

An Overview of the Reading Process

1. What is Active Reading

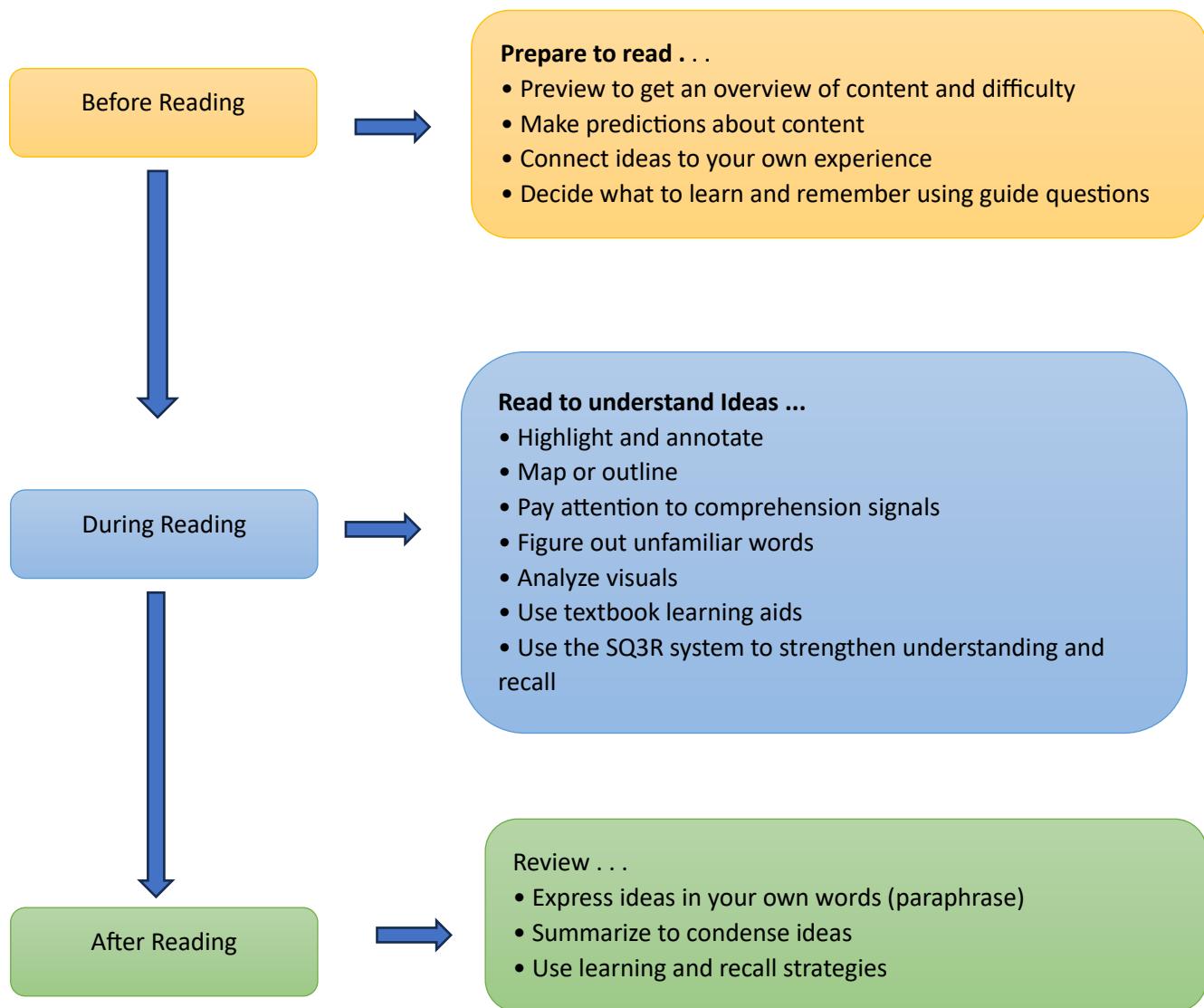
Active readers are **involved** with what they are reading. They **interact** with the author and his or her ideas.

