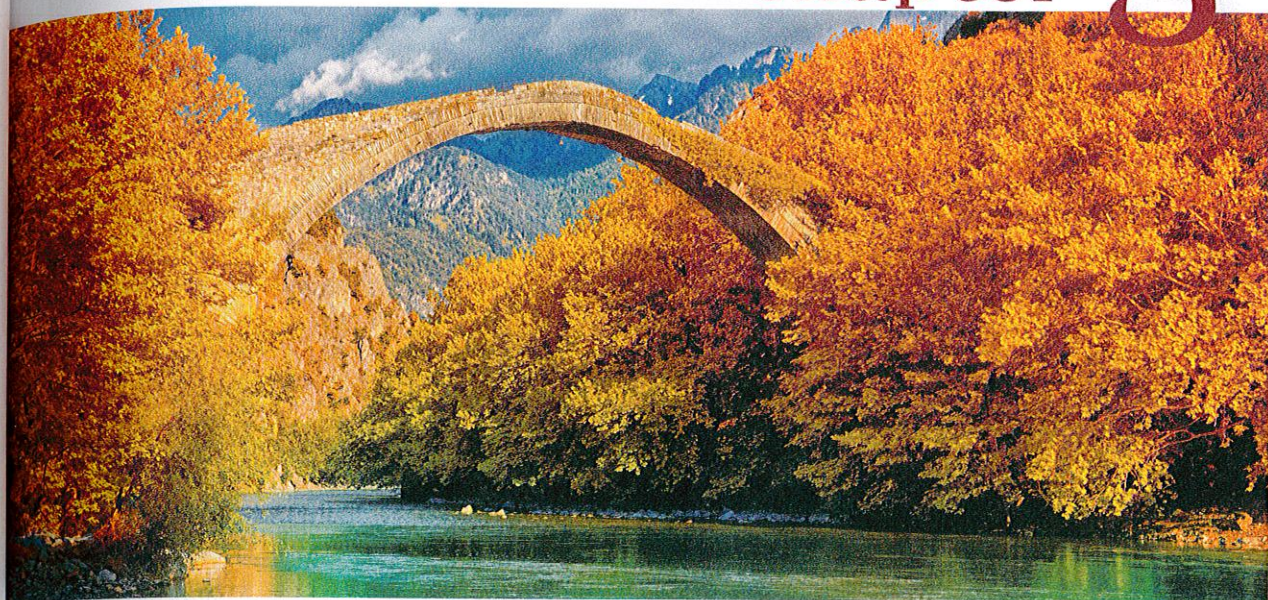




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chapter 3



Reading Across the Curriculum

Let us read with method, and propose to ourselves an end to which our studies may point. The use of reading is to aid us in thinking.
—Edward Gibbon

The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.

—Dr. Seuss, *I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!*

Reading is essential for learning—in more ways than you may think. Reading provides you with an understanding of vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and text structure. The more you read and the more varied you are in your reading, the more authentic language input you give your brain to absorb and process, allowing you to foster the development of a broader vocabulary, richer sentence variety, and rhetorical maturity. Reading also provides you with opportunities for cultural inquiry and awareness, including an introduction to the specialized writing you will be reading in your chosen field. Most of all, though, reading allows you to obtain content information about subjects that you are studying in depth.

Just as with writing, reading can be broken down into two areas that will help you focus on becoming the best college-level reader that you can be: reading to learn and learning to read. The reading-to-learn approach focuses on how you, as a reader, can locate and analyze complex ideas and then use this knowledge to craft your opinion. The learning-to-read approach involves basic strategies that you may have learned in high school or other courses; however, the focus at this stage is learning which of these strategies is most useful for each assigned reading and which ones work best for you.

READING TO LEARN

When you read to learn, you are reading to comprehend and retain information more effectively than when you read for fun. Just as with the writing-to-learn approach discussed in Chapter 1, one of the tenets of reading to learn is for you to use reading to make your thoughts more visible to yourself, so you can organize and analyze them effectively. Whether it is a general education course or a course in your major, your instructor will usually assign reading to help you understand lecture material or prepare you for writing assignments or exams.

To be a successful writer or test-taker, you need to be able to read varied and extensive material with a high command of understanding. Some reading assignments may be low risk, such as previewing material prior to a lecture, and some may be of a higher risk, such as reading research essays that you will critically evaluate in terms of their usefulness for your own research paper. Whatever the risk, the main purpose behind any assigned course reading is to make you more comfortable with thinking critically about key concepts. How you share these ideas

Did you know?

