

Reading Literature

1. **Before you start reading:**

- a. Have the assignment guidelines available to refer to them as you read. Note the due date. What does your professor want you to pay attention to?

Literary terms: Be clear about the meaning of terms such as theme, symbolism, imagery, plot and other literary terms. (See: Writing Resource Center for help with literary terms).

- b. Skim the reading and plan to read it in chunks, noting the following:
 - i. How long is the reading?
 - ii. Are you familiar with the topic? If you are not, an online search about the topic or a historical timeline may help.
 - iii. What is the difficulty level of the reading?
- c. Find a distraction free place to read. If that is not possible, try wearing noise canceling headphones.
- d. Printing the story in a larger font may help with reading.

2. **While you are reading:**

- a. Take notes and keep them organized in whatever way works best.
- b. For example:
 - i. List main events of the plot.
 - ii. Create a chart for the main characters, listing characters' main traits, if they are positive or negative, and noting the page/paragraph of useful quotes.
 - iii. Note questions you have.
- c. Periodically stop reading and take breaks. Imagine you are asked to “teach” the story to someone else. What would you tell them?