

How to Pre-read a Textbook Chapter

These are ideas for overviewing a chapter in a textbook. Spend only a few minutes pre-reading.

Read the chapter title and subtitle. The title provides the overall topic of the chapter.

Read any focus questions at the beginning of the chapter. These questions indicate what is very important in the chapter. They are meant to guide your reading and help you be on the lookout for their answers.

Read the chapter introduction or the first paragraph. The introduction, or first paragraph, if there is no introduction, serves as a lead-in to the chapter. It gives you an idea of where the material is starting and where it is heading.

Read each boldface subheading. The boldface subheadings will give you an idea of the major topic of the following chapter sections.

Read the first sentence of each paragraph. The first sentence often tells you what the paragraph is about or states the central thought. However, be aware that in some material the first sentence may instead function as an attention getter or transition or lead-in statement. In this case, go on to the second sentence to try to determine the main idea of the paragraph.

Look over any typographical aids. Notice important chapter terms that are emphasized by being written in slanted *italic* type or in dark **boldface** type; often a definition or an example of a new important term follows.

Look over any other visual aids. Notice any material that is numbered 1, 2, 3, lettered a, b, c, or presented in list form. Graphs, charts, pictures, diagrams, and maps are other means of emphasis and are usually included to point out what is important in the chapter.

Read the last paragraph or summary. The last paragraph or summary gives a condensed view of the chapter and helps you identify important ideas. Often the summary outlines the main points of the chapter.

Read quickly any end-of-chapter material. If there are study questions, read through them quickly since they will indicate what is important in the chapter.