

# READING ASSIGNMENTS:

## A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR GETTING STARTED

Reading Assignments are frequently assigned as homework, but how often is it that just reading through means that we can easily pick up the material? There are ways to mentally get our brains organized and ready for the reading both before and as we go to make sure that that reading session is most effective:

1. **FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF** with the organization and layout of each of your textbooks: preview the table of contents, chapter titles and headings, appendices, pictures, graphs/charts, and the index.
2. **AVERAGE PERSONAL SPEED.** Figure out how long it takes you, on average, to read a certain number of pages within the textbook. Many textbooks vary in language difficulty and format, so make sure you figure it out for each textbook. Take note of the average length of time for each assigned reading and give yourself a planned amount of study time each week to complete the reading assignment.
3. **PREPARE FOR NEW VOCABULARY.** Always read with a dictionary or glossary on hand. Many textbooks will **bold** or *italicize* new terms, but sometimes there are words you may not know regardless. If you find a word you do not know, look it

up. Many times words that we don't know can make it difficult to understand overall concepts even if the term is not a bolded vocabulary word.

4. **COMPARE TO THE LECTURE.** Figure out whether lectures are wholly or partly based on reading materials or contain different information. This will help you figure out whether you should be combining your notes or creating new notes to organize the new concepts you learn in the textbook. Organizing your notes is always important when learning something new.



5. **STUDY GROUPS** can be a huge help in learning and understanding reading material. When you work in a study group, it allows you the opportunity to review and discuss the material with others. One of the fastest ways to learn material is by teaching it to others, so working together is an excellent way to work through confusing reading assignments.