LEARNING

Set a reading purpose

Know what you are looking for before you begin highlighting.

READING NOTES THAT BUILD UNDERSTANDING

WRITE A USEFUL QUESTION

Turn the reading assignment into a question you can answer. A purpose helps you distinguish central ideas from interesting but less relevant detail.

- [ ] Name the topic and the reason you are reading
- [ ] Write one question in your own words
- [ ] Note any required output, such as a discussion post or summary
- [ ] Set a realistic stopping point for this session

EXAMPLE

Example: Instead of ·read chapter 4,· write ·How does the author explain the cause of the policy change?·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What answer do I need from this reading?

What would I be able to explain if this session goes well?

Adapt the method to your course, workplace, or reading goals. When required, follow the citation and academic-integrity rules that apply to your work.

LEARNING

Preview the terrain

Build a simple map before reading every paragraph closely.

READING NOTES THAT BUILD UNDERSTANDING

SURVEY THE STRUCTURE

Spend a few minutes scanning titles, headings, visuals, opening and closing sections, and unfamiliar terms. This gives new information places to attach.

- [ ] Read the title, introduction, and conclusion
- [ ] Turn headings into predicted questions
- [ ] Notice charts, definitions, and repeated terms
- [ ] Write one sentence about the author·s likely main point

EXAMPLE

Example: Headings on costs, access, and outcomes suggest the text compares three effects of a program.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What structure does the author appear to be using?

Which term should I clarify before continuing?

LEARNING

Read in manageable passes

Pause at natural boundaries so attention has time to become understanding.

READING NOTES THAT BUILD UNDERSTANDING

USE A STOP-AND-RECALL CYCLE

Read a short section, look away, and state its point without copying the wording. Then check the text and correct or add what you missed.

- ☐ Choose a boundary such as one heading or two pages
- ☐ Close or cover the text before recalling
- ☐ State the claim, support, and connection
- ☐ Mark confusion with a question rather than guessing

EXAMPLE

Example: After a section, write: ·The author argues that access mattered more than price here; the survey comparison is the support.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What is this section saying in my own words?

What part can I not yet explain clearly?

LEARNING

Capture notes with a source trail

Separate the author?s words, your paraphrase, and your response.

READING NOTES THAT BUILD UNDERSTANDING

MAKE EACH NOTE REUSABLE

Use one idea per note and attach enough location information to find it again. Clear labeling prevents a quotation from later looking like your own thought.

- [ ] Label each entry as quote, paraphrase, or question
- [ ] Record author, title, and page or section
- [ ] Keep quotations exact and inside quotation marks
- [ ] Add a short note about why the idea matters

EXAMPLE

Example: Paraphrase · p. 42: participation rose after evening hours were added. My note: useful example for the access section.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Could I find this idea again in under a minute?

Have I made the boundary between source and response clear?

LEARNING

Connect ideas, not just facts

Use notes to show relationships across the reading.

READING NOTES THAT BUILD UNDERSTANDING

BUILD A SMALL CONCEPT MAP

After reading, group notes by claim, evidence, cause, contrast, or question. Draw arrows or write linking phrases so the relationships are explicit.

- [ ] Group notes under two to four themes
- [ ] Mark agreement, tension, cause, or example
- [ ] Add one link to prior knowledge or another source
- [ ] Keep unanswered questions in a separate list

EXAMPLE

Example: ·Evening hours · improved access · higher participation· links an operational change to the reported result.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Which two notes belong together, and why?

What relationship does the text imply but not fully explain?

LEARNING

Turn notes into a usable summary

Condense the reading while preserving its logic and limits.

READING NOTES THAT BUILD UNDERSTANDING

DRAFT A CONCISE SYNTHESIS

Write a short summary from your notes without looking at the source, then compare it with the text. Include the main claim, key support, and any qualification that changes the meaning.

- ☐ Start with the author·s central claim
- ☐ Choose only the strongest supporting details
- ☐ State a limitation, condition, or unresolved question
- ☐ Check wording and citations against the source

EXAMPLE

Example: ·The chapter argues that extended hours improved participation in the studied program, though it does not show whether the result applies elsewhere.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What is essential enough to keep in three sentences?

What condition would make my summary more accurate?

LEARNING

Review and retrieve

Return to your notes briefly so they remain available when you need them.

READING NOTES THAT BUILD UNDERSTANDING

PLAN THE NEXT ENCOUNTER

Finish by testing recall and deciding how the notes will be used. A short future review is more useful when it asks you to retrieve, compare, or apply an idea.

- [ ] Cover the notes and answer your original question
- [ ] Create one question card from a key idea
- [ ] Schedule a brief review before the work is due
- [ ] Record the next use: discussion, draft, exam, or project

EXAMPLE

Example: Review card: ·What change did the author connect with participation, and what evidence supported it?·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What can I recall now without looking?

When and for what task will I use these notes next?