



# Smart Reading Ideas



Try **working backwards**.



1. Go to the questions at the end of the text. Read them, answer them to the best of your ability, and then begin your actual reading strategies.
2. Next, read the summary of the chapter or article. This will provide a background as to the big ideas in the text.
3. Preview headings, bold and italicized words, and illustrations to get a sense of the main ideas and organization.
4. Read the chapter or article introduction. From that point you can work through the chapter from front to back. Instead of focusing on chronological order, work to connect the ideas found in the chapter.

Try the **SQ4R Method** for retaining information – Survey, Question, Read, Record, Recite, and Review. (Refer to our SQ4R tip sheet for more details.)

- Surveying enables you to grasp the big picture, direct your thoughts, and get started. Browse through the pages and see what stands out.
- Questioning helps you to think actively and remain objective. Acting as a journalist, pose questions about the text in the margins or on a separate sheet.
- Reading actively (using your senses to imagine what you are reading about, looking up unfamiliar concepts, etc.) helps you to make connections.
- Recording details, especially if you are a **kinesthetic** learner, helps to solidify knowledge. It also gives you a copy of information to review later. Jot down main ideas on flashcards, or write a summary to test your understanding.
- Reciting consists of dictating or restating the main points (to yourself or a friend).
- Reviewing within 24 hours after reading will help to transfer knowledge from short-term to long-term memory. Strive to rehearse the information regularly, not just before a test.





**Pace yourself** and read in 30-50 minute segments at most.

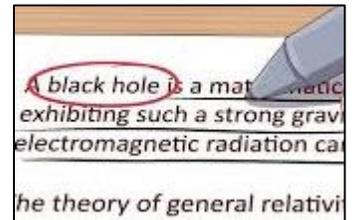
**Make connections** between what you are reading and your own knowledge and interests. Compare your current reading to other texts you've read.



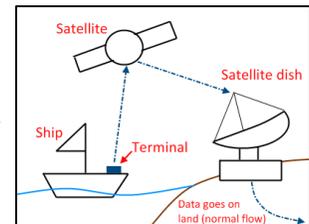
**Read for big ideas**, then key supporting details. Don't try to grasp and retain everything.

**Annotate** the text, using some of the following techniques:

- Mark the text directly (if you own it), or else use sticky notes
- Underline main points and star the most crucial ones
- Circle key words
- Draw arrows between related concepts
- Jot questions and summarize ideas in the margins
- Use numbers to mark a sequence of ideas
- Avoid using highlighters for this activity as they are a more passive means of interacting with material. A better strategy would be to use a multi-colour method to link related ideas or to distinguish main ideas from supporting details.



Try **visualizing** the concepts concretely. Draw diagrams or webs to depict associations.



**Read aloud**, taking turns with a friend if possible. Try the text-to-speech function on electronic documents, especially if you are an auditory learner.

Try **outlining** the text by summarizing the main idea of each paragraph in a few words.