

READING PROCESS

When reading a text (a book, an essay, or an article), you should really try to break up the practice into a three phase operation. That is, you should do three things: Pre-Read the text, Read the text, and Re-Read the text. Although the process seems even more excruciating than simply reading, the goals in reading for college courses are: understanding and memorization.

1) Pre-Reading

This concept involves being able to skim or preview the text. If the text is a book, the reader should simply “thumb through” the text looking at the books features. Locate the different parts (tables of content, the locations of the chapters, any indices (or an index), any appendices (or an appendix, a section with extra material), and/or a glossary (a collection of terms from the book which are defined).

If the text is an essay/article, the reader should look for headings (any bolded or highlighted sections of the text), any notes, and/or any appendices/notes, which are generally shorter for articles or essays. With an essay/article, it may be important to skim through the text reading the first sentences of a few paragraphs to locate the contents, since most essays/articles do not come with indices.

2) Reading

Reading a text sounds easy enough; however, when the goal is to understand and attempt to retain some of the ideas from the text, things tend to become a bit more complicated.

A person can simply read a text and not remember anything from the text. So, when we read, we want to embrace the concept of making notes, writing down any important ideas or terms which come to mind. Additionally, you may find it important to try to use a highlighter or some other writing implement to underline/highlight important information in the text.

Marginal notes: Some people like to make what we call “Marginal notes,” referring to the extreme left or right of the page. Oftentimes, the page maintains enough space in the margins to write short notes or emphasize particular ideas. All-in-all, you want to attempt to make the process of reading an active activity rather than a passive activity. By active, we mean that you want to take time and energy to become engaging in learning the concepts in the text rather than simply reading the text more or less robotically without doing anything to attempt to draw attention to important ideas.

3) Re-Reading

Two types of Re-Reading strategies exist. First, you may like the first strategy which advocates that you simply re-read the entire text. The second strategy involves reading text and focusing

on re-reading the notes, even locating sections where you expect to find particular content/ideas.

Alternative Methods of Reading (Reading for Particular Concepts/Information)

If reading is important to understanding particular concepts (such as definitions, concepts, biographic information or other information), then it may be important to actively search for those concepts or the information as you read. On the other hand, you may simply read the text first (without searching for the concepts), then read to find those concepts. Either way, reading and re-reading may be necessary to assure that you have found those concepts.