

5 Strategies for Preparing to Read

1. Create a KWL chart or other graphic note organizer

- Activating your prior knowledge helps connect new information to old – aiding learning
- Not necessary for *every* reading assignment, helpful for complex or high-stakes reading

K	W	L
What I KNOW	What I WANT to know	What I Learned

2. Survey the Chapter/Article/Assigned Section

- For 20-30 min:
- Note title, scope and structure
- Note questions at the beginning and/or end of the chapter
- Read major section headings and sub-headings
- Note vocabulary and main ideas
- Take notes on all of these items

3. Set Reading Goals

- How important is this reading to achieving my larger class/learning goals?
- How much time will I need for this assignment?
- How will I maintain focus?
- “My goal for the next ____ minutes is to read ____ pages in order to learn _____. I will use _____ as a strategy to read well and stay on task.”
- Evaluate your performance during and after reading

4. Master the Vocabulary

- Note words you do not know
- Begin to learn them in regular, repeated small chunks of time
- Use Quizlet or other on-line quiz tool

5. Read introductory books first

- For difficult topics that you are struggling to understand, start with easy material
- On-line summaries
- Children’s books or “Dummies” books will give basic foundation
- *Note: you can’t ONLY use this low-level material, but it can get you over the first hurdle*

Adapted from Fishel, J. (2015). Straight A’s are not enough. Flying Heron Books.

Not enough time to read?

First step – Reflect! Check your time management – are you using time wisely?



If you really are short on dedicated time to read, try these skimming strategies:

1. **Make a KWL chart or other organizer for chapter topic**
(3 columns: What you already KNOW, what you WANT to know and [later] what you LEARNED)
2. **Survey the chapter**
3. **Set reading goals**

For low-level understanding	For moderate understanding	For the best learning in a condensed amount of time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skim each section for key facts (and write them down) • Go back through list and organize/categorize/prioritize • Focus on reviewing most important facts • Complete “Learned” section of KWL <p>*DOING ONLY THESE THINGS WILL NOT LEAD TO DEEP LEARNING!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skim each section, sub-section, page or paragraph and <i>write</i> the main idea (don’t just highlight) • After each main section, stop and write a brief summary. Look back at your notes to see if you have included all main ideas • When you complete the assigned selection, write a summary of entire reading. Check back over all section summaries to be sure you’ve included all information • Complete “Learned” section of KWL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write questions based on survey of text • Answer the questions (in writing or out loud, and in your own words!) as you skim through text. Make note of perceived importance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Continue to write new questions as needed ◦ If some questions are unanswered, refer to index and try to find the answer elsewhere. Internet searches, friends from class, study groups, help sessions and OFFICE HOURS are your best resources if you are stuck. • Evaluate your understanding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ If confused, reread, formulate the question you’re stuck on, then seek help ◦ Rate the quality of your questions and answers. Do they make connections/distinctions/applications? Do they analyze the material?

Note: None of these strategies will lead to mastery on their own, but some understanding is better than none at all! For true mastery, you will need to apply more intense reading strategies like SQ3R*.

*More information available at www.bucknell.edu/LearningCenter under Effective Learning Strategies

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