

Textbook Reading Strategies

In order to understand the material you need to be **focused**, **strategic** and **efficient**.

TIP#1: Do the reading *before* class.

- Otherwise, the lecture will not make as much sense to you (*not strategic*), and you will spend more time outside class completing the reading (*not efficient*).

TIP#2: Not all assigned readings serve the same function. Know why you are reading.

- Did your professor assign this reading in order to reiterate the content of a lecture or does this reading fill in holes in the lecture? Is this reading supposed to provide general background information or explore a specific example? Knowing the answers to these questions will help you prioritize your reading, so that you can allot more time for important material and skim the less important (*strategic*).

TIP#3: Disconnect.

- Stop answer texts and find a quiet place. If you listen to music make sure it is quiet and lyric-free. Study with your most disciplined and focused friends. Set a timer and challenge yourself to stay offline (*focused*).

TIP#4: Start with the big picture.

- Read these first in this order:
 1. Chapter title
 2. First and last paragraphs of the chapter
 3. Section headings (glance at subheadings)
 4. Tables, graphs, charts, pictures and diagrams
 5. The first sentence of each paragraph in the chapter
 6. Chapter summary
 7. Questions at the end of the chapter
- Now when you go back and read the whole chapter, you will be able to read faster and avoid getting confused or distracted by unimportant details (*efficient*)

TIP#5: Paraphrase information from the textbook in your own words.

- The textbook tells you what the writer knows, your notes are a summary of what you understand.