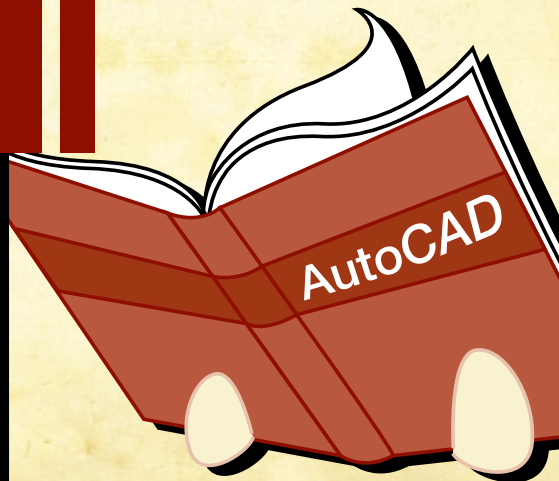# The WRITING CENTER

## Elftmann Student Success Center

## A Guide On How To:

## Read Textbooks

- Top Ten Strategies
- RCRR Strategy

AutoCAD

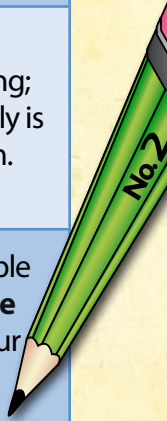# Reading Textbooks

Research shows that effective readers use a variety of methods before, during, and after reading.

| Strategy | For example: |
|---|---|
| 1. Break up your reading into **manageable pieces** to stay focused and monitor your understanding. | See how many pages you can read in five minutes, and calculate out how much time you'll need to read your assignment. |
| 2. **Survey the reading**, and use that survey to start thinking about **what you already know** about the topic. | Scan over the bold print, graphics, objectives, or anything else that you immediately see. |
| 3. **Predict** what the reading will be about. This will help you activate what you might already know about the topic, prepare you for new information, and encourage you to use the vocabulary from the reading to make your prediction. | Read the summary first, or use your survey, the table of contents, bold-print words, or the chapter objectives. |
| 4. Use the words in bold print to **create questions** for you to answer as you read. Since technical textbooks are heavy and dense, it's easy to get lost in the details. | Bold print: **Hybrid Cars**<br><br>Sample Question: *What is a hybrid car?* |
| 5. **Take notes** in your **own words**, and **paraphrase** what you have read after **each section**. | Find the answers to your bold-print questions, and write down a paraphrase of them as your notes. |

| Strategy | For example: |
| --- | --- |
| 6. **Highlight** the key ideas in your text, or the answers to your bold-print questions. | When highlighting in a textbook, only highlight 1-3 words at a time. The words you choose should make sense when read together. The goal is to note the main ideas in clear, concise terms. |
| 7. **Mark in the margins** of your book anytime that you have a question, do not understand, or are reminded of a related incident. Create a system of symbols to do this. | A star in the margins might indicate that you remember reading about this topic somewhere else; an exclamation mark might show an idea that is interesting or surprises you. |
| 8. When you come across an unknown word, **use its parts** or the **words around it** in the sentence to try to figure it out. | A word that uses *pre-* usually includes "before" in its meaning; a sentence that uses "is" usually is giving the definition of a term. |
| 9. See how your **new information fits** in with the rest of the information | Check your syllabus or the table of contents Review any **online resources** that came with your textbook to see the material presented in a different way. |
| 10. Use the information in a **project or major assignment**. Using the information to complete these projects will help you understand it better. | Technical students are often asked to complete PowerPoint presentations, research papers, and field-specific projects like robots, Web applications, or color corrections. |

# What strategy can I use to read a textbook?

Read-Cover-Remember-Retell is a reading strategy useful for dividing up texts and checking understanding before you move on.

| Read | Read a section of text that is only as big as your hand can cover. |
|---|---|
| Cover | Stop reading, and cover the text. |
| Remember | Think about what you just read, and what's important to remember. |
| Retell | Tell a study partner or recite the important points of that section out loud. |

An effective reader approaches reading much the same as an athlete approaches a game. Use these strategies in your technical reading to improve the way you prepare to and read textbooks, and assess your comprehension.

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