MAKING TEXTBOOKS WORK FOR YOU

Academic Success Center
“Getting Started” Textbook Tips

- Read the Introduction and/or Preface: This tells you what the writer says, how they say it, and their purpose for saying it → insight about the author and his/her plan and set up for the book.

- Look for any Supplemental Material: Is there a website for your textbook? Were you provide with an online access code? Check it out to see if it’ll be useful to you.

- Preview Your Entire Textbook: As a result, future assignments will be easier and less time consuming
  - Table of Contents
  - Appendixes
  - Glossaries
  - Bibliographies
  - Indexes

- Preview Chapter Assignments: Previewing the chapter is the best way to ”get a feel” for what the chapter is about.
BFAR: Study Reading Method

- **Browse**: find out what has to be done to accomplish your purpose
  - Note main headings
  - Look at pictures
  - Skim summaries and questions provided
  - Decide how much time is needed and chunk assignment out

- **Focus**: zip through for main ideas without stopping or taking notes
  - Read through once without stopping
  - Get a general idea of main points and reasoning

- **Absorb**: go back and mark key ideas
  - Clear up any confusion
  - Find main ideas/highlight key words
  - Find supporting ideas
  - Mark just enough to trigger your memory

- **Reinforce**: put what you just read in your own words, either by writing and by explaining it to someone else
  - Skim back over fuzzy material
  - Marking and writing in the text gets rid of the need for a separate notebook
  - Outline in the margin
SQ3R Method

- Survey: Focus your attention on what you are going to read before you try to read closely (same as browsing)
  - Serves as an advance organizer
  - Controls your attention
  - Know what the material will be about

- Steps to survey:
  - Read chapter title → what does it mean?
  - Read headings and subheadings → organization of material; trigger prior knowledge
  - Read chapter summary if provided → understanding what is important to remember
  - Look at pictures, charts, graphs and read captions → getting a better frame of reference

- Question: ask yourself questions about what you are going to read
  - Help aid reading because they focus our attention on subject matter
  - Provide a purpose
  - If struggling with formulating questions, turn headings into questions that could guide your reading
  - What does the title of the chapter mean?
  - What do I already know about the subject?
  - What did my professor say about this chapter?

- Read:
  - Read to answer the questions you raised and any pre-provided questions
  - Read all added attractions
  - Read extra carefully all the underlined, italicized, or bold printed words or phrases
SQ3R Method

■ **Recite:**
  - Going over what you read by either orally summarizing what you just read or by making notes or some sort
  - Don’t stop to recite after every paragraph or two – use chunks
  - Don’t wait to recite if a section from one heading to another is too long – use your judgement
  - Don’t underline long passages – be selective
  - Using pencil to mark is always the best bet (can erase)
  - Don’t underline or mark as you read; mark only after you have read the passage and understand it

■ **Review:** use entire method to see what you remember
  - Review immediately after reading a chapter
    ■ Reading over your notes
    ■ Putting together entire chapter to get the big picture
Questions-in-the-Margin Method

- Survey Chapter: helps identify how facts relate to one another
  - Creates a background
  - Gain familiarity with content
  - Provides advanced organizer
  - “Limbers the mind” → warm-up
  - Overcomes mental inertia → “gets the ball rolling” – ease yourself in

- Turning Headings into Questions: forces you to concentrate
  - The better the questions, the better your comprehension will be
  - What does this paragraph tell me?
  - What are the important supporting details?
  - If this fact or idea is true, then what logically follows?
  - How does this paragraph fit in with this chapter?

- Reading Paragraph by Paragraph: read each paragraph thoroughly enough to answer the question, “what did the author say?”
  - This needs to be done before moving on to succeeding paragraphs or meaning will be lost
  - Identify ideas and concepts behind the words
  - Describe in your own words
  - If struggling, identify what it is you are not comprehending
  - Pause between paragraph to think about what you just read
  - Recording and looking up familiar terms

- Writing Questions in the Margin: After each paragraph, create questions to help you review later on and underline in the paragraph what key words make up that answer
Questions-in-the-Margin Method

- **Reciting Based on Questions in the Margin**: Go through chapter again once you’ve read it all and answer questions → put answers in your own words – do this until you get the answers right

- **Reviewing Immediately and Later**: General overview of chapter – bringing everything together

- **Reflecting on Facts and Ideas**:
  - What is the significance of these facts and ideas?
  - What principle(s) are they based on?
  - What else could they be applied to?
  - How do they fit in with what I already know?
  - From these facts and ideas, what else can I learn?