

Introduction

Reading is an essential element at every stage of one's life particularly in schools, colleges and at workplace (for persons occupying executive posts). This is because reading is a means of discovering information to expand one's knowledge and understanding of the subject of any kind. That is why it is said "Reading is to mind what exercise is to the body". The more you read, the stronger your mind is. As the exercise strengthens the body reading strengthens the mind.

Benefits of reading

- Reading develops a person's creativity. Reading a book allows a student to exercise and cultivate her/his creative thinking skills.
- Developing good reading skills can improve students' ability to comprehend concepts and ideas.
- Reading develops critical thinking, thus, ensuring that students will be able to think and make good decisions for themselves.
- One's fluency in a language and, consequently, communication skills are improved by reading.
- Reading introduces students to new things and has the ability to broaden their interests.
- Reading regularly increases the vocabulary.

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- Reading can develop positive values in students.
 - According to studies, reading increases a student's ability to concentrate.
 - Developing students' reading and comprehension skills early on in their education also means that they are preparing them for the "real world."
 - Spelling improves when words are seen in print.
 - Reading also improves students' writing skills as they are able to "subconsciously acquire good writing style."

The fact that students reap great benefits from reading cannot be doubted or questioned. It is for this reason that you must develop a real love for reading and become lifelong readers.

Tips for effective reading

Throughout your career as a student you will be required to read a variety of texts and gather material for assignments. Here are some guidelines for effective reading.

1. Preview
2. Question
3. Take notes
4. Summarise
5. Review and reflect

1. Preview

When skimming, you should follow the procedure below, adapting it to your purpose.

- Read the title.
- Note the writer's name.
- Note the date and place of publication.
- Read the first paragraph completely.
- Read sub-headings and first sentences of remaining paragraphs.

As you read, pick up main ideas, key words (words that tell you who, what, when, where, how many, and how much), and transition markers (words like 'however', 'alternatively', 'additionally', and so on), which suggest the direction of ideas in the text.

2. Question

Effective reading is active reading. To turn reading from a passive into an active exercise, always ask questions.

To do this, you must be clear about the purpose of your reading. If you are reading a text which you will be critiquing in detail, your questions will be different from those you would ask if you were reading a number of texts for background information. If you are gathering material for an essay, formulate some tentative ideas about the approaches you might take, modifying them as you accumulate material.

As you read, list all the words about which you are uncertain; look them up in the dictionary and write down their meanings.

3. Take notes

Some reasons for taking notes are:

- to maintain attentiveness as you read,
- to focus your attention,
- to familiarize yourself on a given subject,
- to analyse the assumptions and strategies of the writer,

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- to provide you with a summary of the material.

Some hints for taking notes:

- Always record bibliographical details of the text from which you are taking notes.
- Write on one side of the paper only.
- Leave a wide margin for comments and cross-references.
- Use headings, subheadings, and diagrams.
- Keep notes brief enough to make sense to you.
- Make sure they're legible.

4. Summarise

Making a summary from your notes has two main benefits.

- It allows you to test yourself on your understanding of the material you have been reading.
- It provides you with a compact account of the text for further reference.

5. Review and reflect

It's important to review and reflect upon what you've read. This enhances your understanding and helps you to commit important facts and ideas to your long-term memory.

The SQ3R technique

SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. It is a proven technique to sharpen textbook reading skills. In college, you'll frequently be assigned multiple chapters for several different courses in books that can be quite complicated. SQ3R helps reading purposeful and meaningful, so that you use your time most effectively. Here's how this strategy works.

Survey

Get an idea of what the chapter is about by reviewing the highlights:

- Read the title, headings, and subheadings.
- Take note of words that are italicized or bold.
- Look at charts, graphs, pictures, maps, and other visual material.
- Read captions.
- Read the beginning and end of the chapter.

Question

As you survey the text, ask a question for each section. Ask what, why, how, when,

who and where questions as they relate to the content. Here's how you can create questions:

- Turn the title, headings, or subheadings into questions.
- Rewrite the questions at the end of the chapter or after each subheading in your own words.

Write down your questions. Questions help you pay attention, understand the text better, and recall the information more easily later on.

Read

Read one section of a chapter at a time, actively looking for an answer to your question for that section. Pay attention to bold and italicized text that authors use to make important points. Be sure to review everything in the section, including tables, graphs, and illustrations, as these features can communicate an idea more powerfully than written text.

Recite

At the end of each section, look up from the text and in your own words recite an answer to your question for that section. Then write down your answer. Be sure to provide examples that support it.

Now repeat the Question, Read, and Recite steps for each section of the chapter or assigned reading. First ask a question for the next section. Then read to find the answer. Finally, recite the answer in your own words and jot it down. The written questions and answers will help you study in the future.

Review

After completing each chapter or reading assignment, review your notes. Identify the main points of the reading by looking for the most important idea in each section. Recite, or write a brief summary of the chapter or assignment.

Review your study notes every week to help you remember the information. When it's time to study for your tests, you'll find you've created an invaluable guide.

- Survey** - gather the information you need to focus on
- Question** - decide on the questions you want to be answered
- Read** - look for the answers for the questions you have

- Recite** - after each section stop and think and find out if you remember what was read
- Review** - once you have finished go back to the whole chapters.

Good reading is an act of love; bad reading is an act of self-love.

Different stages of reading



There are different stages of reading and each stage is built on skills mastered in earlier stages. Lack of mastery at any stage can halt the progress beyond that level.

- **Pre-reading:** The learner gains familiarity with the language and its sounds. A person in this stage becomes aware of sound similarities between words, learns to predict the next part in a familiar story, and may start to recognize a few familiar written words. Typically, developing readers achieve this stage about the age of 6.
- **Initial reading stage or decoding stage:** The learner becomes aware of the relationship between sounds and letters and begins applying the knowledge to text. Typically, developing readers usually reach this stage by the age of 6 or 7.
- **Confirmation:** This stage involves confirming the knowledge acquired in the previous two stages and gaining fluency in those skills. Decoding skills continue to improve, and they begin to develop speed in addition to accuracy in word recognition. At this point, the reader should be able to give attention to both meaning and the