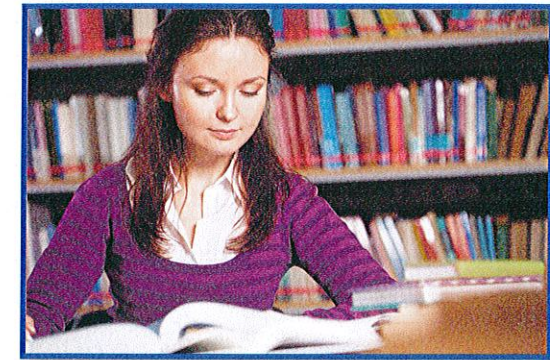
The 2008 ACT's High School Profile Report noted only 53 percent of the students who took the ACT were ready for college-level reading requirements. In addition to reading readiness for college, employers identified reading and writing as top deficiencies of new employees.

—James Pelech and Susan T. Hibbard,
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Reading Strategies for College Students: An Action Research Approach

with yourself, your instructor, your classmates, or any other type of audience is discussed more fully in Chapters 1 and 2, which focus on writing.

To be an effective reader, you should be an active reader. You need to bring all your knowledge to the forefront and use it as you process new material for understanding. Good readers engage with the text as if in a conversation, asking questions and searching for answers as they read. They observe how they are interacting with the text by taking notes or keeping track of main concepts and important information.

One of the most important ways for you to become an effective reader—one who is able to observe details, recall facts, and come to conclusions—is to learn and apply strategies that will help you process what you read. These reading strategies are critical if you are to become an active and effective reader.



LEARNING TO READ EFFECTIVELY

Reading is not magic. It is the consistent application of a range of comprehension strategies.

—Erika Daniels, *The Power of Strategies Instruction*

Different disciplines may have diverse classes, distinct types of information, and discipline-specific types of writing, but they all include reading. When you are assigned reading in a course, you are a scholar, and scholarly reading is quite different from reading for pleasure. You must become a critical reader to be an effective scholarly reader. One component of being critical involves asking questions about not only the assigned reading, but also about why the reading was assigned. The first step to becoming a critical reader is to engage with the reading by being an active reader. Be sure to understand why your instructor has assigned this particular reading. The following questions will help you understand the purpose.

- How does this reading fit in with the objectives of the course?
- How does this reading address the themes of the course?
- How does this reading relate to what is currently being covered in the course?
- Is the reading a critical part of an assignment that will follow?

Once you understand why a reading has been assigned, consider how your instructor wants you to read, process, and analyze the reading. If you are not certain, it is a good idea to ask your instructor how you should manage the assigned reading and process it for understanding. The time you allocate to the reading will depend on how much you want to absorb from the

reading. Use these questions to determine how you want to read; the further down the list, the more time it will take you to process the reading for full understanding:

- Was this reading assigned for entertainment?
- Was this reading assigned to grasp a certain message?
- Was this reading assigned to find an important detail?
- Was this reading assigned to answer a specific question?
- Was this reading assigned to be evaluated?
- Was this reading assigned to apply its concepts to something else?

You must also be an active reader to be an effective reader. To think as you read, use active reading strategies, which improve comprehension, retention, and recall. Your high school teachers may have shared some strategies with you for becoming an active, engaged reader; therefore, some of these strategies may be familiar to you. Whether the following are new to you or not, it is a good idea to have an arsenal of strategies that work for you when you are assigned a reading in class. Consider the reading process to be like the writing process, with a separation into three primary areas: prereading, reading, and postreading. Depending on what kind of reader you are, you should be able to choose at least a few strategies in each area to improve your critical reading skills.

The research shows that [readers] who struggle tend not to ask questions at any time as they read—before, during, or after. . . . They're inert as they read. They read—or I should say they submit to the text—never questioning its content, style, or the intent of the author.

—Ellin Oliver Keene and Susan Zimmermann,
Mosaic of Thought

STRATEGIES FOR PREREADING

1. **Know your discipline's common organization for articles and books.** Each field has its own practice, and knowing yours will help you know where to find abstracts or conclusions that will help you review the material.
2. **Read the preface and introduction.** Oftentimes, the author or editor will present or review important points or even each chapter for you.
3. **Preview and predict what the reading will be about.**
 - a. **Look** at the table of contents, and review the headings and subheadings for the assigned reading.
 - b. **Write** a short journal entry that describes what you know about the topics that are listed in the headings.

