Access
Study Skills Tip of the Week

How Do You Prepare To Read An Assigned Chapter?

Prepare to read an assigned chapter by first surveying or previewing it. By taking a few minutes to look over an assigned chapter, you force your mind to settle down and concentrate on the content you are going to be learning. You find things to focus on and give meaning to your reading.

1. Read the title of the chapter carefully. Think about what it means. Ask yourself what you may already know about the subject. Turn the title into a question that can serve as a reading guide, a purpose for reading. For instance, if the title of a chapter is “Newton’s Laws of Motion,” turn it into these questions: What are Newton’s laws of motion? Who was Newton? What is important about Newton’s laws? Then, do the same thing with any chapter headings and subheadings. Read looking for answers to your question.

2. Many textbook chapters provide an overview or list of objectives at the beginning. Some provide a list of objectives for you to accomplish while reading and some include a summary of the chapter’s contents at the end. Look for these and read them carefully. Reading an overview or summary before you read the entire chapter gives you the key points to look for and helps focus your mind on the subject.

3. Look for any reading aids the author has supplied, such as pictures, cartoons, graphs, tables, and charts. Read their captions. These may not make total sense when you are previewing, but they make a connection with the chapter content. Notice boldfaced or italicized words. They are usually key words that you will need to learn when you read the chapter in detail.
4. **LOOK FOR ANY QUESTIONS AT THE END OF THE CHAPTER.** Think about them as you read, looking for answers when you start reading carefully. Like objectives or a summary, reading the questions gives you an idea of what to focus your attention on while reading. Many instructors base their class tests on the objectives and questions in a chapter.

5. **NOW BEGIN READING THE CHAPTER.** You will find that you have better concentration and focus because you have things to search for while reading. NEVER read difficult material more than 30 minutes at a time. Give yourself a 5 minutes break every 30 minutes. You will read more efficiently and comprehend more in short spurts than in long periods. Be active while reading. Take notes, write in margins, or highlight. Some students find that reading out loud helps them remember material.

Taken from: *Making the Grade*, W. Royce Adams

For more information see:

**ACCESS A+ Program**  
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