

TEN TIPS FOR READING A TEXTBOOK

1. Get it right away.

Don't put off buying the textbook until the day before your first test! Cramming at the last moment is difficult, particularly in science courses! (Money problems? See about student loans!)

2. Plan a reading schedule and stick to it.

Spreading out your reading time over the course of the term will make your actual reading more productive. Plan to read one chapter a night, for example, and you'll find you have less work to do for tests and exams.

3. Survey the book.

Glance over the textbook's chapter headings, subtitles, and charts or graphs which sum up and clarify main points before you start a complete reading.

4. Mark it up.

Simply reading the text will not help you really absorb the information it provides. Underline or highlighter important facts, figures and phrases, and write your own comments and questions in the margins.

5. Take notes

Yes, you took notes from class lectures. Now, take notes from the textbook itself. It means a bit more homework, but you'll find it pays off come exam time!

6. Read and reread.

Does this sound repetitive to you? Well, it is, and that's the whole point! Repetition is one of the most useful--and least used--ways to get the most out of your text. Read the text thoroughly and actively (highlight and take notes) and then skim read the text several times to get an overall sense of the main ideas without having to read every single line again.

7. Ask it questions.

Think of questions you have for the text and read it to answer those questions. This kind of interactive approach will make your reading more effective.

8. Ask your teacher questions.

If your questions about certain concepts and theories aren't answered to your satisfaction by the textbook, ask your teacher in class or during her office hours.

9. Review orally.

After you have read a section or chapter of your textbook, close the book and try to describe out loud the main ideas you have learned. Talking about ideas helps you to understand and remember them.

10. Pay special attention to introductions and conclusions.

These sections of textbooks are really important, because they highlight important ideas and facts. Some textbooks present these sections in point form for extra clarity.