- c. **Draft** some questions you have about the topic.
 - d. **Use** a K-W-L chart by creating columns headed with "What I Know," "What I Want to Know," and "What I have Learned." Fill in the first two columns prior to reading and the last after you finish.
4. **Skim and scan the reading before you start fully reading.** Look at how many pages the reading is, how many sections there are, how long the sections are, and what types of headings and subheadings there are.
 5. **Create reading goals and develop a plan to split up what you need to read or what has been assigned.** You can do this in a journal, on notebook paper, on your calendar, or in the table of contents.
 6. **Choose specific times to read that work for you, and plan enough time to finish a full section.** Find out how many pages you can read in an hour, count up your assigned reading, and then make a realistic plan.

STRATEGIES AS YOU READ

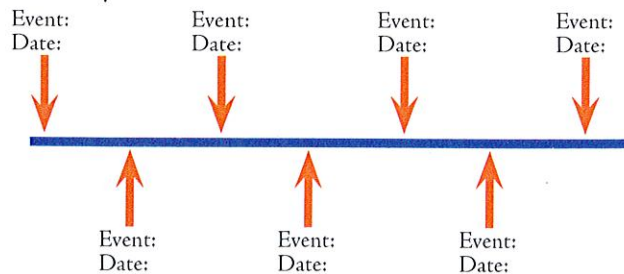
1. **Read for 30 to 45 minutes, and then review what you have read before taking a short break.** An effective strategy is to read for 30–45 minutes, review for 5 minutes, and take a break for 5 minutes.
2. **Read section by section.** It is best to stop when there is a natural break in the reading material. This will help later when you organize your notes, since they will already be focused on one section at a time.
3. **Circle new terms and underline their definitions.** Use a circle or some other graphic tool to help you note new terms as you read and note them later as you return to review the reading. If the term is not defined in the text, look it up and note the definition near the term in the reading, if possible. Consider creating a "terms" page at the beginning of your notebook or binder, and note both the term and its definition when you first encounter them.
4. **Annotate your text.** Draw attention to main ideas or important points by underlining, highlighting, circling, or using asterisks or other graphic reminders. Use a pen or pencil, rather than a highlighter; you'll have less chance of marking excessively.



If you are marking too much, it means you aren't able to select main points and important details. Highlighting more than 20 percent of the text means highlighting isn't working for you.

5. **Read difficult sections out loud, or take turns reading out loud with a classmate.** This will help you process the important information in more than just one way since it adds the audio element to the visual.

6. Create a bulleted list of main ideas as you read, or use an informal or formal outline method. You might also use a cluster approach to keep notes about related ideas together.
7. Create a timeline to keep track of dates, especially when reading literature or when reading about history.



8. Draw helpful pictures or diagrams in your notes, especially when you want to depict relationships between one character or idea to another.
9. Visualize different sections or ideas by using different colored pens, pencils, or highlighters. Take notes as you read.
10. Write down questions next to the material as you read. Or keep a detailed Reader's Notebook with questions, and be sure to include the page number of the material to which they refer.
11. Use information management software to take notes, add tags to highlight related ideas, and then organize your notes into folders. Information management software is available for most computer platforms and is an easy way to search through your notes. (See Box 3.1.)

Box 3.1

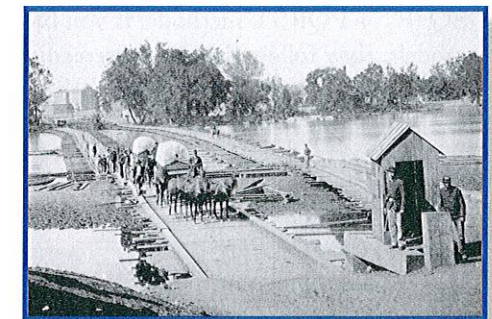
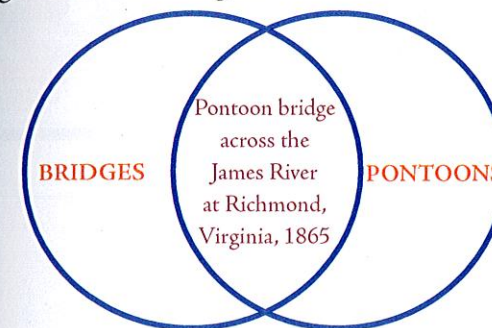
Information Management Software

AllMyNotes Organizer	KeyNote	Qiqqa
AudioNote-Notepad	KNote	SilverNote
BasKet Note Pads	Memonic	Tiddly-Wiki
Catch Notes	Microsoft OneNote	Tomboy
CintaNotes	MyInfo	TreeDBNotes
Evernote	MyNotex	WikidPad
Gnote	Notee	Windows Journal
Jarnal	Okular	XLnotes
Kepppy	PDF Studio	Xournal
KeepNote	Personal Knowbase	Zim

