



Three Stages of Reading

These steps toward active reading help you understand and engage with written material and increase information retention.

They also save time and enhance comfortable learning.

Stage I - Preview

Predict\Question

What is the topic and what does it suggest? What do headings, subheadings, italics, and summaries suggest? How is the material organized? What is the general framework of the material? Is the author listing reasons, explaining a process, comparing something, exploring, criticizing?

Activate Schema

Schema is the skeleton of knowledge in your brain about any given topic. Before reading be metacognitive; think about what you know. What do I already know about the topic or related topics? Is this new topic a small part of a larger idea or issue that I have thought about or have some knowledge about?

Get a Purpose to Read

What is my purpose for reading? What will I need to know when I am finished.

Make a Plan of Attack

Set realistic goals for how long and how many pages you'll be able to read. Don't try to read the entire chapter nonstop. Instead, divide it into small sections, such as half pages or columns, and read them individually. Ask yourself a question before each paragraph or section and try to answer it as you read. Take short breaks when your mind starts to wander. Which parts need most of my attention? How long will this take?

* If reading a textbook: schedule time and breaks, will I take notes or annotate? Is vocab an issue that I need to address before reading? Set realistic goals for how long and how many pages you'll be able to read. Don't try to read the entire chapter nonstop. Instead, divide it into small sections, such as half pages or columns, and read them individually. Ask yourself a question before each paragraph or section and try to answer it as you read. Take short breaks when your mind starts to wander.

Spend time familiarizing yourself with the text as a whole. Check out the author's biographical information if possible, publication information, and the table of contents. Look at each chapter and read the introduction, subheadings, first sentence of each section, and the conclusion. Take time to read any charts or diagrams included in each chapter. Make some projections about the reading by summarizing the main idea and thinking about how the text is organized. Consider how difficult the reading might be and how long it could take to read.

How to Preview

- **Read the title of the passage**
Quite often the main idea of the article is summarized in the title. It may even be the topic.
- **Read Introductory material**
To get an idea of what you are about to read, refer to the preface and Table of Contents. Sophisticated students use the “Table of Contents” as a study guide and outline of a textbook. For novels read the book jacket. The first paragraph of a chapter in a textbook often expresses the Main Idea; look for it.
- **If possible, determine who wrote the text or article.**
What are an author’s qualifications? What do the footnotes or introductory information say about the background and experience of the author? Understanding where an author is coming from may help you understand the writing
- **Skim boldface print** (headings\subheadings\words\numbers). The headings condense the text’s or article’s content for you into just a few words and can give you an idea where the author is headed. Numbers usually indicate a list of important information.
- **Look over any graphics, photos, maps or charts?**
These graphic aids provide you with a quick look at the section’s contents and main purpose.
- **Scan Concluding Summary**
Many textbooks include summaries to highlight important points within the chapter.

Stage 2 – Read (integrate new & old knowledge)

Reading is basically a process of integrating the new knowledge in the text being read to the current knowledge in your schema.

- **Predict**
Develop hypotheses as you read. What will happen next? What will the outcome be? Think of possible results, ramifications, organization of the material.
- **Picture**
Develop visual images during reading. Try to see what you are reading. Think of things that look like what you are reading about. Make characters real, places vivid, actions come alive.
- **Relate**
Relate the characters, situations, information, new knowledge to what you already know. Think of how our new information relates to your experiences, schema, and viws.
- **Monitor**
Keep track of our learning. Are you accomplishing your purposes? Are predictions and questions being answered and addressed? Are you clear of what is happening or what the author is trying to say? Are you on track? Is the material understandable? College textbooks are often involved and contain lots of new information. It is especially necessary to monitor your progress to avoid wasting time and getting frustrated. Be metacognitive!
- **Fix**
Correct lagging comprehension. If you are not on track, re-think it. Be aware of what you are not getting. Perhaps concentrate better, focus more, preview more accurately, have purposes more clearly established. Do what is needed to ensure a successful reqd.
- **Annotate**
Mark the text by perhaps circling major details, underlining minor details, and making brief notes in the margins. . As you read, ask yourself questions and answer them. Underline key words or phrases in each section, and write notes in your margins. Summarize the material in your own words.

Stage 3 - Recall

Recalling is telling yourself what you have learned and what you wish to remember relating to what you already know. It is a form of self-testing to see if your “Purpose” for reading has been accomplished. It is taking a few minutes to recap and digest what was read. It is like having a short conversation with yourself or a friend about the material to have it make sense and be more real to you.

Making Connections

Recall also involves arranging new information into old schema and creating new schemata. Not only are you thinking about what you just read, you are recalling old schema and making connections. While sorting through the material, you are accepting or rejecting information, making decisions about sorting it, rearranging old networks and creating new ones. Good reading involves making connections.

Reasons to Recall

- Pinpoint topic & Main Idea. Sift through generalities, major and minor details.
- Select most important points. Ferret out highlights from nonessential facts and/or ideas.
- Self-test; see if you met your purpose for reading.
- Relate the information. Facts are difficult to learn in isolation. In history, events should not be seen as isolated happenings, but rather as results of previous occurrences. Network our new knowledge to enhance memory. Relate new knowledge to yourself, to other written material, and to global issues.
- Make connections to your schema. Blend old and new knowledge.
- React. Form opinions and evaluate the material and the author. Decide what you wish to accept and what you will reject.
- Learn author's purpose, tone, and message.

Question types on comprehension tests

- Author's tone
- Author's purpose
- Vocabulary
- Main Idea
- Inference
- Literal, Interpretive, Critical
- Detail