Reading A Textbook

Reading a textbook can be labor intensive and time consuming. We have split the reading process into two different parts to help maximize time and retention of the material. Keep in mind, that everyone is different, so make sure to customize this method to work for you and your different classes.

Step 1: Before Class

Before you go to class, read the assigned chapters and follow these three steps:

1. **Preview the chapter:** Flip through the pages to see what the chapter’s all about. Look at the headings, subheadings, key words, figures, and tables.

2. **Scan the chapter:** After you’ve flipped through, go back to the beginning and scan over the entire chapter. *Actually read the first and last sentence of each paragraph*, but other than that, just visually scan the words—don’t worry about comprehension yet.

3. **Pause and focus on key components:** Now, you’ll go back to the beginning and scan again, but this time, you’ll want to *stop and actually read the following parts*:
   - Introduction paragraph
   - First section after each heading/subheading
   - Bold, italic, or underlined words
   - Figures/pictures that accompany text
   - Review/Summary—read twice
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Step 2: After Class

Go back to your book and use the following strategies:

**Read entire sections that didn’t make sense during lecture:** If there were parts of class in which you felt lost or confused, that means that the before class method wasn’t able to provide you with enough information for comprehension or retention—that’s ok! Go back and read those entire sections carefully to make sure you understand them fully.

**Use active reading techniques:** When you’re reading those sections use active reading techniques such as outlining or summarizing the paragraph, highlighting or underlining, and thinking of personal examples.

**Fill in gaps:** If, during the lecture, there were parts that you didn’t quite understand, you’ll want to go back to the textbook and make sure you review that information to fill in those gaps in knowledge.

**Formulate questions.** As you read, continue to jot down questions. One of the best ways students learn is by creating questions and finding out the answers. “How does this relate to the previous chapter?” or “What supporting information does this argument have?” are examples of questions you could ask yourself.

For more information, check out our study skills workshops at aae.boisestate.edu/workshops/