



Student Learning Services

Reading Assignments in Science

First, get a perspective

- **Review the assignment in the syllabus and any handouts (1-2 minutes)**
Maybe you are not required to read some sections
- **Survey the chapter (5-10 minutes)**
for how the content is organized; get the "big picture"
This is not to fully understand, rather develop preliminary associations of bits of information that later will help you understand
Quickly page through the introduction, the summary, vocabulary list, self-test questions, headings, boldfaced material, major graphics, etc.
Notice the major concepts, definitions, descriptions, causes, effects and arguments.
- **Check out the media, the CD and website (if available)**
to see what they contain
- **Take no notes, and mark no text in this phase**

First reading

Make the main purpose of your first reading simply to read and get a good idea of the material: what you understand, and what you do not

A science text presents new and complex material which may be difficult to understand. One piece builds on another to help you build your understanding.

The text can provide the foundation for understanding, and bring together information in lectures, labs and hands-on experiments, field trips, and media.

- **Read sentences, paragraphs and short passages with 1-second pauses.**
Read and pause, read and pause. Let your mind assemble the parts you just read to give you the meaning of the whole unit. This assembly of meaning happens fairly automatically as long as you are intentionally looking for meaning and paying attention to the meanings
- **Look back and forth between words and related graphics**
until you can see/tell how they are showing/saying similar things.

For an individual appointment for one on one help with this study strategy visit Student Learning Services located in Room 110.

- **When you notice that the author is using comparisons and examples,** link them to their descriptions and explanations
- **If you are tired and meanings come very slowly into your mind, take a break.**

If a break is not possible, vary your study activity. For example, draw a picture rather than write, walk instead of sit, read aloud rather than silently

- **If you return to reading after an absence,** scan the text and your notes again before reading to cue associations

Review of first reading

Return to what you do not understand, or want to reinforce

This is not the stage for memorization, but understanding

- **Mark or highlight what you think is important**
In the margin, use or develop a system; use letters as "D" for a definition, "F" for a descriptive fact, "C" for a cause-and-effect statement, "A" for a scientific argument "?" for what you do not understand
Other codes you invent for yourself.
- **New vocabulary**
Write new vocabulary and concepts down along with a short meanings and/or cues
Keep a list close by or in your notebook
- **Create your own visual pictures or images, or concept maps**
- **Create sensory cues**
as heat, brightness, movements
- **Read a passage aloud** to yourself with normal conversational intonation. Your translation of printed text into spoken words may activate meanings.
If you can't read aloud, imagine reading aloud and hearing your own voice
- **Work out your own explanations of hard-to-understand passages:**
Go in short units (a few words at a time), translate their meaning, think of associations, relate them to other parts of the passage, make inferences and try to make your mental model of the meaning match the writer's mental model.
- **Mark passages** with a question mark that you still do not understand

For an individual appointment for one on one help with this study strategy visit Student Learning Services located in Room 110.

A second reading

- **Only read the material again to understand it.**
If you are comfortable with what you understand, proceed to other tasks, like solving problems, exercises, material on the CD or website, and so on
- **In this second reading, if you find you are still having difficulty try**
The CD, video, or website
The library and find other texts that may explain it better
Ask the tutoring service or teacher for help
Ask a study group about the material and their experience with it

Review your notes for what you:

- Need to review before any test
- Must memorize
- Need to complete exercises or solve problems
- Need for labs, experiments, future lectures, etc.

Used with permission from <http://www.studygs.net/science/readingtexts.htm>

For an individual appointment for one on one help with this study strategy visit Student Learning Services located in Room 110.