

Effective Reading & Note-Taking Strategies

10 Reading Tips

1. Read before class
2. Find a place to read that is away from distractions
3. Take breaks, reading in 50 to 60 minute blocks
4. Set goals for your reading period
5. If you have trouble staying awake or concentrating, stretch, take a walk, get a snack, and then go back to reading
6. Read during the day
7. If you have questions, write them down in the margin of the textbook or in your lecture notebook
8. Pay attention to the first and last sentence of each paragraph and the words that are bold or italicized
9. Look up words you do not know in the dictionary or glossary
10. Take the time to read something again if you do not understand it

Reading comprehension and note-taking are essential aspects of each college course. There are several methods that can be utilized to better (a) organize and (b) study your materials. A review of some effective techniques can help you find which method(s) is best for you.

Effective note-taking takes practice, but is well-worth it. You will save yourself time in the long-run by ensuring your studying is both efficient and focused. Best of luck applying these strategies in your courses!

PREVIEW

- Read the chapter's title, introductory paragraph, and end of the chapter summary.
- Review chapter headings and sub-headings.
- Look at the sample exercises at the end of the chapter.

Previewing will provide guidance for the development of notecards, outlines, and/or mind maps to consolidate main ideas.

HIGHLIGHT

- Read a section in its entirety to grasp the overall concept.
- Avoid marking irrelevant information, which will distract you from what is important.
- Go back through the material and highlight the main ideas.

Highlighting can be time-consuming. Make sure to focus on marking major ideas. Do not highlight more than you need.

Key Terms

Previewing: method of first looking through the material to help create a connection between what you are about to read and what you already know

Highlighting: an active reading strategy which will help you focus as you read

Mapping: note-taking technique that provides a visual representation of a chapter's content and allows you to organize large amounts of complicated material

KWL Method: reading comprehension procedure that activates prior knowledge by asking (a) what you know, (b) what you want to learn, and (c) what you learned



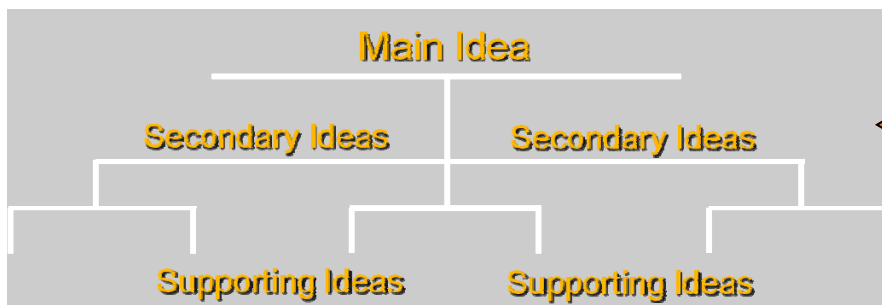
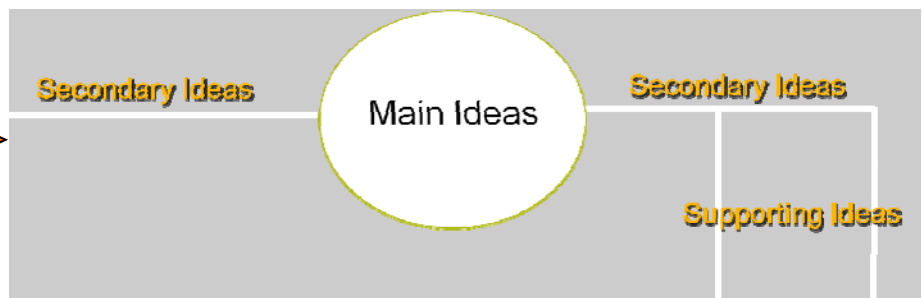
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MAPPING

1. Write down the major ideas.
2. Under these areas, categorize secondary, and tertiary ideas.
3. Use the branches of your map to connect concepts with one another.

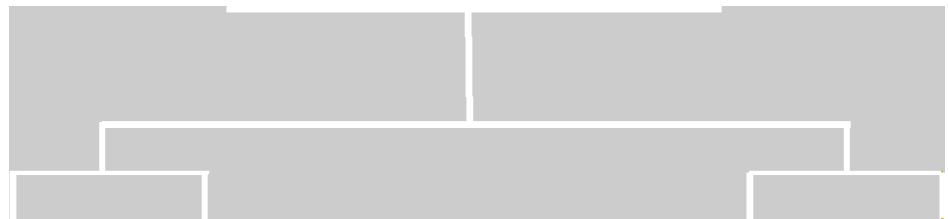
Mapping is a useful technique for both visual and read/write learners. Mapping techniques can be utilized when (a) previewing, (b) reviewing a textbook, or (c) taking notes for class.

Wheel Map



Branching Map

Try to practice a
branching map of
your own:



Additional note-taking tips:

- When taking in-class notes, **use abbreviations** to save both time and space. This can be especially helpful in subject areas where specific terms are used throughout the lesson or course.
- **Ask** your Professor or TA for course notes to supplement the ones you took in class (if not already provided). This can be a good way to review and organize course materials before an exam.
- **Different subjects** may require different methods. For instance, major concepts and sample problems may be critical for your performance in math and physical sciences courses. Get a feel for the main ideas presented by your Instructor as well as anticipating sample, exam questions.
- Remember to find a method of note-taking that works for you. Feel free to use the tips presented in this handout and adapt to your preferred, learning style (e.g., mapping for visual learners).

