

How to Study Your Textbook More Efficiently

PREVIEW-READ-RECALL at first glance seems to be a complicated and time-consuming process. However, it gets easier and faster with practice and it works. Give it a try!

PREVIEW (Before)

Why? If you give your mind a framework of structure and main ideas, you will be better able to comprehend and retain the details you will read later.

How? Look quickly (10 minutes) over those key parts of your textbook to see what it's all about and how it's organized:

- Title
- Front and back information
- Author's biographical data
- Publication date
- Table of Contents
- Index
- Glossary
- Any diagrams, charts, etc.

Before you read each chapter:

1. Write an outline of the chapter's main headings and subheadings.
2. Read the introductory information, the summary and any background material.
3. Observe all illustrations.

After previewing your textbook or chapter, you should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What is this mainly about?
2. How is it organized?
3. How difficult is it?
4. About how long will it take to learn?

READ ACTIVELY (During)

Why? Being an active reader will involve you in understanding the material, build concentration, and will improve retention of what you study.

How?

1. Divide your chapter into short (1 to 3 page) study sections instead of reading through the whole chapter non-stop.
2. Use the headings and sub-headings to set your purpose for each chunk of reading.
3. Read through the small section to understand the ideas.
4. Pay special attention to understanding the new vocabulary.
5. Re-read to learn.
 - a. Use a pencil to mark the book (write in margins, star, number underline).
 - b. Select the main points to study.
 - c. Take notes on a study sheet also for best results.
6. Note how the ideas relate to:
 - a. The rest of the chapter
 - b. The other chapters
 - c. The lecture
7. Anticipate what might be asked on the test.

RECALL/REFLECT (After)

Why? Research shows that 40-50% of the material is forgotten about 15 minutes after we read it. Immediate recall is an essential first step toward keeping the material in the memory.

How?

1. Recall the main idea of what you have studied.

2. Cover your notes and ask yourself questions based on
 - a. The headings and sub-headings in the book.
 - b. Key words written in the margins of the book or your study sheet.
3. Answer the questions in your own words. Say them out loud if possible.
(Recitation)
4. Check your answers and re-study if necessary.
5. Move on to the next study section and repeat the Preview-Read
Actively-Recall/Reflect process.
6. Keep moving—don't slow down too much.
7. After studying several sections quickly review the previous sections to pull
the chapter ideas together.
8. Review all sections reciting the major concepts
 - a. Before next study session
 - b. Before next week
 - c. Before test
9. Adapt the study system to yourself and your assignments.