



OK5R: Textbook Study System

BEFORE READING

OVERVIEW by sampling the chapter for 1-2 minutes to find out what it is about. Glance at headings and subheadings, questions, and summaries to determine what ideas are covered. Get the big picture. Don't burrow into paragraphs, yet. Headings and subheadings will also help with overviewing. Overview helps overcome inertia to read and study.

DURING READING

KEY IDEAS All textbook writing is made up of 3 literary elements: main ideas, supporting details, and transitions. Your job is to discriminate between main ideas and their supporting details. Main ideas are what you need to understand and the subsequent supporting details will help you do that.

READ only a paragraph or short section and then stop to ask yourself: *What is the main idea? What are the supporting and explanatory details? Which transitional words separate main ideas from details and details from other details? Finally: "Do I remember the material in this paragraph well enough so that I could explain it completely and accurately to someone else?"*

To learn and remember, you must be actively involved in reading in the manner described above. That is why reading by stroking words with your eyes alone results in little to no learning. This is normal.

RECORD your understanding. Make marginal notes and underline key words and phrases. Better still; summarize main ideas and supporting materials in separate notes such as on note cards. Avoid summarizing sentence by sentence, for it's a sure sign you are missing the essential points. Focus on recording ideas, not someone else's words.

AFTER READING

RECITE because it combats forgetting! Cover the details, exposing only the jottings in the margins or a main idea in your notes. Then in your own words, recite aloud the details to that main idea. After reciting, check for accuracy. Read-record-recite in this manner, paragraph by paragraph or note card by note card, until you cover all the material. Reciting notes aloud in your own words is a good way to move information from short-term memory toward long-term memory.

REVIEW 2 to 4 times per week by reciting aloud. This activity also moves information from short-term memory toward long-term memory.

REFLECT means think about ideas. Speculate on them, compare 1 with another, notice where they agree and differ. Organize them into larger categories, or compress them into smaller units.