TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR READING TEXTBOOKS FASTER

1. Before you begin reading specific sections of the text, scan the Table of Contents to familiarize yourself with chapter headings and the overall organization of the textbook.

2. Before you begin your close reading of an assigned chapter, flip through the pages and scan for subheadings and illustrations or graphs.

3. As you read, scan each paragraph for the topic sentence that gives you the gist of the paragraph.

4. Note carefully any definitions given of terms that are unfamiliar to you; scan forward to ascertain whether the term is repeated and at what length it is discussed.

5. Carefully distinguish between concept and examples.

6. If you are having difficulty comprehending the meaning of a passage, place a question mark in the margin and quickly move on. You can return to the passage after you have consulted a dictionary, other reference work, or your instructor.

7. Pay close attention to the first paragraphs of chapters and of subsections of chapters; introductions will generally give you an overview or “preview” of the material you will be reading.

8. Try to guide your reading by asking yourself questions to which you expect the textbook to provide answers.

9. Go over the chapter’s conclusion carefully; it should provide a review of the chapter’s key themes and concepts.

10. Many textbooks contain addenda (additional material) at the back; quickly scan these pages for charts, lists of definitions, and bibliographical material.