

## ***Searching for Key Ideas in a Text***

It is important to glance over textbook material to get a feel for what you will be reading. This helps prepare your mind to take on new information. Your task here is to read each section below and with your textbook answer the bolded questions.

### **SURVEY EACH CHAPTER**

Before you actually read a chapter you should perform a survey. Your survey should tell you the scope of the content, how different topics are organized, and what the author's purpose and point of view are.

1. Note the chapter title.
2. Note the chapter objectives.
3. Read the chapter summary or review.
4. Read the major headings and subheadings.
5. Note the visual aids.
6. Note the italicized and/or underlined words and terms.

Q. Choose a chapter in your text. Mark down the chapter and title. After reading the objectives and summary briefly explain in your own words what it is about.

### **SURVEY THE ILLUSTRATIONS**

Our society is visually oriented. Illustrations can literally replace hundreds of words and convey a message more dramatically and quickly than a comparable section of text. Formats range from equations, theorems, and formulas to tables and graphic illustrations.

Q. What visual aids are present in the chapter (table, graph, etc.)? Pick one and briefly explain what message it is trying to get across.

Ask questions before, during, and after reading the material

As you survey the material, ask yourself questions about what you'll be reading and what you will try to answer. Turn the headings and subheadings into questions. These questions give you a real reason for reading and will help you concentrate on the subject you are reading.

Imagine, as you read your textbook that the author is speaking directly to you. Question the author's statements. Challenge the ideas presented by looking at the material critically. Ask the standard questions: what, why, and how.

Q. Choose a section and by reading the heading and subheadings write down a question about the material you will be reading. After reading the section what is one question you would like to challenge the author on?

### **READ FOR THE MAIN IDEAS AND ORGANIZATION**

Now you should read actively with these certain questions in mind and attempt to answer the questions and organize the material. These answers will be the important facts and details. Read everything in a chapter including any of the visual aids such as picture captions, graphs, charts, etc. Note any words or phrases that are italicized, underlined, or in bold print (there's a reason this material is highlighted!) The tendency in reading is to keep going, but you should stop at the end of each section to see if you can answer the questions you asked at the start of the section.

Find the main ideas in each chapter or section. Textbook authors write as you have been taught to write: they develop a topic sentence and/or paragraph, substantiate it, and draw conclusions.

Q. What is the main idea in the section you read?

## **SUMMARIZE ALOUD WHAT YOU HAVE READ**

Recite the main ideas, in your own words, aloud or to yourself, after finishing a page. Check your comprehension and make sure you have the correct information. Do the same for the major points after reading each section or chapter.

By reciting what you've read, you are able to see how much information you absorbed, areas you didn't understand and need to review, and answers to the questions you generated for yourself. If you cannot answer your questions, go back to the material and reread.

## **RECORD**

Write down the central points for the chapter or section in your notebook. Be prepared for class so you can ask questions you don't understand.

## **TAKING NOTES**

*Summaries* enable you to write a brief summation of a section in your own words. Mark down only those points that are clearly essential.

*Use your own words.* Your notes and summaries should be in your own words so you can readily recall the original material as you review.

Q. What are the main points the author uses to back up the central idea?

## **REVIEW CONSTANTLY**

Reviewing is an essential part of retention. Review your textbook notes shortly after you have written them and continue to review them periodically.

Spend a few minutes going over your earlier notes before beginning a new reading assignment. This will help you keep the overall picture of the author's development in mind and will let you place the new material properly within that arrangement.

Review any and all supplements to your text. These usually contain quizzes and self-test on material in your text which will prepare you better for examinations. Constantly review throughout the course will greatly reduce the time you will need to spend preparing for exams and will make that time less stressful ("cramming") and more relaxing ("reviewing").