



Text Reading Tips



TIME SAVING TIPS FOR TEXT READING

WANT TO SAVE TIME READING TEXTS? TRY THIS PROCEDURE:

Quickly ACQUAINT YOURSELF with just enough of the assignment to learn:

1. how long it is
2. how hard or easy it is
3. how much you already know about it
4. what in general it is about and what the main ideas are

THEN

CONSIDER A MOMENT:

1. What particular study seems to pay off for you: how long can you read effectively? (10 minutes? 30?) What time of day or night is best for your study reading?
2. What does the specific purpose of the assignment seem to be? What do you need to learn in order to meet course or personal requirements?

NOW ... You have a basis on which you can DECIDE

1. to read or not to read. Are you able to commit yourself to reading RIGHT NOW, with the expectation of picking up important information and then retaining it?

IF you have been able to make the decision to read, then:

2. how long will you read for this session?
3. how many pages do you intend to cover in that amount of time?

READ ... with the expectation of self-testing immediately afterward. Demonstrate RECALL at once by Reciting, Restating, Marking, Outlining, Summarizing, or using whatever mode you like that transforms and reduces key information.

If you should become aware that the book is receiving only a small part of your attention or maybe none at all, don't persist in the same pattern.

1. Close the book and take a break.
2. Try a new time or place.
3. Break the amount to be read into sections small enough to be read and recalled within a short length of time.
4. SPEED UP! A relentlessly slow, unvarying rate increases your vulnerability to daydreaming. Set time goals for subsections; develop the habit of SELF-PACING, moving your head or index card down the page.
5. Expect to read once and once only. Re-reading specific pages is sometimes appropriate but aimless and habitual re-reading is expensive in terms of time and sustained attention.

COMPILED BY UT-Austin

P-R-R HOW TO READ YOUR TEXTBOOK MORE EFFICIENTLY

PREVIEW-READ-RECALL at first glance seems to be an intricate, time-consuming process. However, it gets easier and faster with practice, ensures thorough learning and also saves later “re-learning” when you review for exams. Give it a try!

PREVIEW	READ ACTIVELY	RECALL
<p>WHY? If you give your mind a general framework of main ideas and structure, you will be better to comprehend and retain the details you will read later.</p> <p>HOW?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Look quickly (10 minutes) over the following key parts of your textbook to see what it’s all about and how it’s organized: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title Front & Back cover Biographical Data Publication date Table of Contents Intro. or Preface Index Glossary Before you read each chapter, look over: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title Intro. Sub-headings 1st sentence of para. Diagrams, charts Conclusions Then answer the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is this mainly about? How is it organized? About how long will it take to read? 	<p>WHY? Being an active reader will involve you in understanding the material, combat boredom, and will increase retention.</p> <p>HOW?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Set realistic time goals and number of pages to be read. Divide the chapter into small (1/2 page? Column?) sections rather than try to read the whole chapter non-stop. Ask yourself a question before each paragraph or section, then seek its answer. This will give you a definite purpose for your reading. Try inverting the sub-heading or first sentence into a question form, using “who”, “what”, “when”, or “how” if necessary. Take breaks when you feel unable to stay with the material due to day-dreaming, drowsiness, boredom, hunger, etc. After a short break, you can return to your reading with more energy and alertness. 	<p>WHY? Research shows that 40-50% of the material we read is forgotten very shortly (about 15 minutes) after we read it. Immediate recall is an essential first step toward continued retention of the material.</p> <p>HOW? After reading each small section of material, choose one (or more) of the following methods:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Recall mentally or recite orally the highlights of what you have read. Ask yourself questions (maybe the same ones you used before you read the section) and answer them in your own words. Underline and make marginal notes of the key words and phrases in the section. Underlining after you read is the best way to decide what’s the most important information to remember. Make separate notes or outlines of what you have read. This technique often works for more technical material which you need to put into your own words. Recall with a friend. What you don’t recall, they might.

Mark Your Books

It's important because...

You COMPREHEND better:

- you **decide** what's important, how ideas are related ... a process which teaches you to read analytically.
- you **test** your understanding by putting ideas into your own words.
- you **concentrate** better because you read actively rather than passively.

WHY? you create an effective REVIEW tool:

- use markings to trigger **recall**: before a test, glance at your notes to see how much you can remember.

WARNING

Don't use underlining as an escape tactic to delay the inevitable work of learning. If you can't concentrate, take a break. Then come back ready to attend.

WHEN? Annotate your book AFTER you have read part of it. Only after reading can you decide what's important. Mark after reading a few paragraphs if the materials is dense with detail you must know, or after a section or chapter, as you judge best.

HOW? **ACTIVELY:** Use your margins to summarize key ideas in a few words, **outline** a passage, write **comments** to yourself. Make connections with lectures, other readings ... get involved!

ECONOMICALLY: Underline as little as possible. Make your markings concise indexes to content. Underline key **phrases** (subjects, verbs, etc.), and occasionally whole sentences if needed. As a guide, ask yourself, "What will this page look like a month from now when I'm reviewing it for a test?"

CONSISTENTLY: Be sure that you **locate all** significant **ideas**, details, etc. Enumerating them helps to remember. Use various marks -- brackets, circles, etc. -- consistently (for example, circle all new terms).

FOR EXAMPLE:

THE STAGNATION OF CENTRAL AFRICA

Almost until the 20th century the heart of the African continent, a large region of tropical rain forest, was practically cut off from communication with outside areas and did not share the progress of other regions in Africa which maintained contact with the world. As a result, central Africa remained stagnant for centuries with weak, tribal forms of government and a population of fewer than two persons per square mile.

The African coast was a formidable barrier to penetration of central Africa by Europeans. It has few deep-water harbors -- fewer than any other large continent -- and approaches to the coast are endangered by pounding surfs and long sand bars. Transportation inland from the coast is difficult. Rivers are blocked in many places by rapids, waterfalls, and sand bars. Even the great Congo River, 3000 miles long, is navigable by ocean vessels for only 95 miles.

The dense tropical rain forest formed another barrier. Larger than western Europe, its very size made communication and travel within the area difficult. Many roads were overgrown by vegetation or washed out during the rainy season.

On the north, central Africa is bordered by grasslands, and by the huge Sahara. This desert is about equal in size to the United States. It has created, in effect, two Africas -- North Africa and the sub-Saharan Africa.

On the south, central Africa is also bordered by grasslands and desert. Vast tracts of rolling grasslands, plateaus, and the great Kalahari Desert separate central Africa from Southern Africa.

One of the most effective obstacles to European communication with central Africa was disease. The hot, wet climate sapped the strength of Europeans and reduced their resistance to disease. Central Africa became known as the "white man's grave." The tropical vegetation was a breeding ground for insects carrying germs of malaria, yellow fever, and other diseases.

The pattern of stagnation in central Africa has been changed gradually during the past half century. The use of (1) DDT sprays, antibiotics, and vaccines has reduced disease. Beginning in 1898, (2) railroads were built, and all-weather motor roads were constructed during the 1930's. Air service, (3) telephones, and radio networks have speeded the emergence of central Africa from its long period of isolation.

-- Adapted from *Living World History*, by Wallhank and Schrier. Scott, Foresman, 1964

Note:

- All significant ideas are noted.
- Margins are used for summaries, outlines, and comments.
- Economical marking enables quick review.
- Different marks for different purposes.