

# College Reading Strategies

Reading college-level texts can be a challenge, so it is important to use a clear, multi-step approach. This 3-step process can help you make the most of your reading time.

## Pre-Reading. Build the big picture and identify your purpose.

- **Set up a productive environment.** Be aware of lighting, seating, noise, location, and time of day.
- **Get to know the text.** Skim the abstract, table of contents, chapter introduction/summary, subheadings, visuals, key terms, and/or related lecture notes.
- **Chunk the chapter into manageable sections.** If your focus starts to wander, take a break. Decide if how the text is divided needs to be revised.
- **Define a purpose for reading.** State why the information is significant. Turn subheadings into questions. For example, the subheading “Establishing Controls” is in a chapter about conducting scientific experiments. You can turn that subheading into “Why is it important to establish controls in an experiment?” or “What are some of the methods/considerations for establishing controls?”

## During Reading. Think about the text. Be active to stay focused.

- **Paraphrase the text** or take notes while reading.
- **Answer** any embedded questions to check comprehension.
- **Use metacognitive markers or your own symbol system** to track your thinking. Some examples of symbols are a circled question mark for murky concepts, a star for something important, underlines or highlights for key terms, a check mark for a mastered concept, and three arrows forming a circle to represent a process or cycle.
- **Record your own thoughts** and main points about the text in the margins or notes. For example: What is the author’s argument or main point? What reasons/evidence support this argument? What patterns are in the text? Are there considerations the author missed? Is the conclusion logical?

## Post-Reading. Check Comprehension.

- **Answer** subheading, book, and/or homework questions.
- **Outline big ideas** and supporting evidence or reasoning in your own words.
- **Make a concept map** to focus on relationships and connections.
- **Log example problems** by writing clear explanations for each step while solving.
- **Combine and connect** your reading notes and lecture notes.

## Additional Info

For more information, visit the Center of Academic Success in B-31 Coates Hall, call (225)578-2872, or visit [lsu.edu/cas](http://lsu.edu/cas).