

What, Why, and How?

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CRITICAL READING:

Before Reading Strategies

Habits of Highly Effective Readers

Pre-Reading Strategies:

- * Activating Schema
- * PQPC: Preview, Question, Predict, Code
- * KWL+
- * KWHL

WHAT ARE HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE READERS?

1. Effective readers have adaptable reading strategies that match different reading tasks.

Effective readers are aware of and use different reading strategies based on the reading task, and they adapt and adjust these approaches as needed. Different types of reading strategies will be covered in this chapter.

2. Effective readers control time, place and atmosphere to suit their reading task.

What time of day are you most alert (first thing in the morning, midday, before dinner, later in the evening)? What environment suits you best (a quiet library, an active coffee shop, sitting outside)? What atmosphere is best for you to focus (complete isolation and quiet, music playing, a group setting where others are also studying)? Take note of when you are most alert and create optimal situations for when you read.

3. Effective readers spend some time previewing the material before they begin reading it.

Reading without previewing first is like driving into an unknown area without a map. Just like a map can prepare you with a sense of direction, street names and an idea of where things are located, previewing a chapter can give you clues as to what direction the reading will go and what the chapter will contain. Take time to skim:

Titles

Author and author qualifications

Outlines or introductions

Summaries or conclusions

Headings/subheadings

Pictures/graphs/tables

End of chapter questions

Indexes, glossaries, and appendices

4. Effective readers know their limitations of concentration and divide chapters into manageable groupings.

If you have a large reading assignment, break your reading into manageable chunks of time. If you find yourself drifting off or losing focus, take a break. Reading a textbook is hard work. Reward yourself with short breaks. You'll be refreshed and ready to read another chunk of material.

5. Effective readers improve their comprehension by trying to read faster.

The key is not to make reading a frenzied activity, just a focused and uninterrupted one. *A quick warning:* Texts with difficult or technical language may require you to read at a slower pace.

6. Effective readers interact actively with the text.

Active readers mark their texts as they read making notes, comments, and highlighting key concepts. Marking texts also helps put the information into long-term memory and improves comprehension.

7. Effective textbook readers use recitation to reinforce what they have just read.

Take just a few minutes to recite, out loud, some of the important points of the chapter and/or discuss the material with another person. Speaking about ideas from the reading out loud, allows you to add yet another active step to the process of learning.

WHAT IS ACTIVATING SCHEMA?

Schema is our prior knowledge and experience. In other words, it is what we already know on a topic; it is what we are familiar with. You activate your schema when you are presented with new information and you take a moment to think about or discuss what you already know on the subject.

WHY ACTIVATE YOUR SCHEMA?

Daniel Levintin, a cognitive psychologist and neuroscientist, said: “In a sense, schemas are everything. They frame our understanding; they’re the system into which we place the elements and interpretations of an object. Schemas inform our cognitive models and expectations.”

- Drawing on your previous knowledge places new information within a familiar framework which enables you to better understand it.
- As we learn and experience more, our schema expands and so does our ability to understand increasingly complex information.
- Our reading comprehension, and understanding of the world in general, is improved when we activate and build upon our schema (our base of knowledge).

HOW DO WE ACTIVATE SCHEMA?

- 1) **Previewing:** Looking over the title, the introduction, the summary, subheadings/ topic sentences, italicized or bold words, visual aids, and study questions, you are able to form ideas about what the text will address. Integral to this process is also taking inventory of what you already know about the topics: your preexisting schema.
- 2) **Predicting:** After previewing a text, predict what will be addressed in the text. When you predict, you are drawing from what you do know and forming expectations about what will follow.
- 3) **Coding:** As you read, list key words or terms that represent topics or main ideas that the text addresses.
- 4) **Visualizing:** Create mental pictures based on what you are reading.
- 5) **Comprehension Monitoring:** Check what you are doing while reading and also gauge whether or not the techniques you are using are working and why.
- 6) **Creating a Reading Plan:** Assess your needs before starting to read by determining how complex and how long the text is, what needs to be done, and how to go about doing it. Ask yourself what reading strategies would best work, what your purpose is for reading, how the material is organized and therefore, how it will best handled.
- 7) **Recalling:** Think about important points that you’ve have read, articulating to yourself why they’re important and connecting them to your own experiences and observations in order to increase retention.

WHAT IS PQPC?

PQPC is a 4-step reading strategy used to strengthen reading comprehension. The 4 steps are **preview, question, predict, and code**.

WHY USE PQPC?

This strategy will help you read faster, understand more, and remember more as you read.

HOW DO I DO IT?

(1) **Preview** a text before you read it. If you have a clearer sense of its structure and content, you will understand it better when you begin reading.

Get to know your text before you begin reading by looking at:

- * Title, table of contents, chapter titles, subheadings, words in italics or in bold
- * Author(s), author's background (can you speculate on the author's agenda/purpose?)
- * Number of pages, number of chapters, average pages per chapter
- * Index, glossary and appendix
- * End of chapter study questions, bibliography, essay questions
- * Visual aids like charts, graphs, pictures

(2) Generate **questions** from the topics or main ideas. What questions do you have about the topic? What questions do you hope will be answered?

(3) **Predict** what will happen or which conclusions will likely be drawn from the data.

(4) **Code** as you read by listing key terms which represent topics or main ideas that the selection addresses.

WHAT IS KWL+?

KWL+ is a chart of notes that includes all the stages in the reading process: previewing, active reading, and organizing. The “KWL+” chart is to be used before, during, and after reading a text.

WHY USE KWL+?

It can be done anywhere, anytime, with or without a computer, and provides a useful record of your interaction with the text.

HOW DO I DO IT?

To make a KWL+ Chart, make 4 squares for the main categories and consider the following for each:

<p>(Before reading): What do I KNOW?</p> <p>BEFORE YOU'VE READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Preview & Pre-read: Look at the title, the introduction, the conclusion, the subtitles (or topic sentences), and visual aids such as pictures, charts, and graphs.● Code: List key words & topics.● Assess what you know about the topic to tap into your schema.	<p>(Before reading): What do I WANT to learn?</p> <p>WHILE PREVIEWING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create questions relating to each of the main parts of the chapter or essay mentioned in the previous category, leading with different question words:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Why?● Who?● What?● When?● How?● Where?
<p>(During and after reading): What did I LEARN?</p> <p>WHILE READING AND AFTER YOU'VE READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide answers for the questions you listed under “W.”● Summarize ideas that you consider significant to the reading and/or to you.● Define vocabulary in the text that is critical to your understanding of the text and/or the topic addressed in the text.	<p>(After reading): What MORE do I want to learn?</p> <p>AFTER YOU'VE READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● List questions from “W” that still need to be answered, and/or questions that the text generated.● Identify what parts that you're confused about or need further clarification.● Explain what further research and/or analysis could be done.

PRACTICE

KWL+ CHART

(Before reading): What do I **KNOW**?

(Before reading): What do I **WANT** to learn?

(During and after reading): What did I **LEARN**?

(After reading): What **MORE** do I want to learn?

PRACTICE

KWHL CHART

When the topic requires outside research, you can add a research section of inquiry:

<p>(Before reading): What do I KNOW?</p>	<p>(Before reading): What do I WANT to learn?</p>
<p>(Before and after reading): HOW can I find additional information on the issues raised?</p>	<p>(After reading): What did I LEARN from the text?</p>