

EFFECTIVE READING STRATEGIES

Required reading material is an important aspect of your course. Reading material can present new information not covered in your lectures, it can present complementary information, or it can overlap with your lecture material. Choose your reading approach wisely. It is important to come prepared to lecture with reading material completed and some professors will expect that you have. When choosing a reading strategy you want to keep in mind your learning style as well as the strategy that appropriate fits with the reading task. Time management will also play a crucial role in developing your reading strategy.

INITIAL STEPS

1. Get to know your text: what is the background of your text? Evaluate the context of the text and how it is organized.
2. Set reading goal: manage your time! Identify what it is you need to read, how you will accomplish that task, and how long it will take.

SQ3R SYSTEM FOR READING TEXTS

The SQ3R system is a five-step process that will allow you to read more efficiently and effectively, enhancing learning and making reading materials more meaningful.

SURVEY

Take a few minutes to survey the text. Doing so will allow you to gain background knowledge about your text and prepare yourself for what's to come.

- Identify titles, subheadings, themes, and important questions that will help you to navigate, structure, and visualize your reading.
- Ask specific questions about your reading and take note of any questions at the end of the chapter or reading. Plan to answer these questions as you read through the text.
- Chapter titles will give you an understanding about the chapter and what's to come, and subheadings will help you to further understand the topics covered in your text in relation to the overall subject matter.
- Identify what is being emphasized in the introduction and summary: what can you expect the chapter/article to focus on?
- Think of everything you already know about the topic. What background knowledge do you have? How does the information fit into the context of the course or the previous class?
- Finally, identify what is being illustrated in pictures, figures, and tables.

QUESTION

Asking questions about your reading material will help you to gain a deeper understanding of the content and will be useful when studying and completing assignments and tests. Formulate questions before reading or while you read. Write your question in the margins of the reading or on a sticky note and stick to the page. In addition to asking specific questions about the content, ask yourself:

- What questions will the chapter answer or be addressing?
- What is the chapter topic?

ACADEMIC

- What major points are being addressed?
- Are any significant terms defined?
- What information is missing?

READ AND REFLECT

Reading involves not only remembering the content and the material; you also want to be able to understand and apply the knowledge and ideas on your assignments and tests. Reading and reflecting work hand in hand and there are a number of strategies you can use to get more out of your reading.

- Apply strategies that will allow you to construct meaning out of words, connecting key concepts and ideas and recognizing your understanding of the content.
- Read the subheadings, pick up clues from text layouts (bold, italics), seek main ideas, paraphrase information, visualize information, and use graphic organizers (graphs and diagrams) to process the information.
- When reading, look for the answer to each question you have and be aware that new questions may be suggested by the reading.
- Highlight important information.
- Write in the margins to clarify or highlight important points.
- Ask yourself what the content means to you. How does it connect to your own life and experiences? What might you do with the information?
- While reading, think of possible exam questions and how you might be tested on the material.

RECORD

Recording important information from your reading material help both your memory and your review notes. By actively engaging with your material you are allowing the information to travel into your long-term memory. There are various ways to record information:

- Underlining and highlighting key points and main ideas will be useful for future review; however, avoid the habit of underlining and highlighting entire paragraphs. Use brackets, circles, numbers, and asterisks to identify key information.
- Make brief notes and paraphrase key concepts in the margins of your text or on a sticky note.
- Make summary notes and organize them under the subheadings from your text.

REVIEW

- After reading the entire assignment, reviewing helps to solidify the information.
- Try to answer all questions on each subject heading
- Review reading notes
- Make a note of which headings need extra study

REFERENCES

Fleet, J., GoodChild, F., & Zajchowski, R. (2006). *Learning for success: Effective strategies for students* (4th ed.). Nelson Education Limited.