

Reading Effectively

This fact sheet provides information on:

- Defining effective reading
- Planning a reading session
- 4 techniques you can experiment with to read more effectively
 - Layering and Outlining
 - PQRST Method
 - Reciprocal Reading
 - Comment Codes

Effective reading

<p>The aim of course reading is to extend and integrate new learning into your current knowledge. Reading is most effective when you consciously consider the material and stay engaged with the content as you read. There are many techniques to help you do this, and some are described in this study guide.</p>	<p>Read to extend and integrate new learning into existing knowledge</p>
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Planning a reading session

<p>Plan to cover all reading for all papers. You may need to improve your time management if you are not getting through all your reading.</p>	
<p>Read in short bursts of 30-40 minutes, with a 5 - 10 minute break. This will keep your mind fresh and focused.</p>	<p>Read in short bursts</p>
<p>Try to read in a location free of interruptions and distractions, where you can sit comfortably and take notes as you read.</p>	<p>Choose a distraction free environment</p>
<p>Making notes of the content in your own words and journaling your thinking helps you learn and make sense of the material.</p>	<p>Make notes as you read</p>

Four techniques for effective reading

Layering and Outlining

Look over the entire section to be read to identify the headings and sub headings.

Form an outline of these by either creating a mind map or an outline where headings are aligned to the left margin and sub headings are indented, to show the structure of the reading. The headings on this page which identify four techniques for effective reading, without the detail of the text, would form a good example of an outline. Alternatively, pick out the topic of each paragraph (often found in the first sentence of a paragraph) and use key words to create the mind map or outline.

Review the outline in order to gain an overall understanding of the topic.

Go back and read the details, thinking about how they fit with the overall structure.

PQRST

Preview, Question, Read, Summarise and Test is a reading process that will turn reading into learning. This method helps you keep your mind engaged. It includes aspects of the layering and outlining method. Refer to the [PQRST Method of Reading](#) study guide.

Reciprocal reading

Reciprocal reading is a group reading process where a reading is explored in depth. It is useful for analysing a reading or case study, learning from each other, or generating group discussion. The process can be time consuming, but highly effective when the purpose of reading is to not only understand the material but to share knowledge. It can be an enjoyable method of reading text that otherwise might be uninteresting or challenging.

Reciprocal Reading is conducted in small groups of 3-5 people. Each person takes a turn facilitating the reading process to guide the rest of the group through a section of the text. The facilitator uses prompts outlined in the [Reciprocal Reading Prompts](#) study guide to lead the group.

Comment codes

Using comment codes helps keep your mind engaged as you read and think about the material. This method involves creating a coding system which you use to mark the text. One set of codes is listed below, however you may use symbols of colours, or create your own codes.

A = Agree

DA = Disagree

MI = Main Idea

D = Detail

CTO = Check this out

I = Interesting

(Tertiary Education Commission, 2008).

A caution on highlighting

Many students like to highlight as they read. Although some students find this helpful it can cause confusion when referring to the text later.

- When re-reading the eye is usually drawn to highlighted portions of text only, creating the risk that important non-highlighted information is missed.
- It is easy to overuse a highlighter making it difficult to identify important points when looking back over the text.

- The text is permanently highlighted on the first reading, yet with further learning the decision regarding what should be emphasised or highlighted may change.

If you wish to use highlighters, it is preferable to create a colour coding system.

Material adapted from:

Long Beach City College [LongBeachCityCollege]. (2011, February 2). *LBCB- Great ways to study* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLjip0wygAI>

How to study using the Preview, Question, Read, Summary, Test or PQRST Method. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.wikihow.com/Study-Using-the-Preview,-Question,-Read,-Summary,-Test-or-PQRST-Method>

Reference:

Tertiary Education Commission. (2008). *Teaching adults to read with understanding. Using the learning progressions*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.

Related Guides:

[Reciprocal Reading Prompts](#)

[PQRST Method](#)