ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

text features: design elements that highlight the organization and especially important information in a text
boldface type: thicker, darker type, often used for key terms
bulleted list: each listed item is signaled with a dot or “bullet”
caption: written information about an illustration, photograph, or graphic
footnote: a numbered note placed at the bottom of a page that provides additional or source information
graphic aid: visual tool (a photograph, table, graph, or other illustration)
head or heading: title that identifies the topic of the content that follows it
key word: important term, may be italicized, boldface, or highlighted
numbered or lettered list: list showing a sequence or an order of importance
review questions: help readers focus or assess their understanding
sidebar: additional information set apart from the main text of a page
subhead or subheading: signals the beginning of a new topic or section under a more general heading
title: name given to a book, chapter, play, film, or poem

HERE’S HOW

Step 1: Before you read, identify the text features. Knowing the kinds of features that a text contains can help you find information.

Step 2: Next, preview the text features. Follow these steps:
• Read the heads and subheads to get an overview of the material and to determine which details go with which main ideas.
• Scan for boldface terms, other key words, and lists to get a sense of the important details you will encounter in this text.
• Glance at the graphic aids (and corresponding captions) to see what kind of data the text offers besides words.
• Look at what is covered in the sidebars, but don’t read them yet.

Step 3: Now read the text and organize information. As you read, paragraph by paragraph, work in the graphic aids and sidebars as convenient. Use the text features to help your note taking, outlining, summarizing, and questioning.