II

READING, UNDERSTANDING, AND REMEMBERING

MASTERING ESSENTIAL LEARNING SKILLS

Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, and Speed

Reading Faster and Understanding More

Studying Textbooks and Course Materials

Mastering Content

Listening and Memory

Taking In and Remembering Information
“The process of learning a new topic is like storming a fort. You will have to stage several attacks before you can knock down the wall separating you from a subject. . . . You can go for several weeks in a state of utter confusion . . . and then suddenly . . . eureka! Everything comes together and you say, ‘Oh, now I understand it!’”

ADAM ROBINSON, AUTHOR OF WHAT SMART STUDENTS KNOW
While the reading and studying skills you’ve developed over time may have worked well enough to get you into college, they may not prepare you for the kind of complex, lengthy assignments you will face in the years ahead. To keep up with the sheer volume of material and to grasp what it all means, you need skills that improve your comprehension and pace. The material in this chapter will present active learning techniques to increase comprehension and build vocabulary while boosting speed. You may even experience an unexpected, pleasurable benefit—enjoying what you read.

In this chapter you will explore answers to the following questions:

■ What will improve your reading comprehension?
■ How can you set the stage for reading?
■ How do you build a better vocabulary?
■ How can you increase your reading speed?
WHAT WILL IMPROVE YOUR READING COMPREHENSION?

Reading is a process that requires you, the reader, to make meaning from written words—that is, to master concepts in a personal way. Your familiarity with a subject, your background and life experiences, and even your personal interpretation of words and phrases affect understanding.

Because these factors are different for everyone, reading experiences are unique. If, for example, your family owns a hardware store where you worked during summers, you will read a retailing chapter in a business text in the context of your background. While you are comparing text concepts to your family’s business practices, most of your classmates are reading for basic vocabulary and concepts.

The goal of reading comprehension is complete understanding. This is a crucial skill in college, where you are asked to master material on your own and use what you learn as a foundation in upper-level courses. When you struggle through and master concepts that you considered impossible the first time you read them, you’ll be proud of your ability to overcome obstacles and not give up. This pride will motivate you every time you read.

Following are attitudes and strategies that may help you tackle assignments.

**Don't expect to master material on the first pass.** Instead, create a multistep plan: On your first reading, your goal is to gain an overview of key concepts and interrelationships. On subsequent readings, you grasp ideas and relate them to what you already know. By your last reading, you master concepts and details and can apply the material to problems. (Chapter 5 will introduce the SQ3R reading technique, a multistep reading plan.)

**Think positively.** Instead of telling yourself that you cannot understand, think positively. Tell yourself: *I can learn this material. I am a good reader.*

**Think critically.** Ask yourself questions: Do I understand the sentence, paragraph, or chapter I just read? Are ideas and supporting evidence clear? Am I able to explain the material to someone else? Chapter 5 presents strategies for critical reading.

**Build vocabulary.** Lifelong learners never stop learning new words. The larger your vocabulary, the greater your understanding and the faster your reading speed.

**Look for order and meaning in seemingly chaotic reading materials.** Use SQ3R and critical reading strategies to discover patterns and connections.
Build knowledge through reading and studying. More than any other factor, what you already know before you read provides a context for new material.

HOW CAN YOU SET THE STAGE FOR READING?

On any given day, you may be faced with reading assignments like these:

- a textbook chapter on the history of South African apartheid (world history)
- an original research study on the relationship between sleep deprivation and the development of memory problems (psychology)
- the first 100 pages in John Steinbeck’s classic novel, *The Grapes of Wrath* (American literature)
- a technical manual on the design of computer antivirus programs (computer science—software design)

This material is rigorous by anyone’s standards. In fact, many students are surprised at how much reading there is in college, and that they are often expected to learn concepts that are never covered in class. Fortunately, strategies like the following will help you set the stage for reading success.

If you have a reading disability, if English is not your primary language, or if you have limited reading skills, seek out the support programs your college offers at reading and tutoring centers (see Chapter 2 for more on learning disabilities and support services). Your ability to succeed is linked to your ability to ask for help.

