

How to Make Good Use of Your Textbook

I. HELPFUL HINTS

The first thing you should do is **FAMILIARIZE** yourself with your textbook. This will entail flipping through the book, paying attention to the title, preface, author's note, chapter headings, and the book jacket. The purpose is to try to gain a global understanding of the book.

It is necessary to get ready and motivated to read. You should schedule time for each class to read your assignments. On the average, three hours of studying will be expected for each hour that you spend in class and much of this time will be spent reading. You may need more or less time depending on your comprehension for a particular class subject. Next, it is necessary to get excited about the reading. You will be ahead of most students if you do your reading before your class meets. If you wait to read until after the lecture, your instructor may be moving on to a new topic and you will be left behind.

It is more beneficial for a student to study at the time he or she is more alert, especially if it's a difficult class or if studying for a test. Reading requires attention, so you should study when you are alert for better retention. The area that you read in should be well lit, and you should sit in a chair with a good posture. Studying at a desk in a hard backed chair with your feet on the floor will result in optimal concentration for most individuals. You will be able to get twice as much reading done in half of the time when you are mentally ready and avoid studying some place that's too comfortable.

Some reading assignments consist of many chapters or many pages. It is beneficial to break the task down into smaller parts, and to complete it in several sessions during the course of a day or within a certain period of time.

Remember to have a positive attitude when you are reading. Focus on what you are learning and how it will help you meet the objectives of the class and to finish the semester. Try to enjoy your reading, so that you could read for fun and not just to meet an assignment.

Keep a good, contemporary dictionary with you when you read and use it. When you do not recognize or fully understand a term that your textbook uses, you may miss the full meaning of an entire passage.

II. THE SQ4R (SURVEY, QUESTION, READ, RECORD, RECITE, AND REVIEW) METHOD:

This reading method will allow you to obtain and retain information from your textbook quickly and accurately.

--There are six steps in this method: Survey, Question, Read, Record, Recite, and Review.

Survey (S)

This is a skimming technique for an entire chapter.

Steps:

- Read the title, introduction, and chapter objectives.
- Read the chapter headings and subheadings, look at visual aids, and read any small margin notes.
- Glance at terms in bold or italic letters, read the chapter study questions, and read the summary carefully.

Question (Q)

Write your own questions before you read, as they relate to subheadings and headings. Or if your professor has given you topics to consider before the next lecture, re-write these to jog your memory.

Read (R)

Read the paragraphs and pages slowly. Try not to jump ahead or let your mind wander. If you find it hard to concentrate, take a break from reading.

Record (R)

Repeat what you learned back to yourself or explain it to a friend. Say new words or definitions out loud.

Review (R)

Go back and re-skim. Review the chapter headings, your notes in the margins, your highlighted areas, and the chapter summary **MORE THAN ONCE**. The chapter summary is often worth writing again in your own words.

You can use the SQ4R method with your own variations, but the main message is that you just do not sit down, read a chapter through, and close the book.

HOW TO MAKE GOOD USE OF YOUR TEXTBOOKS

Purpose Of Textbooks (6)

1. SURVEY THE ENTIRE BOOK

- Pre-read

2. READ FOR MAIN IDEAS

- Be extra alert when looking for main idea

3. QUESTION YOURSELF AS YOU READ

- 4SQR

4. UNDERLINE/HIGHLIGHT AND MAKE MARGIN NOTES

- Use your study guide or instructors notes to help you identify important topics.

5. COORDINATE YOUR CLASS NOTES AND TEXTBOOK NOTES

- This will help you make summary of summary notes.

6. REVIEW CONSISTENTLY AND GET ADVICE FROM AN EXPERT

- Use all sources that are available.