



How to Study Psychology

Visit the Office of Academic Support

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Reading Does Not Mean Studying

Reading a textbook is not the same as reading a novel.

Apply active reading strategies:

- Start with the chapter summary because it structures the chapter and highlights the main ideas.
- Turn chapter headings into questions so that when you are reading, your purpose is to answer the question.
- Write down the questions and answers in the margin of your book or in a notebook.
- Apply the concepts that you are reading to your life or to something meaningful to be will be more likely to remember them.

Study the Important Terms in the Text

- Create flashcards or index cards to learn unfamiliar words. Important words are often in **bold** or *italics*.
- Use the website www.quizlet.com to create flashcards and online quizzes.
- Provide examples for the definitions so that you can recognize the terms beyond their literal meaning.
- Pay attention to data and information in tables and boxes.
- Create concept maps when studying in order to organize information.
- Use mnemonics (pronounced *neh-mahn-icks*) to remember material by associating the meanings of words to familiar words and visual images.
- Use your textbook's online companion site for extra practice.

Come to Class Prepared

Read the text before class:

- Understanding the material **before** class will help keep you engaged and active **during** class.
- If you are unsure of a concept that you have read, listen for that concept during class and use your time in class as an opportunity to ask questions and clarify your understanding.
- Keep up with the reading every week to avoid cramming before an exam.

Become “Active” in Class

Listen carefully to what your professor says and participate in the class discussion.

Take notes on important concepts that are discussed in class. Include examples of those concepts, including personal examples that help you relate to the material.

Write down questions that pertain to the material taught in class:

- Listen for the answers during the class to clarify anything you read that was confusing.
- If your questions remain unanswered, ask them after class, in an email to the professor, during a session with a tutor or with classmates as part of a study group.

Plan Your Study Time

- Establish a study routine at the beginning of the semester so that you can pace your study time throughout the semester.
- Studying throughout the semester will ensure that you won't wait until the last minute to prepare for an exam. Studying in advance is the key to your feeling confident that you know the material and will help you succeed in the course.
- Apply the two-hour rule: Devote two hours of studying for every one hour of class.
- Plan to study in a distraction-free environment.
- Study in 45-minute increments to maximize concentration.
- Take regular breaks to recharge.

How to Study Your Notes

Read your notes as you would a textbook:

- Write questions or comments in the margins so during studying you can test yourself by answering the questions.
- Explain your notes out loud. Imagine that you are teaching the material to someone else or work with a partner.
- Predict test questions based on your notes.
- Review your notes frequently.

Test Yourself

- Use the practice quizzes either at the end of each chapter, from your textbook's online companion site, or on Quizlet to test your knowledge after each chapter or module.
- Read the material once or twice and test yourself multiple times. This approach is more effective than reading something multiple times and testing yourself once.
- Learn from the types of errors that you are making so that you can adjust your preparation.
- Reinforce your knowledge of the material with various study techniques (flash cards, mnemonics and working in study groups).

If You Would Like to Learn More About How to Study Psychology

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