

Note to instructors: This strategy application handout is meant to accompany the textbook reading strategies handout. This is modified to introduce students to their chosen textbook and practice before, during, and after strategies as they work through the first chapter. Before this class, I ask students to bring in a textbook for another class. Because my students don't share a common content reading book, I've modified the activities to a smaller scale. For example, instead of listing all vocabulary words, I ask my students to list the first ten words (in case there are more.) If students were using this in your class with a book they all had in common, you could modify the handout to include the full chapter and its contents. This would be a great starting point for content teachers to familiarize their students both with their chosen textbook and with reading in that particular field. It would also work well for a learning community involving reading and a content course. Of course, it also works well for any reading course, too!

Textbook Reading Strategies Application

Now that we've gone through some study strategies to use for textbooks, let's practice some of them and see which ones are useful for you. We will begin by practicing our pre-reading strategies.

1. Preview the book, looking through table of contents, glossary, and features in the front and back of the chapters. What do you think the book will be about?
2. Use prior knowledge. What do you already know about the topic?
3. Check the chapter set up. How is each chapter set up? What features are in each chapter?

Now, select a chapter that you think might be interesting, and we'll practice pre-reading chapter strategies.

4. Preview the headings or sections. What is going to be covered in the chapter?
5. Preview the pictures. What types of pictures are there? What does that tell you about what you will be learning?
6. Preview the questions at the end of the chapter. What are they? (If there are more than three, just write the first three down for this exercise. When you are really studying the chapter, you should write down all.)
7. Preview the review. What concepts should you know by the end of the chapter? (Again, just write a few to get the idea.)
8. Preview the vocabulary words. What are they? List them. Put checkmarks by the ones you already know, and an "x" by any that you've at least heard of. (If there are more than ten, list the first ten for this exercise. When you really study this chapter, you should write down all.)
9. Use prior knowledge. Now that you've glanced through, what information do you already know about the subjects in the chapter?

When you are done scanning through and "prepping" to read the chapter, you would normally do a thorough job of any combination of the following, whichever are proven to work for your studying and learning styles:

- ✓ Highlight
- ✓ Read carefully, but at a decent pace
- ✓ Look for answers to the questions (and highlight them)
- ✓ Put question marks by parts that are confusing
- ✓ Note vocabulary words, highlight meanings
- ✓ Reread if something is not making sense

For the sake of time for this exercise, we won't thoroughly read our chapters, but continue with the following studying and learning styles inventory:

10. Do you work better with or without noise?
11. Do you have trouble holding still? How could you modify your reading to help you with this?
12. Can you concentrate if you have something else on your mind? If not, how can you clear your mind to study?
13. What type of lighting do you prefer when you are reading?
14. Do interruptions distract you? If so, how can you minimize them?
15. Do you study by yourself or with partners, groups, or friends?

Use this information to help you "set the mood" when you are reading or studying.

Once you are done reading the chapter, you would also:

Take notes. Go back and take brief notes over information you've highlighted. The more concise you can make your notes, the quicker the process will be. Instead of writing, "Photosynthesis is a process in which green plants use energy from the sun to transform water, carbon dioxide, and minerals into oxygen and organic compounds," write "Photosynthesis: gr. plants + sun + h₂O, cO₂ & min = air & org. comp." You should not note-take in complete sentences. Note-taking should be quick and accurate. You should not take notes over material you already know or that which is common sense. Be efficient!

Quiz yourself. Ask yourself the questions from the end of the chapter, and briefly write down your answers. It's okay if you have to look back in the chapter to find the information.

Study vocabulary words. Go back through and write down brief definitions of the vocabulary words you didn't already know. No need to write down definitions to words you already knew.

Retell yourself the chapter. This is an important step. Go back through and use the headings, vocabulary words, pictures, etc. to see what you can remember from the chapter on your own. If you draw a blank when trying to remember a section, that is a section you should reread. (For this exercise, you may skip this step.)

16. Answer the three questions you jotted down from the end of the chapter. When you are really studying this chapter, you should look for the answers to any question you are not sure of. Don't, however, "study" the information you already know.

17. Write down the definitions for three of the vocabulary words you jotted down for step 8 above.

18. Finally, which two of these strategies seem like they would be helpful to you? How could you use them in a college course?