

Comprehension Strategies Self-Assessment

Read each question carefully and answer yes or no.

	Question	Yes	No
1	I have a purpose in mind when I read		
2	I take notes while reading or receiving instructions in order to help me understand what I am learning		
3	I think about what I know to help me understand what I read or what is being asked of me		
4	I take an overall view of the text or assignment to see what it is about before I read/begin		
5	I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read		
6	When a text or assignment becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand		
7	I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose		
8	I read slowly and carefully to make sure I understand what I am reading or being asked to do		
9	I review the text/assignment first by noting its characteristics like length and organisation		
10	I try to get back on track when I lose concentration		
11	I underline or circle information in the text/assignment to help me remember it		
12	I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading		
13	I use reference materials (e.g., a dictionary) to help me understand when I read		
14	When text becomes difficult, I pay close attention to what I am reading		
15	When assignments become difficult, I return to the instructions to help me understand what is expected of me		
16	I use tables, figures, and pictures in texts/assignments to increase my understanding		
17	I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading or what is being asked of me		
18	I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading or what is being asked of me		
19	I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) of better understand what I read or what is being asked of me		
20	I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read or what is being asked of me		

	Question	Yes	No
21	I use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key information in texts or assignments		
22	I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text or assignment		
23	I go back and forth in the text/assignment to find relationships among ideas in it		
24	I check my understanding when I come across new information		
25	When text or an assignment becomes difficult, I reread to increase my understanding		
26	I ask myself questions I would like to have answered while reading the text or completing the assignment		
27	At the end of the reading/assignment, I check to see if my questions about the text/assignment have been answered		
28	When I read, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases		
29	When reading I translate from English into my native language		
30	When reading I think about information in both English and my mother tongue		
31	I scan through the chapter introduction/chapter summaries before reading the whole text		
32	I carefully read through the whole assignment before starting		
33	I ask a lot of WH-questions (who, what, where, when, and why) related to the subject matter to myself before I read or start an assignment		
34	I use different colours or highlighters to differentiate main ideas from supporting details when reading or writing an assignment draft		
35	When starting an assignment or a new reading, I try to see the connection between topics discussed in other readings or in-class		
36	When I am reading a topic, I try to think of cases I know from my own experience that are connected to that topic		
37	If I don't understand a text well, I try to find other sources (i.e., books, articles from websites, etc.) about the subject concerned		
38	If I don't understand a text or instructions well, I approach my lecturer for further explanation		
39	When I have difficulty in understanding a text, I try to analyze why it is difficult for me		
40	If I am unsure of what I am reading or what is expected of me, I solve my doubts/exchange opinions with my classmates		

In-Class and Assignment Strategies

Chunk the text.

1. For each passage or set of instructions, choose two to three key vocabulary words and provide pictures of those items translate the words into your native language if you're unfamiliar with the terms.
2. After each chunk of text/step in the instructions, write a one-sentence summary of the section using your own words. Then move on to the next section of text/instruction.

Try the ConStruct Procedure.

1. Start by rapidly skimming the text or assignment: look at the title, the subtitles, the first sentence of each paragraph, any illustrations, charts, etc.
2. Then, start a diagram or note sheet that includes the important information you have found.
3. Next, do a more thorough reading of the text/assignment, this time reading to understand, but with no stress toward remembering points. Add any new important material to your diagram.
4. Before beginning a third and fourth reading, look over the diagram/note sheet and make sure that it makes sense. Try to figure out what does not make sense and check back through the text to find this information.
5. The final reading involves looking for more specific details, and anything that will fill out the diagram.

Develop some QuickQs.

Create a list of questions to go through (either mentally or on paper) each time you receive a new task or assignment, such as:

- What is the purpose of this assignment?
- What is the main outcome they are wanting me to demonstrate?
- Do I fully understand what is being asked of me?
- Am I able to separate what I do understand from what I don't?
- Are there additional resources that I can reference to help me understand?

Put information into your own context.

Try to take concepts and definitions from the textbook and connect the information to something you already know. Material in isolation can be harder to remember than material that is connected to other concepts – especially ones that you already know well.

Incorporate repetition.

For a concept to move from working memory into long-term memory, it needs to be memorable and repeated. Repetition techniques can involve things like flash cards and self-testing. Space out your studying and repetition over several days and start to increase the time in between each study session – varying your study sessions and techniques can significantly improve your information recall.

