Reading for a Thesis

Step 1: Preparation

In the space below, write two or three things that you have prepared yourself to look for in the text as you read.

Step 2: Read for Patterns and Oppositions

In this space, note at least two patterns that you see developing in the text. These may related to the notes you made in step 1, but they do not have to. (You are allowed to be surprised by your interests.)

Pattern 1

Name this pattern:

Note at least three examples that support this pattern:

Is there another pattern that could form an opposition to this one, such as a pattern of commands opposed to a pattern of questions?

Do you see an exception to this pattern or an element of it that stands out in an unusual way?

Pattern 2

Name this pattern:

Note at least three examples that support this pattern:

Is there another pattern that could form an opposition to this one, such as a pattern of commands opposed to a pattern of questions?

Do you see an exception to this pattern or an element of it that stands out in an unusual way?

Step 3: Look for Complications

In this space, note the elements of the text that you find most surprising or confusing. These will work best if you have genuine questions about them that inspire your curiosity and make you want to learn more about the text.

Step 4: Draft a Thesis by Adding Complexity to Patterns

Use the space below to write preliminary ideas that might lead you to a thesis. Some of the most useful notes will include connections among ideas you have had in the three steps above. For instance, does one of your patterns have an interesting relationship to something that you said surprised you in Step 3?