

Using Your Textbook

When you purchase a new book, there are several things you should do automatically.

- 1) Look in the front:
 - a) **Read** and think about the table of contents.
 - i) This will show you the overall organization of the course and help identify what's important.
 - ii) It will get you interested in the material.
 - b) Glance over any preface or foreword to see what the book is trying to do.
 - c) Consider the title. This is often a significant statement about the book's "slant." Do you know the author?

- 2) Look in the back:
 - a) Glance at the index. This is a listing of subject and pages upon which they can be found.
 - i) You can tell from the percentage of known and unknown words how difficult the text will be for you.
 - ii) You can see with great precision what the course is concerned with.
 - iii) You can look up specific items of interest.
 - iv) As a review for tests, you can easily look up unknown items since the page number is given.
 - b) Is there a glossary listing unknown words and their definitions?
 - i) The main concern of many courses is to teach the vocabulary of the subject. This is a vital section, not something to be ignored.
 - ii) Make a page tab out of scotch tape, and undertake to study and learn these words during the term. Use the tab for easy reference during time between classes-time which might otherwise be wasted.
 - c) Determine what other possibly useful materials are in the back-**before** you need them. You don't have to read them now; just know that they exist.

- 3) Determine how a typical chapter is constructed. (All of the other chapters will be put together the same way. If one chapter has a summary, they all will; if one chapter has questions, they all will.) Use this knowledge when you have a reading assignment. Structure your approach accordingly.

- 4) Don't be afraid to write in your book-vocabulary words, condensations of ideas, personal reactions, etc. Interact with the book the way you'd interact with a person. Your texts provide a valuable resource during and after your academic career.



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