

# Increasing Reading Comprehension

## 1. Find the Purpose

Before you begin reading, consider why this specific reading has been assigned by your instructor. What should this reading provide you that your in-class lecture did not? Is it to go into greater detail on a concept? Is the purpose to give you a broad idea of how the concept interacts with other concepts learned previously? Or perhaps the purpose is to show you how the concept is practical for real-world application? Think about why your instructor has assigned this specific text, and keep it in mind as you read.

## 2. Getting Back on Track

Most students will occasionally find themselves distracted while reading. To prevent this, reduce the number of distractions surrounding you as you read. Whenever possible, find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted by conversations, music, social media, or text messages. Additionally, to prevent distraction, consciously think, react, and take notes as you read. Make it a point to jot down notes when you read something that is important, interesting, particularly practical for clinical work, or even when you come across an opinion with which you disagree.

## 3. Adjust Your Reading Speed

As you sit down to read, consider the difficulty of the material, and use an appropriate reading speed. Slow your speed if you find you are missing key concepts. Remember, you will not read better nor comprehend more material simply because you are a fast reader.

## 4. Rereading

Many students reread their material, but don't reread with a purpose. Before beginning to reread, consider why you are rereading. What specifically did you miss the first time? How can you read it differently this time? What new strategies can you use? Remember, if you read it the same way you did the first time, you won't gain any additional comprehension. Understanding what you want to gain out of your second reading will help you accomplish it.

## 5. Using Context Clues

Using context clues allows you to understand unfamiliar words, as well as critically evaluate the material you are reading. Use context clues by making use of the information surrounding the unknown word or concept to make predictions on what the word or concept might mean. To test your prediction (or if you could not make a reliable prediction at all), Google the term to find the definition before reading on. When reading liberal arts, literature, or history texts, use context clues to understand the authors' viewpoints, bias, and cultural understandings. For science and nursing texts, use context clues to understand trends and practical applications.