



on #11

## TEXTBOOK READING II

This is the second lesson on using systematic study to read and learn more from text books.

### **Q: What am I supposed to learn from textbooks**

All authors want you to learn the main ideas they present in their books. So when you read, a good question to ask yourself is, "What does this author want me to know?" This will help you focus your attention and concentrate on finding main points.

Many students misunderstand reading in textbooks. They think that they should just open their books and begin reading. They only stop when all the words have been read. This is **not** a good way to read. It is slow and often ineffective. In this lesson, you will learn three skills to improve your reading so you can read more in less time and remember better.

### **Q: What do you call this kind of reading?**

Reading like this is called **active reading**. To read well, you must be active; otherwise you may read words but not remember what they say. The opposite of active reading is passive reading.

Passive reading happens when people read but, because they were not concentrating, they have no idea what they read. They were thinking about something else. Passive reading is usually a waste of time. When people read actively they think only about the topics they are reading.

### **Q: How can I read actively?**

Here are three skills or actions you can use to be an active reader. Remember, you must prepare first as you learned in Lesson 10.

1. *Reflective Pauses*. From time to time stop reading and think about what you have just read. Ask yourself, "What are the main points?" "Do I understand?" "What have I learned?" If you can answer questions like these then read on; if not, try rereading.

You should use these skills about two times for an average textbook page. Another way to use reflective pauses is after every paragraph.

2. *Stop and Think.* In this skill you stop reading and think about other things you know which relate to what you are reading. These may be topics, people, places, and ideas which are similar to what you are reading.

This will help you focus your attention and increase interest. You should do this regularly; about every page or so. If you have trouble thinking of ways to relate ideas, you can ask your teacher for help.

3. *Restating.* With restating you put the author's main points in your own words. The best way to do this is to look briefly away from the book and say to yourself (or someone else) what you have read.

If you have trouble, it probably means that you didn't understand well. Then, you should reread. Restating is a good skill to use frequently, about every page. You can also use restating when you "feel" overloaded with information.

### **Q: What is the best way to read?**

The best way to read is the way in which you learn most. This will change from person to person. You will also learn more if you change how you read for different subjects. If one way of reading doesn't work try another. You will learn a lot more about actions you can take to study and to read effectively in the next few lessons.

Below are some guidelines that are good to follow when you are reading textbooks. These will help you learn more as you study.

1. *Read small amounts at one time.* Most people can read faster than they can think; so, it is good to read in many short periods rather than one long period. For example, reading for 45 minutes twice is better than reading for 90 minutes at once.
2. *Spread reading out over many days and weeks.* It is better to read some each day than to read everything right before a test. This is one reason it is good to develop a study plan.
3. *Make sure you have a purpose for what you read.* Have a goal you want to accomplish as a result of reading. These study goals should be directed at the material and not "just to finish 10 pages."
4. *Change how you read if you aren't successful.* Use different skills to control how you learn while reading. For now, you should experiment with all skills to discover which skills you can make work best for you.

**Q: Should I also TEST when I read?**

Yes, you want to read systematically so testing your accomplishments should be the last part of reading. You should test yourself to see if you have met your goal. Here are some questions you can ask about your reading.

1. What were the author's main points?
2. What do I know now that I didn't know before I read?
3. What questions am I likely to be asked about this material?

To test yourself, you can also write a summary from memory, explain the ideas to someone else, and write an idea skeleton.

**Q: How can I get started?**

Identify the material to be covered in your classes for the next week. Make a reading schedule for your textbooks which covers this material. Plan to read an equal amount each day. You can choose how much to read by dividing the total number of pages by 6 or 7 (for the days in a week).

When you have finished each reading assignment, write a summary of the main ideas. Before you read, reread all summaries from previous days. You can use Form 11.1 to make your reading schedule.