Take an Active Approach to Difficult Texts

Because college texts are generally written to challenge the intellect, even well-written texts may be tough going. Generally, the further you advance in your education and your career, the more complex required reading is likely to be. You may encounter concepts and terms that are foreign to you. This is often the case when assignments are from primary sources—original documents, including academic journal articles and scientific studies, rather than another writer’s interpretation of these documents.

Some academic writing has earned the reputation of being difficult for the sake of difficulty—an observation that motivated George Orwell, the author of *1984* and *Animal Farm*, to write a parody of how a passage from the Old Testament would read if it were translated into academic prose (see Key 4.1).

Your challenge is to approach difficult material actively and positively. The following strategies will help:

- **Have an open mind.** Be careful not to prejudge assignments as impossible or boring or a waste of time and energy before you begin.
Expect to go through difficult chapters more than once before you finally get it. One reading is almost never enough—especially when the material is complicated. You do not have to read and review the material all in one sitting. Breaks help things sink in.

Know that some texts require extra work and concentration. You may have to look back at last semester’s text to refresh your memory. If the material still doesn’t click, scan background material for information that will help you understand. Set a goal to make your way through the material, whatever it takes. If you want to learn, you will.

Define unclear concepts. Consult resources—instructors, study-group partners, reference materials—for help. Build a library of texts in your major and minor areas of study and refer to them when needed. “If you find yourself going to the library to look up the same reference again and again, consider purchasing that book,” advises library expert Sherwood Harris.¹

Ask yourself questions. University of Michigan psychology professor and textbook author Charles G. Morris recommends that you engage in an internal question-and-answer session before reading a chapter. Look at the chapter outline or chapter headings and then think about what the material means and why it is being presented in this way. Write down your thoughts. Then read the chapter summary to see if your questions are answered.²
(As you will see in Chapter 5, questioning is at the heart of SQ3R.)

**Choose the Right Setting**

Finding a place and time that minimize distractions will help you focus on your reading:

*Select the right company (or no company at all).* If you prefer to read alone, establish a relatively interruption-proof place and time, such as an out-of-the-way spot at the library or an hour in an empty classroom. Even if you don’t mind activity nearby, try to minimize distractions.

*Select the right location.* Many students study at a library desk. Others prefer an easy chair at the library, in their dorm, or at home. Still others prefer spreading papers out on the floor. Avoid studying in bed, since you are likely to fall asleep. After choosing a spot, adjust the temperature and light to do your best work.

*Select a time when you are alert and focused.* Eventually, you will associate certain times with focused reading. Pay attention to your natural body rhythms and study when your energy is high. Whereas night owls are productive when everyone else is sleeping, for example, morning people have a hard time working during late-night sessions.

Students with young children have an additional factor to consider when they are thinking about when, where, and how to read. Key 4.2 explores some ways that parents or others caring for children can maximize their study efforts. (You can also use these techniques after college if you work from home.)

**Learn to Concentrate**

When you focus your attention on one thing and one thing only, you are engaged in the act of *concentration*. Without concentration, you are likely to remember little as your mind wanders. Following are active-learning methods for remaining focused as you study:

*Be intensely involved.* Tell yourself that what you are doing is important and needs your full attention—no matter what is going on around you.
### Key 4.2
Use these techniques to manage children while studying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEEP THEM UP TO DATE ON YOUR SCHEDULE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Let them know when you have a big test or project due and when you are under less pressure, and what they can expect of you in each case.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPLAIN WHAT YOUR EDUCATION ENTAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell them how it will improve your life and theirs. This applies, of course, to older children who can understand the situation and compare it with their own schooling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIND HELP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask a relative or friend to watch your children or arrange for a child to visit a friend. Consider trading baby-sitting hours with another parent, hiring a sitter to come to your home, or using a day-care center.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEEP THEM ACTIVE WHILE YOU STUDY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give them games, books, or toys. If there are special activities that you like to limit, such as watching videos or TV, save them for your study time.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY ON THE PHONE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You might be able to have a study session with a fellow student over the phone while your child is sleeping or playing quietly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFSET STUDY TIME WITH FAMILY TIME AND REWARDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children may let you get your work done if they have something to look forward to, such as a movie night or a trip for ice cream.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIAL NOTES FOR INFANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study at night if your baby goes to sleep early, or in the morning if your baby sleeps late.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study during nap times if you aren't too tired yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay your notes out and recite information to the baby. The baby will appreciate the attention, and you will get work done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put baby in a safe and fun place while you study, such as a playpen, motorized swing, or jumping seat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It might help to place a purpose statement at the top of your desk. For example, “I’m concentrating on the U.S. Constitution because it is the basis for our laws and because it will be on Friday’s American government exam.”

