

Ten Tips for Reading College Textbooks

Reading a text book can sometimes be overwhelming.

Try using this Preview, Read, Review and Verify Approach.

1. **Read the chapter before the corresponding class.** This will help you build background on the topic, learn the basic organizational structure of the material, and take better lecture notes and participate more meaningfully in small group activities.
2. **Divide the chapter into readable chunks.** A 50-page chapter is probably best read in five chunks of around ten pages each. Dividing the chapter into smaller reading segments increases your comprehension and decreases the time you spend reading the chapter.
3. **Be specific about when and where you will do your reading assignment.** Put it on your “To Do” list and choose times when you are most alert, usually during daylight or early evening hours. Select a location that is quiet, free of distractions, and well lighted (such as the library). A routine of time and place aids in concentration.
4. **Space your reading.** Spread the ten-page chunks out over one or two days. Take breaks between sections or read one chunk in the morning, another in the evening, and the third chunk the next day.
5. **“Preview” the chapter before you read.** Read the title, introduction, and headings, read the “what will you know?”, glance at charts and pictures, and read the summary. A two-to-five-minute preview reduces the total time you spend reading and increases your comprehension.
6. **“Read”--Turn chapter headings into questions before reading.** This will give you a specific purpose for your reading, resulting in better comprehension. Read the suggested “Read and Response Questions” by reading to answer the question, your focus will be greatly improved.
7. **“Review” Take notes or highlight the text as you read.** Highlight, underline, or take notes at the end of each section. Wait until you finish reading the paragraph or small section before you begin to mark your text.
8. **“Verify”--Monitor your comprehension.** Stop to check your understanding of the material at regular intervals. If the material is easy to understand, you may be able to wait until the end of each main division of the chapter to summarize what you have learned. If the text is difficult, you may need to pause at the end of each paragraph.
9. **ASAP** complete the reading response.