

# Reading *Approaches*:

Authors don't expect readers to create inferences out of nothing. Authors provide information (that's the external text); readers use that information in a variety of ways to create their internal text. When authors aren't providing literal information, they are often implying something.

**Authors *imply*.**  
**Readers *infer*.**

## THE BIG FIVE

Approach every reading task—essays, portions of novels, poetry, informative pieces—with these five questions in mind:

1. What is this passage about? (the topic) (both literature and nonfiction)
2. What does the passage say? (What the words mean—the literal meaning as it develops through the passage) (both literature and nonfiction)
3. How does the author develop meaning through the text? (How is it organized? Purposeful organization is called rhetorical organization.)
4. What is the narrative perspective—speaker/author's point of view? (literature)  
What is the narrative stance—speaker/author's position (nonfiction)
5. What does the passage mean (theme) (literature)?  
What does the writer want the reader to feel, think, do (rhetorical purpose)? (nonfiction)

\*Note: Analysis of language/rhetorical strategies—connotation, figurative language, syntax, for example—is important but should not be the sole focus of a reading task.

## VISUAL & ACTIVE READING

**VISUAL:** Picture (visualize) what is happening as you read through the text.

**ACTIVE:** Sit up straight, pen or pencil in hand. This puts your brain on alert. When you slouch down, brain goes into passive mode, thinking it's time to go to sleep. As you read, mark the text. On your first reading, keep this minimal, but do mark. Research has shown that Keeping your hand moving often allows your brain to concentrate.

## SOAPSTONE

I. **SOAPSTONE** Analysis – you begin by identifying each part (subject, occasion, etc.) as much as you can from considering carefully all information given you either in text introduction, or in the text itself.

**Subject:** \_\_\_\_\_ (What is text about?)

**Occasion:** \_\_\_\_\_ (What circumstances led to text?)

**Audience:** \_\_\_\_\_ (For whom is text intended?)

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_ (What does speaker/writer want audience to feel, to think, and to do?)

**Speaker:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Who is the speaker?)

**Tone:** \_\_\_\_\_ (What is the speaker's attitude(s) towards his/her subject?)