
Textbook Reading Skills

Things To Do Before Reading

- 1. Make specific times to read assignments** for each course. Mentally commit yourself to these time periods to read about these subjects. This makes concentration easier.
- 2. Recall what you already know** about the topic to be read.
- 3. Bring an open mind to what you read.** You do not have to agree in order to understand what an author says.
- 4. Divide a long chapter or assignment into pieces.** It is easier to concentrate if you focus on one piece at a time instead of trying to digest a large amount of material at once.
- 5. Take 1-2 minutes to skim through a chapter before reading** to see how it is structured and where the author is going to take you. Look at the title, introduction, subheadings, and summary.
- 6. Create questions out of titles, subheadings, italicized, or boldface words** and read to find the answers. Concentration and memory improve when there is a specific purpose for reading.

Things To Do While Reading

- 1. Read only when you are able to concentrate.** If you are unable to concentrate, do something else for five or ten minutes or study a different subject for a while.
- 2. As you read, take notes from the text.** Condense ideas using abbreviations, symbols, short phrases, and sketches. Avoid complete sentences. Use your own words to record ideas. This will aid in learning and in later recall on tests.
- 3. Make questions from main ideas in text and place it on a notecard.** Write the answer on the other side. This reduces forgetting what you just read and provides a fast and easy way to organize notes.
- 4. Change reading speed** according to the difficulty of the material. No single reading speed is effective for all types of reading material. If you take good notes, you should not have to re-read a chapter.

Things To Do After Reading

- 1. Think about what you read.** Discuss information with others, possibly in a study group.
- 2. Review note cards** in your spare time. This will help to keep concepts fresh in your mind.
- 3. Relate what you have read** to class lectures and notes. This helps to tie together what you have read with what you have learned from class.

