

Reading Strategy: Preview, Read, Recall

Preview, Read, Recall (PRR) is one easy way to think about the three main components of active reading. Rather than passively skimming a text only to find that you can hardly remember anything, actively engaging with what you're reading can help you retain more information, increase your understanding, and feel more confident with essays and exams.



PREVIEW

Before you start reading, spend 5-10 minutes briefly skimming the chapter, article, or unit to get a general sense of what it's about. What are you reading for? Consider features like headings and sub-headings, figures, tables, charts, key terms, intros/summaries, etc. Then, you'll have a framework for going into the text.

Develop a few key questions you have going into the chapter, such as:

- What do you think this reading will focus on?
- Can you anticipate any arguments for/against the topic?
- Are there important contextual elements? (Field, time period, etc.)
- What do you think you will find most confusing? Most interesting?
- What's the difficulty level?
- Are there any vocabulary terms you need to know before going in?

READ

When you get to reading the text itself, don't try to tackle a long reading all at once. Divide your reading into realistic "chunks" and take short breaks between sections or chapters to improve your focus.

After each section, do something with the information you've read:

- Make an annotation (even if it's just whether you agree/disagree)
- Underline or highlight a few key terms or a standout quote
- Jot down a question or related class concept
- Rewrite the main point of the section in your own words

RECALL

This is one of the most essential steps in active reading, and yet it's one many readers neglect. To enter information into your long-term memory, your brain needs to work at recalling that info right away. Here are some recall strategies to try:

- Write "exam questions" or discussion questions based on this reading, then try to answer them
- Without looking at the text, try to write a summary of the reading in your own words
- Explain or teach what you learned to someone else, like a study partner, or recite your take on the concepts out loud
- Make an outline of the author's ideas/arguments
- Transform your reading notes into a diagram, outline, or other visual aid

Want more help? Make an individual appointment with a TAEC Learning Specialist at our [website](#).



Adapted from the [Sanger Learning Center](#), UT Austin

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