Textbook Reading Skills

**Things To Do Before Reading**

1. **Make specific times to read assignments** for each course. Mentally commit yourself to these time periods to read about these subjects. This makes concentration easier.
2. **Recall what you already know** about the topic to be read.
3. **Bring an open mind to what you read.** You do not have to agree in order to understand what an author says.
4. **Divide a long chapter or assignment into pieces.** It is easier to concentrate if you focus on one piece at a time instead of trying to digest a large amount of material at once.
5. **Take 1-2 minutes to skim through a chapter before reading** to see how it is structured and where the author is going to take you. Look at the title, introduction, subheadings, and summary.
6. **Create questions out of titles, subheadings, italicized, or boldface words** and read to find the answers. Concentration and memory improve when there is a specific purpose for reading.

**Things To Do While Reading**

1. **Read only when you are able to concentrate.** If you are unable to concentrate, do something else for five or ten minutes or study a different subject for a while.
2. **As you read, take notes from the text.** Condense ideas using abbreviations, symbols, short phrases, and sketches. Avoid complete sentences. Use your own words to record ideas. This will aid in learning and in later recall on tests.
3. **Make questions from main ideas in text and place it on a notecard.** Write the answer on the other side. This reduces forgetting what you just read and provides a fast and easy way to organize notes.
4. **Change reading speed** according to the difficulty of the material. No single reading speed is effective for all types of reading material. If you take good notes, you should not have to re-read a chapter.

**Things To Do After Reading**

1. **Think about what you read.** Discuss information with others, possibly in a study group.
2. **Review note cards** in your spare time. This will help to keep concepts fresh in your mind.
3. **Relate what you have read** to class lectures and notes. This helps to tie together what you have read with what you have learned from class.