



8 Tips for Textbook Reading

By Kate Cousins, SARC Academic Coach

1. **Complete assigned reading before it's discussed in class.** That way you'll go into the lecture with background knowledge and have an idea about questions to ask your professor or TA.
2. **Before reading, skim the chapter(s).** Take a look at the following things and ask yourself these questions:
 - a. **Number of pages** (How can I break this into more manageable pieces? How long will it take me to go over each section? When will I make time for this? *It might help to track exactly how much you intend to read each day in your planner or schedule, and keep yourself accountable.)
 - b. **Section headings** (How is the information presented? What do I already know about this topic? What do I need to focus on?)
 - c. **Bold, italicized, or highlighted words** (Which of these are familiar to me and which do I need to pay special attention to?)
 - d. **Pictures, tables, figures, etc.** (How do these relate to what I am learning? How can they help me better understand the topic?)
3. **Organize and plan out your notes** in order to get the most out of what you read. No matter which method you use (i.e. Cornell, outline, concept map, etc.) it's important to organize according to chapter titles, headings, etc. so that you can refer back to the correct section in the book later. It may also be helpful to write down questions as soon as you think of them, summarize the entire reading at the end, or create your own practice quizzes. *For more on notetaking styles, visit: <https://sarconline.sdes.ucf.edu/learning-skills-resources/notetaking/>
4. **Read one paragraph or small section at a time.** Do not try to take notes simultaneously as you read, just focus on understanding the content. After you finish the section, see if you can summarize it in your own words and write down key information in your notes.
5. **Check your notes** against the chapter summaries, practice questions, or previous notes from the textbook, your study group, and/or lecture.
6. **Take a break.** After you finish reading for the day, leave the information for a little while. A good place to stop is at the end of a paragraph or section. A good time to stop is when you feel like you have to keep going back to read the same part because you stopped paying attention!
7. **Look back frequently** and make sure you still understand what you have written. If necessary, change or add to your notes as you learn more. Write down any questions you may have about the material to be answered by your professor, peers, or TA.
8. As the test date approaches, **rewrite your notes to solidify your understanding.** Combine all notes from the textbook, lecture, review sessions, etc. into one document with only the most important information. This can be used as a handy study guide refresher in the days before the test, and the act of rewriting can help you cement the information into your brain!

More info and resources can be found at <http://sarc.sdes.ucf.edu/>