

Don't just read, read with a purpose! Use one or more of these methods to take notes and create study guides from your textbook readings!

If your textbook...

...Has chapters, subheadings, list of key terms, etc.:

- Use subheadings to create questions and search for answers while reading.
- Skim text before reading and look for main ideas, key terms in bold, etc., to help you stay focused.
- Make copy of review questions at back of chapter to guide your reading.
- Does the text have online companion? Use it!

...Is not broken up by subheadings, has long chapters or no chapters, has very small, dense text:

- Break down each reading assignment into equal parts.
- Resist the urge to over-highlight.
- At the end of each page or most logical break, look away from the text and mentally summarize.
- As soon as your mind starts to wander, stop reading, and write a brief summary in your own words of what you have read. Then check your accuracy with the text.

...Is math, science, detail-oriented and problem-based:

- Create a list/set of flashcards of terms, formulas, etc. that you will need.
- Make notes of questions to ask professor.
- When examples are given, work through each step to make sure you understand.
- Create a diagram, chart, or concept map of how info connects.
- 'Over work' problems to prepare for new problems on tests and quizzes.

Create your own guidelines for marking your textbooks effectively!

How to mark in your textbook

- Underline or mark the key ideas in your text. You don't have to underline complete sentences; just underline enough to make sense when you review your markings.
- Learn to be brief, fast and neat in your marking or highlighting.
- Use different kinds of marks and symbols to mark your text.
- Most college texts have wide margins. Use these margins to write questions, outlines or key points to remember.
- Use your marks to help you organize what you have read. Write in numbers or letters and use different colors of highlighters to help you organize ideas.
- Quickly review the important points after you have marked each section. Quickly review again when you have finished the chapter. If you review within 20 minutes, the review will be faster and easier.

If you tend to over mark in your textbooks

- Try to aim for marking or highlighting about 20% of the most important material. If you mark too much of your reading, it will be difficult to review the main points
- If you are tempted to mark too much, use the double system of first underlining with a pencil as much as you want and then using a highlighter to pick out the most important 20% of the material in the chapter.
- Read each paragraph first. Ask yourself, "What is the main point?" Highlight or mark the main point if it is important. Not every paragraph has a main point that needs to be marked.

If you don't have a system to mark your textbook

- Use a single underline or double underline.
- Put a bracket around an important paragraph.
- Use numbers or letters.
- Use circles and squares to make important words stand out.
- Use an asterisk or star in the margin to mark a very important idea.
- Write a "?" in the margin if you do not understand.
- Write "DEF" in the margin to point out a definition.
- Use your imagination to come up with your own consistent symbols.