Table 1 Active Versus Passive Reading

Active Readers . . .	Passive Readers ...
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tailor their reading strategies to suit each assignment.2. Analyze the purpose of a reading assignment.3. Adjust their reading speed to suit their purposes.4. Question ideas in the assignment.5. Skim the headings or introduction and conclusion to find out what an assignment is about before beginning to read.6. Make sure they understand what they are reading as they go along.7. Read with pencil in hand. highlighting, jotting notes, and marking key vocabulary.8. Develop personalized strategies that are particularly effective.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read all assignments the same way.2. Read an assignment because it was assigned.3. Read everything at the same speed.4. Accept whatever is in print as true.5. Check the length of an assignment and then begin reading.6. Read until the assignment is completed.7. Simply read.8. Follow routine, standard methods.

2. What is the Reading Process

Reading is much more than moving your eyes across a page. It is a multi-step process that involves numerous strategies to use before, during, and after reading that will help you understand and remember what you read and prepare you to write in response to what you read.



3. Pre-Reading Strategies

Just as you probably would not jump into a pool without checking its depth, you should not begin reading an article or textbook chapter without knowing what it is about and how the author organized it.

3.1. Preview before reading

Previewing is a way of quickly familiarizing yourself with the organization and content of a chapter or article before beginning to read it.

How to Preview Articles, Essays, and Textbook Chapters

Think of previewing as getting a sneak peek at what a reading will be about.

1. Read the title and subtitle of the selection. The title provides the overall topic of the article, essay, or textbook chapter. The subtitle suggests the specific focus, aspect, or approach the author will take toward the overall topic.
2. Check the author's name. If it is familiar, what do you know about the author?
3. Read the introduction or the first paragraph. The introduction or first paragraph introduces the subject and suggests how the author will develop it.
4. Read each boldfaced (dark print) heading. Headings announce the major topic of each section.
5. Read the first sentence under each heading, which often states the central thought of the section.
6. If the reading lacks headings, read the first sentence of each of a few paragraphs on each page to discover main ideas.
7. Note any graphic aids. Graphs, charts, photographs, and tables often suggest what is important in the selection, as they have been chosen to support the author's message. Be sure to read the captions for photographs and the legends on graphs, charts, or tables.
8. Read the last paragraph or summary. This may provide a condensed view of the selection, often reviewing key points, or it may draw the reading to a close. If the last paragraph is lengthy, read only the last few sentences.

3.2. Make predictions

Predictions are educated guesses about the material to be read. For example, you might predict an essay's focus, a chapter's method of development, or the key points to be presented within a chapter section. While previewing a reading assignment, make predictions about its content and organization, and anticipate what topics the author will cover and how the topics will be organized using these questions:

- What clues does the author give?
- What will this material be about?
- What logically would follow next?

TABLE 1-2 SAMPLE PREDICTIONS

Heading	Prediction
Where and When Do You Fit in Time for Study?	The author will provide tips on how to find time to study.
Opening Sentence	Prediction
Most college students, at one point or another, have probably run into the concept of a <i>learning style</i> , but what exactly is it?	The author will define the term <i>learning style</i> .

3.3. Connect reading to prior knowledge and experience

After previewing your assignment, you should take a moment to think about what you already know about the topic-this is your **prior knowledge**. Activating your prior knowledge aids your reading in three ways: (1) it makes reading easier, because you have already thought about the topic; (2) the material is easier to remember, because you can connect it with what you already know; and (3) topics become more interesting if you can link them to your own experiences.

Here are some techniques to help you activate your background knowledge, using "Secrets for Surviving College" as an example.

- Ask questions and try to answer them. What have I learned in the past about improving my grades? What do I already know about study methods?
- Draw on your own experience. What have I done in the past that improved my grades? What are my friends who are successful in school doing that results in their being successful in class and in taking exams?
- Brainstorm. Jot down or type everything that comes to mind about doing well in college and improving your grades. List facts and questions, or describe cases you have recently heard or read about.

At first, you may think you know very little—or even nothing—about a particular topic, but by using one of these techniques, you will find that you almost always know something relevant.

3.4. Form guide questions

Did you ever read an entire page or more and not remember anything you read? Guide questions can help you overcome this problem. You develop guide questions to answer while or after you read. Here are some headings with examples of the kinds of questions you might ask about them.

HEADING	QUESTIONS
Reducing Prejudice	How can prejudice be reduced? What type of prejudice is discussed?
The Deepening Recession	What is a recession? Why is it deepening?
Newton's First Law of Motion	Who was Newton? What is his First Law of Motion?

References

McWhorter, K. T. (2016). In Concert: Reading and Writing (2nd ed.). Pearson