

1. Choose a place to read where there will be a minimum of distractions.
2. Try to sit in the same place each time you read your textbook.
3. Read at peak periods of attention, rather than when you are tired or distracted.
4. Do not read your most difficult textbook at the end of a study session. Push yourself to read it first or second.
5. Make a schedule for all your reading; take a few moments to plan your study and reading time for all your classes.
6. Reward yourself after reading.
7. Get interested in the textbook by
 - trying to predict the author's thoughts
 - trying to connect the chapter with previous chapters
 - trying to connect what you are reading with what you've learned in other courses, or with your own observations or experiences.- reading critically
 - asking questions while you read. For example . . .

if you're reading a psychology chapter entitled "States of Consciousness" . . .

"You have probably heard stories of people under hypnosis being able to recall details of a crime they witnessed, such as remembering a license plate number. Because hypnosis has been reported to improve memory, it has been used in police investigations."

. . . you might ask these questions:

How does someone get hypnotized?

Is hypnosis reliable?

If hypnosis is used in police investigations, can something recalled under hypnosis be used in court?

Have such recollections ever swayed the outcomes of a court case?

8. Combine mental and physical activities. For example, write notes and underline key points in your textbook while reading. Also, consider mapping the reading.
9. Vary your activities. Alternate textbook reading, for example, with accounting problems or a chemistry lab report.
10. Keep a distractions list nearby. Jot down items that distract you while you're reading that you need to remember later on (such as something you need to buy, or a reminder to make an appointment).
11. Keep a tally (// //) of how often your mind wanders while you're reading.
12. Prop up your textbook, so your angle of vision is approximately 90°.
13. Avoid moving your lips as you read.
14. Avoid moving your finger along the lines as you read.
15. Avoid moving your head from left to right as you read.
16. Avoid distracting physical activities such as tapping your foot or chewing gum while reading.
17. As you read, think of the writer(s) who wrote the textbook. Remember that there is a real person behind the print. Consider why and how that person wrote what you're reading. Consider how that author chose to organize the material.

18. Treat reading as only the first step in the reading process. One reading is seldom enough. For mastery, you'll also need to re-read, review, write summaries, and/or discuss the material with others.
19. Think of reading as communication and thinking.
20. Establish a purpose for reading each chapter and each section, by turning the headings into questions.

Try to begin your questions with "WHAT," "HOW," and "WHY," words that lead to more detailed responses. Searching for the answers while you read will result in more active reading.

For the biology heading "Regulation of Bile Release," ask "How is bile release regulated?" Then read to find the answer. For the history heading "Dawn of the Atomic Age," begin with the question "When did the Atomic Age begin?" but continue with questions such as "How did the Atomic Age develop?" and "How did the Atomic Age alter life in the 20th century?" The active thinking needed to write such questions will expand your understanding of the material.

Also, connect subheadings to broader headings. This sociology heading "Problems of the Elderly" is followed by the subheading "Housing and Health Care." Connect them by asking "Why is housing a problem for the elderly?" or "How can health care be improved for the elderly?" Don't these sound like test questions? *

21. Use the "S-Q-3R" method, but add a "W" step. "S-Q-3R" stands for

"Survey - Question - Read - Recite - Review." This is a systematic approach to reading which includes taking specific actions before you begin to read, and some more actions after you finish reading. Here's a brief description:

Survey - In 2 - 5 minutes, glance over the headings in the chapter to discover the main points that will be developed. Also, if there is a summary paragraph, read it.

Question - Turn each heading into a question, to arouse your curiosity, thereby increasing your comprehension. The questions also help you distinguish the main point from the explanatory details. Turning a heading into a question is really a simple task, but it requires a conscious effort on your part.

Read - Read carefully, to answer the question (usually to the end of that headed section). Actively search for the answer.

Recite - Now look away from the book and try to recite the answer to each of your questions. Use your own words, and include an example. If you can do this, you know what you have just read. If you can't, glance back over the section. An excellent way to do this reciting from memory is to jot down cue phrases in outline form on a sheet of paper. Make these notes very brief.

Review - After the material has been read, look over your notes to get a bird's-eye view of the points and their relationship, and check your memory of the content by reciting the major sub points under each heading. This checking of your memory can be done by covering up the notes and trying to recall the main points. Then uncover each major point and try to recall the sub points listed under it.

Write - This is an extension of "Review" above. In addition to just thinking about what you remember, write the material down. Write lists, write summaries, write answers to questions. Writing helps you commit the material to memory.