

10 Reading Improvement Tips

Prepare to Read

Tip #1: Figure out how long it's going to take to do the reading, and set a schedule to complete the assignment on time.

Tip #2: Read for short periods of time (such as 30-40 minutes) then take a break and return to your reading —especially if your reading is particularly challenging

Tip #3: Read earlier in the day – retention has shown to be higher than when reading during the late evening or nighttime.

Tip #4: Set goals for your reading. What is the purpose or goal for your reading? You should be able to summarize your reading in just a couple of pages.

Tip #5: Read in a place that will facilitate your learning. The best places are the library, empty classroom or some other location on campus. Get in the habit of doing your reading in one place and go there consistently throughout the semester.

Reading Comprehension

Tip #6: Start by surveying the entire reading first – how long is it? How is it divided? Are there graphs or illustrations? Is there a summary at the end? Start by reading the summary and try to answer any summary questions first. This provides a “mental map” that allows you to take in the information and know how to break it apart.

Tip #7: Ask yourself questions as you read. You should be searching for answers to such questions as: What is this chapter about? What is the main idea or ideas? What facts or examples support it? Good readers are active readers!

Tip #8: Take each section of the reading apart – write down the main theme or ideas for each section. You want to reduce the many pages of reading into two or three summary pages. Take notes on each section. This is a concrete task that will improve your concentration. Don't be just a mindless highlighter! Whenever you feel the need to highlight, write notes instead.

Tip #9: Review the notes you took from the textbook once or twice a week. Practice is a critically important part of the learning process! Recite or practice the information either out loud or on paper. Without referring to your notes, explain the ideas to a real (or imaginary) younger brother or sister in a way they would understand.

Tip #10: Write your own exam questions based on the readings. This is a great way to really ensure that you can answer questions based on the information and simulate a test environment as well.