Learn in multiple ways.

Read the textbook and your notes, look for videos or podcasts that explain concepts, read out loud to yourself, draw a mind map, and try to think of creative ways to engage your visual learning, verbal learning, and auditory learning. This helps to retain the information into multiple 'storage areas' in the brain, which can help to move beyond memorization and towards understanding.

Textbook Reading Strategies

BEFORE READING

Preview the reading.

Look through the reading to get a feel for what topics will be discussed. Look at the titles, headings and subtitles, the vocabulary lists and glossaries, bolded words, the diagrams, as well as any special interest boxes or captions in the margins. These are the main topics that the authors have already identified for you and you can use these to structure your notes.

Come up with a game plan.

You don't necessarily have to do your reading in order. You can get an overview of the entire reading assignment and then decide where you want to start. Consider a brief review of the information you already know, and spend your energy on any information that is less familiar to you. Set a purpose for your reading – what do you need to understand, know, or be able to do after reading? Consider formatting your notes in this way or writing a list of questions that you want to answer while reading.

WHILE YOU READ

Incorporate auditory learning.

Consider reading out loud to yourself or using a screen reader for digital textbooks. Reading and listening at the same time can help to reinforce new material.

Take breaks and pace yourself.

Make sure you take a 10 minute break every 30-45 minutes. Set a timer. Your brain needs breaks in order to process and store information but also to keep it fresh and focused.

Find your routine.

There are many different strategies that may work for helping you effectively learn information from your readings. Consider trying the following:

- Write in your textbook.
- Highlight with a strategy.
- Mark the passages that you want to review and come back to them later.
- Read with a partner.
- Read an entire section or page before taking any notes.
- Take notes using your own words.
- Try to take concepts and definitions and connect them to something you already know. Material in isolation can be harder to remember than material that is connected to other concepts.

AFTER READING

Review your notes.

Reviewing your notes allows you to think again about the concepts you've learned. Repetition is key to having information stick in your brain. Focus on main concepts and related them to material covered in class. Consider creating flash cards or a sheet of mnemonic devices to help your memory.

Incorporate multiple learning strategies.

Read your notes out loud, draw a mind map, and try to think of creative ways to engage your visual learning, verbal learning, and auditory learning. This helps to retain the information into multiple 'storage areas' in the brain, which can help to move beyond memorization and towards understanding.

Note Taking Strategies

Develop a system.

Your brain craves routine, so finding a good one for notetaking will set you up for success. For example, don't wait until the lecture starts to get your orienting information (date, class, topic, etc.) down. Take some time before the week begins to set up your notetaking space for the coming week so that when you get to class, you're ready to start taking notes as soon as the lecturer starts.

Be prepared.

Preview your text or reading assignments prior to lecture. Previewing allows you to identify main ideas and concepts that will most likely be discussed during the lecture. Look at your course syllabus so that you know the topic/focus of the class and what's going to be important to focus on. Briefly review notes from previous class sessions to help you situate the new ideas you'll learn in this class. Keep organized to help you find information more easily later. Title your page with the class name and date. Keep separate notebook sections or notebooks for each class and keep all notes for each class together in one space, in chronological order.

Don't just write word-for-word

Record questions and thoughts you have or content that is confusing to you that you want to follow-up on later or ask your professor about. Jot down keywords, dates, names, etc. that you can then go back and define or explain later.

Determine what's important enough to write down.

There is no right format to use when taking notes. Rather, there are many different structures and styles that can be used. What's important is that you find a method that works for you and encourages the use of good note-taking qualities and stick with it. Here are a few types of formats that you may want to experiment with:

- Cornell Notes
- Charting Method
- Flowchart/Concept Maps
- Sentence Method

More information on each method can be found here: <https://www.oxfordlearning.com/5-effective-note-taking-methods/>

Follow up after class.

Part of good note-taking includes revisiting your notes a day or so after class. During this time, check for clarity, fill in definitions of key terms, organize, and figure out any concepts you may have missed or not fully understood in class. Figure out what may be missing and what you may need to add or even ask about. Utilize your instructor's office hours, a study group, self-testing strategies, or rewrite your notes in order to reinforce your learning.