



## Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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### Take Control of Your Reading

A poor reader often reacts negatively when given a reading assignment. He might say...

- Why bother? I won't understand it anyway!
- I could read the whole chapter and not remember one thing!
- I hate reading this book!!

A good reader might say...

- I'm going to conquer this material!

Rather than being controlled by the material, a good reader is in control of what she reads. The book is in control if the reader does the following:

- Reads just because he has an assignment.
- Opens the book and simply starts on the first sentence.
- Skips over the titles and subheads.
- Accepts the words automatically, without thinking about them.
- Always reads at one speed.
- Just reads, without writing anything down.
- Closes the book after reading and forgets all about it.

The reader is in control if she does the following:

- Considers why the material was assigned.
- Previews the material.
- Breaks up the reading into sections.
- Slows down if the material is hard; speeds up if the material is easy.
- Takes notes as he reads.

- Thinks about the material and reviews her notes.

### Asking Questions

As the student thinks about various issues, the following questions may help to focus his thoughts.

**Problems:** e.g., teenage smoking

*Description:* What is the problem? What are the signs of the problem?

*Function:* Who or what is affected by it? What new problems may it cause in the future?

*History:* What is the current status of the problem? What or who caused it?

*Value:* What is its significance? Why is it more (or less) important than other problems?

**Policies:** e.g., a new dress code

*Description:* What type of policy is it?

What are its most important features?

*Function:* What is the policy designed to do/ What is needed to make it work?

*History:* What brought this policy about? What are the alternatives to this policy?

*Value:* Is the policy workable? What are its advantages and disadvantages?

**Concepts:** e.g., community service

*Description:* What type of concept is it? Who or what is related to it?

*Function:* What has been influenced by the concept? Why is it important?

*History:* When did it originate? How has it changed over the years?

*Value:* What practical value does it hold? What is its social value?

A skilled writer thinks through questions such as these before beginning to put her thoughts down on paper.