College Reading Strategies

Reading college-level texts can be a challenge, so it is important to use a clear, multi-step approach. This 3-step process can help you make the most of your reading time.

### Pre-Reading

**Build the big picture and identify your purpose.**

- **Set up a productive environment.** Be aware of lighting, seating, noise, location, and time of day.
- **Get to know the text.** Skim the abstract, table of contents, chapter introduction/summary, subheadings, visuals, key terms, and/or related lecture notes.
- **Chunk the chapter into manageable sections.** If your focus starts to wonder, take a break. Decide if how the text is divided needs to be revised.
- **Define a purpose for reading.** State why this information is significant. Turn subheadings into questions. For example, the subheading “Establishing Controls” is in a chapter about conducting scientific experiments. You can turn that subheading into “Why is it important to establish controls in an experiment?” or “What are some of the methods/considerations for establishing controls?”

### During Reading

**Think about the text. Be active to stay focused.**

- **Paraphrase the text** or take notes while reading.
- **Answer** any embedded questions to check comprehension.
- **Use metacognitive markers** or your own symbol system to track your thinking.
- **Record your own thoughts** and main points about the text in the margins or notes. For example: What is the author’s argument or main point? What reasons/evidence support this argument? What patterns are in the text? Are there considerations the author missed? Is the conclusion logical?

### Examples of Metacognitive Markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Murky Concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key Terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Underline or Highlight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Mastered Concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⚪</td>
<td>Process or Cycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Post-Reading

**Check Comprehension.**

- **Answer** subheading, book, and/or homework questions.
- **Outline big ideas** and supporting evidence or reasoning in your own words.
- **Make a concept map** to focus on relationships and connections.
- **Log example problems** by writing clear explanations for each step while solving.
- **Combine and connect** your reading notes and lecture notes.

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