Facing Barriers
As a college student, it is an everyday battle to comprehend all the text we are assigned for class, but we can do it! Comprehension is greatly affected by an individual’s physical environment, language background, and attitude. Here are some tips to help you.

Physical Effects
* Avoid distractions like texting or loud music.
* Get plenty of sleep at night.
* Eat a well balanced diet.

Language Background
* Comprehension increases as our vocabulary increases
* Broaden your vocabulary by keeping a dictionary on hand to look up words.
* Words from different time period in historical text can be difficult, so search out the definitions.

Attitude
* Mental states can affect concentration.
* If you have a good attitude towards a class, you will be motivated to read and understand the material for the class
* Negative attitudes can change our perspective of the message.

Two Types of Text
**Narrative:**
* Involves a story (eg. novel)
* Try to interpret what the author is trying to convey based on the reading

**Expository:**
* Organized by topic like a textbook
* Use the SQ4R method to get the most out of your reading
SQ4R Strategies for Reading

S: SURVEY

How? Explore the structure and content of the text before reading it. Pay attention to titles and bold words!

Why? This gives a framework to build on and prepares you to receive new information.

Q: QUESTION

How? Be curious. Ask questions for each section. Change the heading into questions. What do you want this text to answer?

Why? Doing this generates interest, sets purpose for reading, and help focus your attention.

R: READ

How? Read the first section of the text with an alert mind. Continually ask yourself, “Am I understanding this?” Actively search for information and try to answer your questions: ask, connect, infer, synthesize, code the text, do what it takes to capture the meaning of the text.

Why? This informs and answers formulated questions; stimulates learning.

R: RECITE

How? Stop at the end of a chunk of text and write or tell yourself what you have read (mentally download). Re-read if you can’t remember!

Why? This puts information into memory; it lets you know if you grasped the concepts and information.

R: REFLECT

How? Think about the information to pinpoint lingering questions. Connect to what you already know, generate new thinking inspired by the text. Think of how to apply to expand your perspective.

Why? This goes beyond memorization by increasing understanding. Being able to connect new information with what you have learned in the past, as well as figuring out how it specifically applies to you, will make the material memorable.

R: REVIEW

How? Go over the text with such methods as “Cover & Recite.” Re-read parts as needed and use any strategies to solidify and extend your thinking.

Why? This puts information into long-term memory for latter use, evolving understanding, and creative scholarly production.