

Read Faster, Read Smarter

Student Success Workshop
Sauk Valley Community College

What type of reader are you?

Are you a passive reader who likes to use a highlighter?

RESULT - Reading passively delays learning because you may have the tendency to become lazy and highlight most of your reading. Ask yourself this question, “did I remember most of the material I highlighted?”

Are you reading for hours at a time just to get it done?

RESULT: You may become a lazy reader and you do not really focus your attention on the critical points. In other words, you may have the tendency to “zone out.”

Become an “Active” Reader

- The main goal of your reading assignments is to connect ideas on the page to what you already know. Once you have formed a connection to the information, you will remember the information.
- When you use active reading strategies, you focus your attention on comprehension or attaching meaning and significance to the information that you are reading.

Become an “Active Reader”

First, read the title of the chapter or selection carefully.

- Determine what clues it gives you as to what the selection is about.
- Watch for key words like "causes," "results," "effects," etc., and do not overlook signal words such as those suggesting controversy (e.g. "versus," "pros and cons"), which indicate that the author is planning to present both sides of an argument.

Become an “Active Reader”

Look carefully at the headings and other organizational clues.

- Section headings clue you in to the main points that the author wants you to learn.
- If you concentrate on the details and ignore the main ideas, you will have much more difficulty retaining the information you read.

Become an “Active Reader”

Remember that authors of college textbooks want you to recognize the important concepts by using the following:

- Major headings and subheadings to convey major points.
- Italicized words and phrases so that crucial new terms and definitions will stand out.
- Lists of points set off by numbers or paragraphs that begin with the phrases such as "The three most important factors . . . " etc.
- Redundancy - Restating facts and ideas to gain exposure to the ideas.

How to Read Faster

- Reduce the need to stop and go back while reading by taking in more words at each stop
- Use a pen or your finger to guide your eyes to move faster along the page
- Practice stopping only twice per line and keep forcing your eyes to move forward
- Continue to practice reading faster
- Test yourself at the end of the reading by either writing or verbalizing what you read

Vary Your Reading Rate

- To "get the gist," read very rapidly.
- To understand general ideas, read fairly rapidly.
- To get and retain detailed facts, read at a moderate rate.
- To locate specific information, skim or scan at a rapid rate.
- To determine value of material, skim at a very rapid rate.
- To pre-read or post-read, scan at a fairly rapid rate.
- To read for enjoyment, read rapidly or slowly, depending on what you want.
- To build general background, read rapidly.

Increase Your Understanding

- Do not skip words you do not know, look up the definitions
- Read a variety of information to practice your skills
- Use new words in your everyday vocabulary

Learn to Skim Material

Preview material first in order to:

- Get an idea of what the reading is about to answer questions
- Learn the main concepts in a short time
- Refresh your memory if you have read the material before

Gather Information While You Read

While reading seek out information:

- What is the main idea, how is it supported, what conclusions does the author state?
- Is the material opinion or fact, does it raise further questions, are the conclusions logical?
- What did you gain from this reading, can you summarize what was read?

Use Your Textbook

Use the resources in the front of your textbook:

- Consider the title - This is often a significant statement about the book's "slant".
- Use the table of contents as an outline for the book and the class.
- Glance over any preface or foreword to get more information on what the book and ultimately the class will entail.

Use Your Textbook

Use the resources in the back of your textbook:

- *Glossary* lists words and definitions (in alphabetical order) used in the textbook.
- *Subject Index* lists the various topics found in the book.
- *Name Index* lists the people mentioned in the book.
- An *Appendix* lists supplements information listed in the chapters of the book.

Use Your Textbook

Interact with your book as you read by:

- Take notes on what you are reading.
- Write down vocabulary words.
- Write down your personal reactions or questions pertaining to the reading.
- Summarizing the reading by writing down the main topics or themes and why these are so important to what you are learning.

Thank you for attending!

Information retrieved from:

- <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/reading.html>
- *How to Improve Your Reading Skills* – Channing Bete