suggests that using a highlighter while reading will help you gain a better understanding of what the writer is trying to tell you.** Next time you have a *Times* reading assignment, highlight words or phrases that “jump out” at you. This could

happen because the text reminds you of something in your life, uses especially descriptive language, or maybe it doesn't quite make sense to you. After reading, get together in a group and write down the exact words highlighted by each person and their reasons for highlighting. Then, jot down the “deeper” thinking that comes from your group considering and discussing these words. Ms. Tovani points out that you often will see similar points being highlighted by you and your classmates as well as some unique choices that will get your group talking!

** From *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?*
By Cris Tovani. Stenhouse Publishers (2004)

After reading, it's a great idea to ask questions to see how much you learned. Good readers are able to recall information, analyze it, compare it to something else, make predictions and evaluate the meaning or “gist” of the story. You can do this by yourself, with your family at home, or in class with friends. Here are a few samples to get you started:

- What is ____?
- Identify the ____.
- What happens after ____?
- What is the main idea?
- What are the parts of ____?
- What is the difference between ____ and ____?
- ____ and ____ are similar because they both ____.
- The main conclusion from ____ is ____.
- What would happen if ____?
- What is your opinion of ____?
- What is the best solution to the problem of ____?
- Defend your opinion about ____.