

I. Outline the Structure

What is the text about as a whole?

1. Classify the text according to kind and subject matter.

2. State what the whole text is about with the utmost brevity.

3. Enumerate the text's main parts in their order and relation, and outline these parts as you have outlined the whole.

4. Define the problem or problems the author is trying to solve.

II. Interpret the Contents

What does the text say in detail?

5. Find the most important words, and through them come to terms with the author.

6. Grasp the author's leading propositions by dealing with their most important sentences.

7. Know the author's arguments by finding them in, or constructing them out of, sequences of sentences.

8. Determine which problems the author has solved and which they have not; and whether they are aware of the latter.

III. Criticize the Text

Is the text true, in whole or in part?

9. Do not criticize until you have completed your outline and your interpretation of the text.

10. Do not disagree disputatiously or contentiously.

11. Present good reasons for any critical judgments, demonstrating the difference between knowledge and mere opinion.

12. If you disagree, show where the author is uninformed.

13. If you disagree, show where the author is misinformed.

14. If you disagree, show where the author is illogical.

15. If you disagree, show where the author's account or analysis is incomplete.

Analytical Reading

