7 Tips for Online Reading

Identify Why You are Reading

- Ask yourself the following three questions to establish a purpose:
  - Why? Why am I being asked to read this passage? What are the instructions my professor has given me?
  - What? What am I supposed to get out of this passage? What are the main concerns, questions, and points of the text? What do you need to remember for class?
  - How? How will I remember what I just read? In most cases, this means taking notes and defining key terms.  
- Establishing a purpose only takes a few minutes but can have a significant positive impact on what you take away from your reading.

Minimize Distractions

- Find a quiet, comfortable, and distraction-free place to read away from busy spaces. Share your study and reading schedule with your family and roommates to minimize interruptions.
- Deal with the temptation of using your cell phone by turning it off or placing it in another room.
- Quit out of social media applications and close all distracting websites.

Build a Foundation

- The following three steps form a foundation for reading comprehension and efficiency.
  - Preview: scan the text to observe elements such as section headings & sub-headings; bold and italicized words; images and charts.
  - Read actively: make notes of key concepts, ideas, terms, and formula in a notebook, note-taking application. Or, use a program to annotate the text.
  - Check your understanding: create a summary or point-form notes of the key concepts and explain how they relate after reading. Record questions of spots where you don’t understand the material.

Make Notes

- Have a paper and pen or access to a word processor other note-taking program readily available when you begin reading. Note-making while reading is just as important as making notes during lectures.
- Adopt a note-making method that works for you. Find a method that lets you record key concepts and ideas without recording too many details or a word-for-word transcript.
Online Learning Strategies

Carefully Choose Links

- Unlike printed material, online readings may provide immediate access to supplementary material through links and interactive features that can encourage active reading. Ensure that you remain on topic despite your access to further materials.
- Read a passage straight through at least once before clicking on links or participating in interacting opportunities.
- Ask yourself: will this link take me to useful information?

Set a Time Limit

- Break longer and more difficult readings into smaller segments.
- Set specific reading goals along with a start and finish time for reading sessions. Once the time is up, continue the reading if you haven’t achieved your goal, or move on to a new section.
- When structuring your time, consider the 20-20-20 rule for reducing eyestrain. To avoid eyestrain while reading online, spend 20 seconds, looking at a spot 20 feet away, every 20 minutes.

Assess Authority

- Authority of printed materials often comes from publication by a reputable publishing company. However, there is not the same assurance of authority for content on the internet.
- When assessing the authority of online material, you should be able to identify the author/creator and their credentials.

Works Consulted:
Online Reading. Maricopa. [https://learn.maricopa.edu/courses/980637](https://learn.maricopa.edu/courses/980637); Accessed July 2020.

Student Learning Services
University Library
Room 106 Murray Library
University of Saskatchewan
Email: sls@usask.ca
Phone: (306) 966-2886
library.usask.ca/studentlearning