

1. Preview the text to get an overall idea of what it's about. Read the chapter titles and section headings. Look over the photographs or illustrations and any sidenotes or special features in the margins. Scan the text for any bolded terms. If there are questions at the end of the chapter, preview those, too.
2. Focus your reading by deciding on a purpose. Of course you are reading because you are required to for class, but choosing another purpose will help you stay on track as you read. For example, if the assigned reading is a chapter from your history ~~book~~ about the Cold War, one purpose for reading might be to discover the major players in the war, or the major causes of the war. Use the 5 "Ws" in setting your purpose: Who, what, when, where and why.
3. Keep track of what you read by taking notes. There are a variety of ways to take notes. Some people prefer to jot down important ideas in a notebook. Others might create an outline. If you learn best by seeing the text in graphic form, try creating a ~~chart~~ diagram or even sketching pictures of what you read.
4. Mark the text in your book. If you own the book and are comfortable with writing in it, use a highlighter to capture key ideas. Write notes in the margins, including definitions for difficult words or points your instructor makes during lectures. If you don't own the book or prefer not to write in it, use sticky notes instead; stick them right in your book.
5. Be certain you've understood what you've read by stopping after each chunk of text and summarize the main ideas. If you're working in a study group, stop after each paragraph and have each person write a summary of the paragraph. Then compare summaries so no one misses any key points.
6. Paraphrase bits of text, especially those that are difficult to understand. When you paraphrase something, you essentially translate it into your own words.
7. Stop and look up a word only if knowing the word is essential to understanding the text. If the sentence still makes sense even if you do not know the word, skip it and keep on reading. If you're curious about the word look it up later, but don't let it interfere with your reading. A good way to remember new words is to create flashcards and quiz yourself.

