

How to Study

Back on Track



Reading and Studying Textbooks:

As soon as you buy your textbook for a class, give yourself a head start before going to class. Read the Table of Contents, prefaces, introduction, and any other up-front material in the book. Leaf through the book and see what it contains. Read the captions, read chapter titles, and go to the back of the book to see if there is a glossary, an index, answers to quizzes given throughout the text, etc. Get familiar with your book. Treat it like a tool you want to use with proficiency.

When you are ready to begin reading a chapter, don't just plunge into your reading. Here is a sure-fire way to get the most out of your reading:

First, preview the chapter. Look at headings, subheadings, topic sentences, **boldfaced** and *italicized* words, pictures, diagrams, graphs, summaries, and review questions at the end.

Second, ask yourself questions about the subheadings.

Third, read a section of the chapter (one subheading at a time). Put the book down and ask yourself what you just read. Did you understand what it was about? Could you answer questions about it? Could you explain it to someone else? Continue reading and stopping to think about what you just read. Ask yourself questions.

Fourth, don't skip any part of the chapter. Read the sidelines, the captions under photos, definitions, and any additional information the author has included. It's all there to help you learn.

Fifth, don't be afraid to mark your text – use different colored highlighters for particularly important parts, but don't defeat the purpose of highlighting by overdoing it.

Sixth, outline the chapter: When you have read the chapter through, go back and take notes. Define terms, draw diagrams, and explain things in your own words. Make up memory tricks to help you remember new terms. For example, if you are studying the part of the brain called the "hippocampus" you may use a memory trick of association, picturing a "hippo" with a good memory, since the hippocampus deals with memory formation.

Seventh, draw arrows or other symbols to direct you to important details or definitions. If a word appears that you do not know, look it up and write the definition in the margin. Underline key points.