

PARROT System for Textbook Reading – A 6 Step Reading Strategy

1. Preview: This step involves looking over the entire reading assignment with the purpose of familiarizing yourself with the concepts that will be covered and the length of the reading assignment. Previewing involves skimming the major headings, illustrations, charts, figures and anything else that stands out from the text. If there is a summary, read it for the first time during the preview stage. This helps you prepare for what is to come and understand how concepts relate to one another. As you preview, you will begin to determine how many pages you can read in 45 – 60 minutes and your level of familiarity with the topics.

2. Ask & Activate: As you preview the material and prepare to read, it is important to formulate questions based on the topics and subheadings. Ask yourself if anything is familiar, hence activating your prior knowledge on the subject. Ask yourself what you can expect to learn or what you need to find out. This creates a purpose for you to begin reading. Determine the exact number of pages you hope to cover within the 45 – 60 minute time frame. Mark in the text where you will stop reading for your break. During this phase you may decide that there are parts of the reading assignment that you are already familiar with and that you may decide to skim that section.

3. Read: When you read the passage that you have selected, do so without a highlighter or pen in hand. Don't take notes or highlight on your first reading because everything seems important the first time you read it. *There is a tendency to over highlight or take notes on information that is not important or that you already know!*

4. Recite: Reciting does not mean word-for-word recitation of what you read. Recite refers to the point at which you stop to check your comprehension by saying aloud, if possible, a summary of the material you have just read, preferably in your own words. The objective of this step is to help you make personal connections to the information in the textbook. As you recite or explain the material you read to yourself, you should be taking note of how the information is organized.

5. Organize: At this step, you should organize the information in a format that will help you better comprehend and study. This may involve creating an outline, developing study cards, constructing a concept map, taking Cornell notes, or another process that suits both your learning style and the level at which you need to recall the material. **DO NOT TAKE NOTES ON MATERIAL YOU KNOW!** This is a waste of your time, and you do not benefit by this activity. You should be focusing your activities at this step on devising methods to recall information that is complex and that you don't have a strong grasp on.

6. Test: Remember, you don't know *what you know*, until you actually test yourself. Use the study questions and/or quiz questions at the end of the chapter, or go on-line to complete the chapter quiz to determine what information you have retained. You can also create your own questions by forming the headings, subheadings, italicized, and bolded words into questions. If you are able to answer all the questions successfully, you are ready to move onto the next reading assignment.

If you get some answers wrong, you only have to go back to the section of the chapter that you got wrong.

Don't punish yourself by rereading information you already know!