Welcome to a presentation on Active Reading. In order to gain maximum benefits from your reading, you need to practise active reading. Passive reading, i.e. reading without engaging with your text will not only result in loss of concentration but you will also forget what you read. This presentation will address some strategies that you could use to practise active reading. Among the strategies that will be discussed are 1) underlining and highlighting key words, phrases and ideas; 2) recording key words or phrases; 3) listing and finding answers to questions; and 4) summarising.

Underlining key points in your texts is an active reading strategy that you can use. This allows your mind to engage with what you read. Furthermore, when you pick out main points from a text, the next time you need to refer to it, you can directly go to the information. This saves you a lot of time. If you do not like to see lines on your texts, you could use a highlighter. A highlighter comes in handy when you need to highlight different aspects. For example, if you are studying a course on Society, Culture and Language and you have to read a journal article about ‘Vague Language and Interpersonal Communication’, you can use an orange highlighter to identify the principles of ‘Vague Language’ and pink for the definition. Just be careful that you do not go overboard with the underlining and highlighting.

Another strategy that you can use is to note key words. Use the margin in your text to note key words from headings or the sentences that you read. This encourages your mind to actively engage with your reading by condensing what you read into two or three words or phrases. This is helpful as it allows you to pick out the key ideas and ignore examples or details. Noting key words is also very beneficial in that, the next time you need to refer to the text, you can get the gist by just looking at the key words in the margin. If you need to use this information in your assignment, it would be easier to paraphrase the idea from two or three key words compared to the whole sentence. This way, you ensure that you are restating the information in your own words. Remember, you still need to cite the source.
Slide 5: List and Find Answers to Questions

In the university, you will be required to read different types of texts for different purposes such as attending lectures or completing assignments. When you read for these contexts, you are looking for answers to particular questions. Listing the questions that you want answered is an active reading strategy. When you list the questions, you will be attempting to find the answers in the different sections that you read. This helps you focus and engage with the text. You can create questions from the title of texts, headings, sub-headings or even from your assignment questions. You can scan and skim the text when you know what you are looking for, thus saving a lot of time. For example, if you are reading the article ‘Vague Language and Interpersonal Communication’ for your assignment, you may want to find answers to the following questions, namely, 1) What is vague language? 2) How is vague language associated with interpersonal communication? 3) What are some examples of vague language? etc. You can also note questions that arise while you are reading the text and discuss them in the tutorials. This will show your tutor that you are thinking outside the box and going beyond your textbook and lecture notes.

Slide 6: Summarize

Another active reading strategy is to summarize what you read. This is a good technique to check whether you have understood what you have read. Begin by reading the text and noting key words, phrases or ideas. Then use these to write a summary in your words. Try not to look at your text when you write the summary. When you have finished writing the summary, skim the text to check for the accuracy of the summary. This is important as you may have misinterpreted the text. If you did miss something in the summary, fill in the gaps. You can use the summary in your assignment but remember to cite the source.