

Get More Out of Reading (In Less Time)

1) **Pre-Read: (2-10 minutes, depending on length and importance of text)**

Think about the context and function of the assignment before you read.

Decide on your purpose in this reading. Sample questions might include: (pick 2)

- Why am I being asked to read this? What is the purpose of the assignment?
- How does this assignment connect to the rest of what we have been doing? (Is it core material, or just an example of something?)
- What am I supposed to be getting out of this? (Ideas, background information, procedures, overview?)
- What level of detail am I going to need to retain? (Do I just need to get the big picture, should I focus on specific concepts, or do I need to know the whole thing in detail?)
- **Jot down your answers to remind you as you read.**

Think about what you already know about the text and the context in which it was written, or is used.

Sample questions might include:

- Who wrote it? Why is this person important?
- When was it written? What is happening in that place at that time?

Figure out what is in the book, how it is arranged, and where the important stuff is. Sample strategies include:

- Scan TOC (Table of Contents).
- Scan chapters and headings
- Look carefully at pictures and graphs.
- Read the intro and conclusion.
- Scan introductions and conclusions of each section.

Think about what you know now. You may not need to read more.

2) **Critical Reading:**

- Use a 3 x 5 index card to regulate reading speed; write your purpose on it
- 2 Highlighters and Pen reading system
 - First highlighter is for key points and things you want to remember. (Be judicious—only highlight 1-2 items per page at the most.)
 - Second highlighter is for things you don't understand, questions, and places you disagree.
 - Pen is to write comments in the text. (Writing comments keeps your learning active and helps you remember the content you read.)
- If you read this way, you will always have questions and comments on the reading for class discussion and your teacher will think you are a conscientious, engaged student.

3) **Post-Reading: (10 minutes spread over 2 days)**

- Don't immediately switch gears when you finish reading. (Switching gears immediately is the surest way to erase everything you just read from your short-term memory.) You will process better and remember more if you take a few minutes to reflect on what you read.
- Reflect on your pre-reading (how it relates to course goals).
- Write a summary. 3-5 sentences in 3-5 minutes. Some sample questions (choose 1-3):
 - What is this writer's purpose? Who is the audience?
 - What are the main points/topics covered?
 - What 3 things do I need to remember about this material?
 - What reasons and evidence support these main points?
 - How is it relevant to this course? Context.
 - What am I supposed to learn from this?
 - How and how strongly do I react to this? Why?
 - What do I think is wrong/right? Why? What reasons do I have for my beliefs?
- **Review within 24 hours** to process it again—this helps move the material from short-term to long-term memory.