

Efficient reading

Efficient reading is active. It integrates pre-reading strategies (see below) with an active note making/mapping process.

Pre-reading

Pre-reading allows the reader to build up background knowledge and to select what to read. Pre-reading involves

- survey/overview
- skim
- scan

Survey/overview

Look quickly and superficially at the whole text.

What is it? What is it about? What is likely to be covered?

Skim

Read quickly and superficially:

- general idea
- knowledge of context

How to skim

- read the introduction and first sentence of each paragraph (topic sentences) conclusion
- read any headings
- look for linking words—link ideas (therefore, in addition, because, resulting in, since, compare/contrast words.)

&

Scan

Reading quickly for:

- specific information
- knowledge of context

How to scan

- answer questions who, what, where, when, why
- look for—key words, phrases, dates or names (look for capital letters and numbers)
- move eyes systematically over page

Try this method for more efficient reading.

1. **Read the title and the introduction.**
Highlight information that tells the reader what the article is about. Highlight the main points to be covered.
2. **Read the conclusion.**
Highlight the part where the main points are repeated.
3. **Read any headings, sub-headings** and words in **bold** or *italics*.
Highlight key words
4. **Read the topic sentence** for each paragraph (usually the first or second sentence).
Highlight key words in each topic sentence. Then put the article away.
5. **Brainstorm** all the information you can remember from the article.
Use paper **horizontally/landscape** style so more information can fit on the page.
Write down all **key words** you can remember.
Draw **diagrams** or **illustrations**.
6. If relevant, read the article in depth.

Understanding what you read

Dealing with unfamiliar words -

- **Pre-read** to build up background knowledge.
- Read the **whole sentence**; do not focus on difficult words.
- Read the **whole paragraph** if a sentence is difficult to understand.
- Try to **read whole thoughts** not single words.
- Focus on **general understanding**, not word by word.

Use the context

Below are techniques writers use to help their readers understand the meaning of new or difficult words.

1. Restatement - restates or explains the meaning of difficult words.
Look for these words **or, in other words, that is, such as, which is, that is to say or –(dash)**.
2. Example - explains the meaning by giving an example.
Look for language like: **such as, for example, for instance, including**.
3. Comparison - a difficult word is often compared to a familiar word.
The following words are often used to show comparison: **like, as, as if**.
4. Contrast - a difficult word may be contrasted with familiar word.
The following words show contrast: **but, on the other hand, however, yet, not although**.

Remember!

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | Use of pre-reading techniques enhance cognition , that is learning. |
| 2. | Use of concept maps , for example, diagrams and flow charts, is a useful way of organising information. |
| 3. | Pre-reading , like other preparation strategies is a useful tool. |
| 4. | Although many students do not use them, pre-reading strategies are a very useful study tool. |

Use a dictionary effectively

Buy a **pocket** sized dictionary. Ask for advice about what will be the best dictionary for you.
Use your dictionary **after** you have done the **pre-reading** and know the general idea.
Try to look up only the **key words**; do not waste time looking up unimportant words.
Use an **English/English** dictionary — translate only as a last resort