

PART I: Reading Strategies

As noted in the Introduction, one of your key learning goals should be to develop more effective reading habits. This involves acquiring some important reading strategies that you can develop only through frequent practice over a period of time. You are already acquainted with a number of general learning strategies for reading (pp. 1–4 in the Introduction). In this chapter, we introduce three more specific strategies for reading: reading at an appropriate pace, understanding what you read, and remembering what you read. Practice opportunities are given throughout the book.

► **Reading at an Appropriate Pace**

If you are like many non-native speakers of English, you probably read at a very slow pace, focusing your attention on each word in the sentence because you are concerned about understanding and remembering the content. However, studies have shown that reading at a very slow pace and focusing on each individual word usually hinders or slows down the process of becoming a good reader. To become a more competent reader, you need to adopt the following habits of good readers.

Reading at an Appropriate Pace

1. **Read at a rate or speed that is appropriate.** Don't read all materials at the same rate or speed. Rather, vary your reading speed according to your learning goals and the type of content you are reading.
 - Read quickly when you are looking for specific information (called *scanning*) or looking over a reading passage to get a general idea about the subject matter (called *skimming*). For scanning and skimming, you don't need to understand the content thoroughly, nor do you need to read every word.
 - Read more quickly when the information is easy to understand or not very important to remember. For example, if you are reading an article in a newspaper, you can probably read it rather quickly and still understand the main points.
 - Read more slowly when you must comprehend new or difficult content. For example, when your goal is to thoroughly understand a section from a theology book, you should read at a pace that allows you to understand the new ideas and terminology and also remember the main points and the important details.
2. **Read phrases or small groups of words.** Don't read one word at a time. Instead, focus on phrases or small groups of words that belong together and read each group at a glance. This will help you read more quickly and understand more of what you read. Research shows that those who focus on individual words, instead of reading whole phrases at a glance, never become proficient at reading at a normal pace and they do not remember as much of what they have read.

► **Understanding What You Read**

Understanding what you read requires you to apply a number of key reading strategies. You should use most, if not all, of these every time you read. The more often you do this, the easier the strategies will be to use. In addition, you will find that each of these strategies helps you understand the content of the reading passage more quickly and/or more completely.

Understanding What You Read	For More Information
<p>1. Before reading a passage, skim (i.e., quickly look over or preview) the passage so that you discover the topic and the general direction that the author is going. By first skimming a reading passage, you will find that it's easier to understand the content when you read it more carefully. Since this is one of the most important strategies for effective reading, we will use skimming as a pre-reading activity in nearly every chapter. With few exceptions, you should employ this highly useful technique every time you read academic material, even when we do not specifically tell you to do so.</p>	<p>Ch. 1, pp. 35–36 Ch. 9, p. 273</p>
<p>2. For each paragraph, find the main idea, which is often in the first sentence. If a single sentence contains the main idea, this sentence is called the topic sentence. Then look for supporting details, which usually give either more information or examples.</p>	<p>Ch. 1, pp. 33–35 Ch. 2, p. 80–81 Ch. 4, pp. 114–117 Ch. 5, pp. 142–145 Ch. 7, pp. 206–207</p>
<p>3. Draw upon your previous knowledge and experience, so that you can place the new information into a framework that's familiar to you. You should begin doing this as you skim a passage and then continue relating the new content to what you already know.</p>	<p>Ch. 3, pp. 97, 98 Ch. 4, p. 117 Ch. 5, p. 145</p>
<p>4. Think ahead and predict what will be said next. Anticipating what the author is going to say gets your mind ready to process the new information.</p>	<p>Ch. 1, p. 40</p>
<p>5. Ask yourself questions as you read, and answer them out loud or in writing. You may also want to use this procedure with a classmate. Asking and answering questions will help you to organize and clarify what you have learned.</p>	<p>Ch. 9, p. 273</p>
<p>6. Summarize or paraphrase what you are reading, either orally or in writing. Try to use your own words as you summarize, rather than repeating the exact words from the reading passage.</p>	<p>Ch. 3, p. 98</p>
<p>7. Discuss what you are reading with another person. Focus on understanding the meaning.</p>	<p>Ch. 2, p. 71 Ch. 9, p. 273</p>
<p>8. Scan for key terms. These may appear in headings and subheadings. Within the text, they are often in boldface, italics, or quotation marks.</p>	<p>Ch. 3, pp. 81–82 Ch. 5, p. 145</p>
<p>9. Study the diagrams, charts, and pictures. They often contain key information about the topic, and quite frequently you must interpret the diagrams, charts, and pictures in order to understand the reading selection.</p>	<p>Ch. 1, pp. 22, 24, 43 Ch. 3, p. 101 Ch. 9, p. 273</p>
<p>10. Recognize organizational markers. These include words like <i>therefore</i>, <i>for example</i>, <i>first</i>, <i>second</i>, <i>third</i>, <i>to conclude</i>, and <i>in summary</i>. These markers will help you to see how the reading is organized and, therefore, help you grasp the key points and supporting details more easily. Chapters 2 and 7 provide lists of organizational markers and discuss how they can help you understand reading passages.</p>	<p>Ch. 2, pp. 57–61 Ch. 7, pp. 207–212</p>
<p>11. Look for footnotes (at the bottom of the page) or for endnotes (at the end of the chapter or the end of the book). They comment upon a specific part of the text and may also give additional references. Their location in the text is indicated by a small raised number after the item.</p>	<p>Ch. 1, p. 30 (endnote) Ch. 4, p. 132 (endnote) Ch. 6, p. 197 Notes p. 363</p>