



Reading for your classes will take time and energy. Most classes you will have to read outside of the lecture. Sometimes your professor will not lecture on all of the parts of a particular topic however, you will be expected to know the material for the exam/quiz. The following information provides you with strategies on how to improve your reading comprehension. These strategies may take time to master and reading comprehension may not become easy immediately.

Before Reading

1. Make a schedule for when you plan to read each week/day. (For all classes).
 - a. Break your reading up into 45 minutes to 1 hour reading study sessions. Take a 5-15 minute break and then continue reading or switch topics/subjects and return to the reading later.
 - b. Time yourself reading. See how many pages you can read per hour. This will help you create an estimate for how long it takes you to read and you can better plan your schedule. Note: Some subjects/topics may take longer for you to read than others.
2. Choose a location to read with minimal distractions. (Try to be consistent if you can.)
3. Try to read when you are focused and can put your energy towards the reading. Try not to read when you are tired or distracted. Reading takes good time and energy.
4. Don't place your reading assignments at the bottom of your to do list. In many classes, the reading is critical and you will be tested on material you read in the text that won't be presented to you in lecture.
5. Read each day. If you fall behind and have to catch up on reading, you will find yourself skimming and missing a lot of important information.
6. Have an extra piece of paper near you before you start reading. If something comes to mind while you read, that is off topic that you need to address later, write it down so you are able to focus and continue reading.
7. If you are able, place your phone on silent or do not disturb. (It takes an average of about 25 minutes to return to the original task after an interruption, according to Gloria Mark, who studies digital distraction at the University of California, Irvine.)
8. Explanatory Questioning
 - a. Ask yourself why questions before, during, & after reading.
 - b. Think about what the author wants you to believe/understand. Predict the author's thoughts.
 - c. Decides whether the author's views are worthy of agreement.
 - d. Examples of other questions to ask: "What do I already know about this topic?" "What do I want to learn?"
 - e. Asking questions creates a purpose for the reading. When you have a purpose, your brain knows the goal you are working towards and it will also focus your attention.
9. Preview the Chapter first.
 - a. Read the titles, bold words, look at pictures, read the summary/conclusion, and look at the questions if the book provides them. This will help you get an idea of what the reading will be about and what you should be pulling from the reading. It will prep your brain for what is to come.



During Reading

1. "Never read a book without a pen in your hand." ~ Benjamin Franklin
 - a. Make sure you have a highlighter, a pen/pencil, and paper so you can interact with the text as you read. If you highlight, be selective in what you highlight. Avoid highlighting more than 20% of your reading.
 - b. If able, write in the book, it can be helpful for referencing later.
2. Explanatory Questioning
 - a. Asking questions about what you read requires your careful examination of the writer's claims, as well as the use and quality of the writer's supporting evidence.
 - b. Turn headings into What, How, and Why questions.
 - c. As you interpret the text, you inevitably draw upon your own experiences, as well as your knowledge of other texts. However, the basis of your analysis must be rooted in the text itself.
 - d. Examples: "What am I learning?", "Where am I confused?"
3. If you are struggling to grasp an idea, read it out loud. You generally read slower when you read out loud and you tend to retain things better this way because you're engaging multiple senses (hearing and seeing). Note: You may not want to read everything out loud as you start to focus more on lip movements than the actual meaning. This also means try to avoid lip movement when reading to yourself.
4. Note Taking While Reading
 - a. Write down key terms and then the definitions in your own words.
 - b. Keep your reading notes with the lecture notes that correspond. If you do this, when you are tested on the materials, all of that particular topic will be together.
 - c. Read a whole section before you stop to highlight or take a note. Don't just stop right when you see something worth noting. Keep reading to get the big picture and then take notes in your own words. Then re-read your notes to make sure it makes sense.
5. Write the questions down that come up in the text when you read. These questions may be answered as you read further or you can take these questions to lecture, your professor's office hours, ask classmates, or a tutoring center.



After Reading

1. Reward yourself after reading!
2. Explanatory Questioning
 - a. Example questions to ask yourself: “What did I learn?”, “Did I learn what I wanted?”, “What do I still need/want to know?”
 - b. Did you answer all of the questions you asked in pre-reading/during reading?
3. Do you have questions that you need to ask in lecture, during your professor’s office hours, or to a classmate, or a tutoring center appointment?
4. Reading once is often not enough for mastering the topic. You will need to go back to your reading and recite important parts and/or review your reading notes. This will help you place the knowledge into your long-term memory.
5. Can you summarize main topics? Talk to yourself or to someone else about what you read. Studies show that you can profitably devote up to 80% of your study time to active reciting. When you try to explain it to another person, or to yourself, it will help you understand the material more OR you will know if you need to re-read the material.
6. Reviewing within 24 hours moves information from short-term to long-term memory. Spend 15 minutes looking over your notes and reciting the main points again.
7. Do you need to re-write your notes you took during reading? Do you want to create flash cards?
8. Compare your reading notes to others/study group. You may find it will help you and the other people.

Resources:

- <https://www.esc.edu/online-writing-center/resources/critical-reading-writing/general-reading/interpreting-texts-asking-questions/>
- <https://www.brookhavencollege.edu/aboutbhc/readingtheappforlife/Documents/21-tips-for-effective-textbook-reading-final.pdf>
- <http://www.studyqs.net/preread.htm>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqbG5lo5Usg>