

Getting the Most out of Reading Your Textbooks

The idea is to work smarter, not harder. You want to get the most out of the time you put in studying. Use this tip sheet to evaluate how well you recognize and use textbook clues to pick up on the main ideas and key concepts in each chapter. Select a chapter from one of your textbooks and complete the questionnaire by answering the questions. Questions 1-3 can be answered after you survey the chapter. The rest of the questions can be answered after you have finished reading the chapter. Use the feedback you gain from completing the questionnaire to identify ways that you can read your textbook more efficiently.

Class:

Textbook title:

Date reading assignment is due:

Number of pages in assignment:

Number of pages to be covered in this study session:

1. Does the author preview the contents of the chapter by using any of the following?

- Lists of key questions
- Lists of headings
- Lists of learning objectives
- Lists of vocabulary words
- An overview of the chapter
- A story
- A chapter outline
- Other _____

2. How can you use this introductory material to guide your reading?

3. Does the author open the chapter with questions to guide your reading?

- If yes, did you use them?

- If not, why not?

4. Does the author use any of the following methods to highlight key points?

- **Boldface** type
- *Italics*
- Colored ink
- Marginal notes or footnotes
- Graphs, tables or charts

- Illustrations

5. How can you use these devices to focus your reading on what's important?

6. Does the author use headings to provide clues about what will be covered in the chapter sections?

7. How can you use headings to guide your reading?

8. How would you rate this chapter?

- Easy to understand
- Difficult to understand
- Somewhere in between

If the chapter was difficult to understand, how did you respond to the challenge? For example, did you slow down, re-read difficult passages, or underline while you read?

9. How would you rate how well you read this chapter?

- I worked really hard and tried to use different reading strategies to help improve my comprehension.
- I started out focused, but after a few pages I got tired or frustrated and quickly gave up.
- I just skimmed the chapter; I didn't really concentrate on understanding the material.

If you either gave up on reading or just went through the motions by skimming the chapter, can you describe what went wrong?

10. The next time you have a reading assignment, what will you do differently? Which reading strategy or technique will you use again?