STRATEGIES FOR POSTREADING

1. After reading, write to learn by using journals, graphic organizers, or other options described in Chapter 2.
2. Read particularly challenging sections again, or reread as needed to answer study questions.
3. Answer reading questions that your instructor has given you, or check the end of the chapter or the book's website for helpful questions.
4. Mark information in your notes that connects to your instructor's lectures or other class materials. Bring your reading notes to class, and highlight any information from the book that your instructor covers again in class or asks questions about.
5. Turn your linear notes into a chart, table, outline, or any other graphic that will help you process the information more quickly. Check out the many different types of graphic organizers at <http://www.thinkport.org/technology/template.tp>. See Figure 3.1 for one example of a Venn diagram.

Figure 3.1 Venn diagram



6. Use the *shrinking outline* method. Immediately after reading, write in a journal as much information as you remember or think is important. Then, go through what you've described, making it more concise by taking out things you've repeated or that are not as important as others. Then, go through the information one more time, and create a concise, abstract-like description of what you read (see Chapter 9, p. 243).
7. Create a concise statement about the reading topic. While riding on an elevator for a few floors, try to come up with a brief statement of what the reading was about before the elevator stops, or you might apply this strategy as you walk up a few flights of stairs.



8. Use special strategies for difficult material.

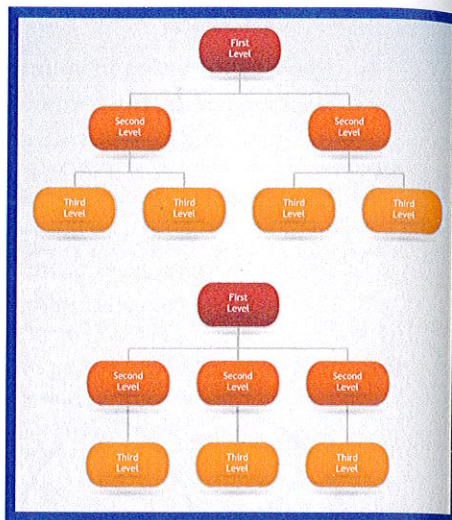
- a. Reread. Sometimes rereading is all it takes to grasp something you didn't understand the first time.
- b. Stop reading after each paragraph or section, and write your notes or rephrase what you have read using your own words.
- c. Discuss the reading with a classmate, create a study group, or go see your instructor during office hours.
- d. Create a flow chart of how ideas in each section or paragraph relate to each other.
- e. Take a break from your reading and return when you are refreshed. Sometimes, a cup of coffee or a good night's sleep will help you understand what was eluding you.

You may have also learned a reading and studying technique in high school that constructed all of the reading steps into one model, such as the SQ3R, SQ4R, or PQRSST methods. If you break down these models, they follow the same prereading, reading, and postreading pattern described earlier, but you may want to add other strategies from the list above when you build your own reading model. Here's a brief breakdown of these methods:

S → SURVEY
 Q → QUESTION
 3R → READ, RECITE, REVIEW

S → SURVEY
 Q → QUESTION
 4R → READ, RECITE, RELATE, REVIEW

P → PREVIEW
 Q → QUESTION
 R → READ
 S → SELF-RECITE
 T → TEST



Did you know?

Students who fail to employ reading strategies tend to experience difficulty inferring conceptual meaning, relating to what they have read, self-monitoring their learning and understanding, and evaluating texts for clarity and consistency.

—Kathrynn Di Tommaso
 from her research study described in *Strategies to Facilitate Reading Comprehension among College Transition Students*

Reading researchers stress that students should choose reading strategies that fit their personalities, reading levels, and time constraints. Once you choose what strategies work for you, it is best to make using them a habit as you read for your courses. Use an organizer like the one in Figure 3.2 to track your reading strategies.

Figure 3.2 Sample Strategies Organizer

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	What strategies do you want to investigate further?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	What strategies work best for you?



READ MORE ABOUT IT

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chapter 4



The Research Process

Research has been called good business, a necessity, a gamble, a game. It is none of these—it's a state of mind.

—Martin H. Fischer, Howard Fabing (ed.) and Ray Marr (ed.),
Fischerisms

Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.

—Zora Neale Hurston, Robert Hemenway,
Dust Tracks on a Road: an Autobiography

I think that the thing I most want you to remember is that research is a ceremony. And so is life. Everything that we do shares in the ongoing creation of our universe.

—Shawn Wilson,
Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods