

MURPHY BI-WEEKLY WRITING TIP

Reading Tip: Break Down Sentences

Dear Murphy Students:

This week's tip is a reading tip to help you understand dense (difficult) sentences, which we commonly see in a lot of our assigned readings.

Reading Tip: Break Down Dense Sentences

When you see a dense, difficult sentence you need to understand:

1. Rewrite the sentence on a separate document
2. Divide the sentence into parts. For example:

To illustrate, one historical origin of liberalism is the Wars of Religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries following the Reformation; these divisions opened a long controversy about the right of resistance and liberty of conscience, which eventually led to the formulation and often reluctant acceptance of some form of the principle of toleration.

This is a long and dense sentence – but we can divide it into parts:

To illustrate, /
one historical origin of liberalism /
is the Wars of Religion /
in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries /
following the Reformation; /
these divisions opened a long controversy /
about the right of resistance /
and liberty of conscience, /
which eventually led to the formulation /
and often reluctant acceptance /
of some form of the principle of toleration.

Then, we can find definitions of any words or phrases we don't know:

To illustrate,
one historical origin of **liberalism**
is the **Wars of Religion**
in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries
following **the Reformation**;
these divisions opened a long controversy
about **the right of resistance**
and **liberty of conscience**,
which eventually led to the formulation
and often reluctant acceptance
of some form of **the principle of toleration**.

From here, you can take notes about what you believe the sentence is saying or put it into your own words.

Note: This can take time, so it is best to use this strategy on sentences that you feel are very important, and not for every sentence of an entire article.

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1. Visit <https://murphy.mywconline.net/>
2. [Register for an account](#)
3. Log in and select the "Writing Support (All Campuses)" calendar.
4. Choose any of the available white rectangles.
5. Fill out the form with your assignment info.

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If you have questions or want to put this into practice, feel free to contact me! 😊