

READ BETWEEN THE LINES

Improving Your College Reading Skills

1. Choose the best place to read

Consider your learning style and choose the right reading environment. What noise level can you tolerate? Is there good lighting? Consider these three factors: location, atmosphere and distractions. You'll comprehend more if you're in a place that increases your focus and concentration.

2. Preview the material before reading

Surveying the text helps you learn the material more efficiently because it sets a purpose for reading. Read the title to get a sense of the text's key points. Look over the key parts of your textbook: front and back pages, table of contents, glossary and introduction. This will help you digest the material when you finally dive in.

3. Mark key words and concepts

As you read, try to capture key information. Pay attention to important terms, definitions, facts and phrases. Annotate the text, which involves writing notes in the margins and underlying key phrases.

4. Build your vocabulary

If you come across an unfamiliar word that may be vital to understanding the text, look it up. Use a dictionary or computer while reading. You can utilize online reference sites like [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com) and [Merriam-Webster](https://www.merriam-webster.com).

5. Reference any questions you have while reading

When you ask questions, your reading comprehension improves because you're able to make connections with the text. Read through each section or chapter carefully. Keep a list of questions you think of while reading and look for the answers as you continue.

6. Take notes

As you read, think about what you're reading and take notes. Think about the main point of each chapter you're reading and only jot down relevant information. There are plenty of note-taking strategies (e.g., outlines, mind mapping, bullet points). Good notes will give you a starting point when it comes to understanding the text and writing papers.

7. Paraphrase what you've read

After reading, summarize what you've read in your own words. Summarizing will help you pull out main ideas and take better notes. Creating a summary also demonstrates that you understand what you've read. You can do this by leveraging one of the many note-taking applications available. If you don't understand or remember what you just read, reread it carefully.

8. Review your notes

Reviewing notes is just as important as writing them. Looking over your notes regularly helps you retain information. It also helps you avoid last-minute cramming and exam anxiety.

9. Discuss what you've read

Take time to identify what you've learned. Talk to others about the text or form discussion groups to compare notes. If there's something you don't understand, don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify certain things. You can always talk to your instructor or a classmate. It's good to get other viewpoints.

