



Reading Strategies

How to get the most out of college reading

College reading can be a daunting task. During the course of a semester students can have large amounts of required reading. The amount of reading coupled with the short amount of time to do it often creates a stressful situation. The following strategies can help you manage the reading while developing better critical thinking skills. There is a difference between remembering and understanding. The goal of college reading is to realize what material is important to read, remember and understand. Keep in mind that the following is an overall approach, not a rigid step-by-step guide. It is necessary to adapt these strategies to different types of academic reading.

Before You Read: PREVIEW

Textbooks

Survey: Before you begin reading the main text;

Note any headings, subheadings and content vocabulary. Look at the diagrams and charts. Skim the introduction. How does it relate to the course syllabus and previous lectures/classes? Plan a strategy; How many pages do you need to read? How much can you read in a sitting?

Question: Before you begin reading the main text;

Begin with the first section. Using who, what, when, where, or how, turn the heading into one or more questions. Write the questions out in the margins of your notebook.

Next: Skim the Introduction as this is your overview of what will be covered. It is your outline for the chapter.

Non-Textbooks

Survey: Before you begin reading the main text;

Review the info on the cover of the book, front and back. Note the chapter titles and forewords. How does it relate to the course syllabus and class. Why did the professor choose this book? Plan a strategy: How many pages do you need to read? How much can you read in a sitting?

Question: Before you begin reading the main text;

Build in your background knowledge. What can you relate to the book? Create questions using information from the chapter titles or information from class notes.

Next: Skim the introduction to get an overview of the book.

Try this for any type of reading: Read a different book or article on the same subject, to get a different perspective.

READ

After you read a paragraph or so, think about what is important to remember and understand. Note this information in the margin, and underline or asterisk the text. Only highlight the most important details. Refer to the questions you wrote in your notebook. Are you able to answer these questions? Build in your background knowledge. If the information is repetitive, skim it.

REVIEW

Once you have completed the 'chunk' of reading, review any important information or details and make sure to write it into your notebook. This is another step in using your notes as a comprehensive study tool.