Reading a Textbook

Reading Tips

- Have a quiet place to read, good lighting, and a sturdy, comfortable chair.

- Determine where and when is the best time and place for you to concentrate on your reading.

- When you are reading a textbook, don’t just read the words. Concentrate, and focus on learning the material.

- Practice reading at different speeds. For example, in most cases, a science textbook should be read at a much slower speed than a novel.

- Read introductions and summaries carefully. They contain the most important information.

- If you are reading material that is particularly difficult or important, read it out loud—or take notes as you read.

- Most importantly, take the time to 1) SURVEY, 2) READ, and 3) REVIEW each assignment.

“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.”

Joseph Addison

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Review is the key to learning anything!
Reading a Textbook

- Does your mind ever wander when you read a textbook?
- Do you sometimes miss information that’s important?
- Do you often forget what you just read?

If you answered yes to any of the above, you may want to work on improving your reading skills.

To do well in your classes, you must be able to understand and remember the information you read.

To help you comprehend and retain more of what you read, go through the following three steps:

1) SURVEY   2) READ   3) REVIEW

It may take some practice to get the SURVEY, READ, REVIEW process down, but you’ll soon realize that this process doesn’t mean more work—it just means better grades!

SURVEY

Before you begin reading, take a few minutes to survey the entire assignment.

A quick overview
Surveying gives you a quick overview of what you’ll be reading. To survey an assignment, do the following:

- Read the title, section headings, and everything in bold and italic print.
- Look at the pictures, graphs, and charts.
- Read the introduction, summary, and review questions.

To survey the above, look at the picture, read the title, the section heading, and the highlighted text.

READ

To improve your reading comprehension, use all of the “learning tools” the author provides—and read with a purpose.

Learning tools
Textbook authors use these learning tools to make it easier for students to understand and learn the material they’re presenting.

- Headings and Subtitles – introduce main ideas
- Bold and Italic Print – highlight key terms
- Pictures/Graphs – help you visualize information
- Vocabulary Lists – introduce new terms
- Chapter Summaries – give you an overview
- Review Questions – test your comprehension

Read with a purpose
When your reading has a purpose, you have a reason to stay focused, and your comprehension improves. To give your reading purpose, turn each heading into a question. Then keep your question in mind as you read the section. When you’re finished reading, see if you can answer your question.

The Poison Dart Frog
We’ve turned the heading, “A deadly creature,” into a question.

After reading The Poison Dart Frog text, you should be able to answer this question.