



To get the most out of reading, it's very important to read actively. Thinking, asking questions, taking notes, and summarizing in your head or on paper as you read all help you read actively.

- Before reading, think: WHY am I reading this? WHAT do I already know about the topic? (That brain works to learn new information by relating it to what we already know.)
- Adjust your reading approach to the situation:
 - If you are reading for class discussion, you can PREVIEW, and then SKIM (read faster and less thoroughly with less focus on details). Read for the big picture, main ideas, questions you have, and things that would be interesting to talk about in class.
 - If you are writing a paper, you can also SKIM in this situation. Make notes about possible paper topics. Note what interests you, what you agree or disagree with, what connects to your life or other issues you've read about or discussed in class, and/or what you have questions about. If you already have a topic, break it down into questions (try using reporter's questions—who, what, when, where, why, how), and use FOCUSED SKIMMING to look for answers to those questions. Use the table of contents and index to shortcut!
 - If you are reading to prepare for a test, you will often need to take more time and be more thorough. PREVIEW first, and then read more carefully. It's helpful to stop and write short summaries in your own words of main ideas, key points, and examples after each chapter or after each section if the reading is very dense. Write down questions you have so you can ask in class/office hours or
 - Ask a tutor. Drawing pictures, diagrams, or charts in your notes can help you condense, understand, and remember material.
 - If you are studying for a test and have a study guide or outline, use the table of contents, index, and focused skimming to find information on those topics instead of re-reading the whole chapter or book. Re-reading your notes and summaries will be faster than re-reading the whole text.

Take notes using Cornell, outline, or thematic/topic system. This is better than just highlighting/underlining because it helps you understand and remember better and creates a more user-friendly resource you can refer back to when studying or preparing to write a paper.

- Ask questions as you read, and write them in your notes: How does this relate to my experience? To things I've already learned? What don't I understand? What do I agree or disagree with and why? Bring these to class/office hours/a tutor; talk about them with friends; use them to write papers.
- Sometimes it helps to cover the part of the page you aren't reading with a blank piece of paper and move it down as you read. This helps cut out distractions and keeps you moving along. Laying a sheet of transparent colored vinyl over the page you are reading helps some students with learning disabilities read more easily.

You can consult with staff in the PLTC, your professor, or an ASC if you'd like more help with reading. If you think you may have a learning disability and would like to discuss testing and/or accommodations, see the Director of Accessibility and Disability Resources (located on the third floor of Clapp).