**Banish extraneous thoughts onto paper.** Don’t let unrelated thoughts block your efforts. When such thoughts come up, write them down on a separate piece of paper and deal with them later. Keeping a monthly calendar of classes, appointments, and events will help you organize your life and be less distracted.

**Deal with internal distractions.** Internal distractions—for example, personal worries or even hunger—can get in the way of work. Even if it means time away from your books, taking a break to deal with what’s bothering you will make you more efficient. Physical exercise may relax and focus you, studying while listening to music may relieve stress, and a snack break will reduce your hunger.

**Compartmentalize your life.** Social invitations may be easier to resist if you have a policy of separating study time from playtime. No one will think less of you if you refuse an invitation so that you can concentrate on work. You may even influence others to study. Plus, when you have a successful study session, you are likely to enjoy your downtime more.

**Analyze your environment to see if it helps or hurts concentration.** Think about your last study session. How long did you try to concentrate and how long did you actually concentrate? If you spent more than 10 percent of your time blocking out distractions (people, things going on, noises, etc.), try another location with fewer distractions.

**Don’t let technology distract you.** If you are reading near a computer, force yourself to place Web surfing, e-mail, and instant messaging off limits. In addition, turn your cell phone off, and check your voice mail only after you finish your work.

**Structure your study session so you know the time you will spend and the material you will study.** No one can concentrate for unlimited periods, so set realistic goals and a specific plan for dividing your time.

**Plan a reward.** After concentrating for hours, go to the movies; have dinner with friends; jog around campus; do anything that gives you a break. Plan your reward in advance so you have something to look forward to, because you deserve it!
The strongest motivation to concentrate comes from within—not from the fear of failing a test, or disappointing a teacher. When you see the connection between what you study and your short- and long-term goals, you will be better able to focus on your readings, to remember, to learn, and to apply.

**Familiarize Yourself with What’s Ahead**

Successful readers try to familiarize themselves with material before reading it in depth because they know that material they have seen before is easier to grasp than material they know nothing about. Here are two ways to do this:

- Using the surveying techniques of SQ3R, scan the table of contents of your texts for an overview of content, organization, and theme; pre-read chapter headings, objectives, and summaries; and skim paragraphs for main ideas.
- When you begin to study an unfamiliar topic, read a basic primer for an understanding of general concepts and interrelationships. For example, before opening a college astronomy text, review basic concepts in an astronomy book for general readers, on a general information website, or in a lower-level text.

**Become Emotionally Involved**

Successful readers also understand that they are more likely to remember material that evokes an emotional response than material that does not affect them. Student success expert Eric Jensen explains: “When your emotions are engaged, the brain codes the content you’re reading by triggering the release of chemicals that single out and mark the experience as important and meaningful. . . . The stronger you feel about something you read the more likely you are to remember it and make sense out of it. The good thing about this is that it works both ways; hating something or disagreeing with something works just as well as liking something or strongly agreeing with it.”

How do you surround normally “dry” text material with emotions? These suggestions might help:

- Stop and think about your reaction to ideas, to the author’s point of view and writing style, to chapter features and text design, and even to the chapter order.
- Discuss specific points with classmates and don’t hold back your comments when you disagree. This will also help you understand the material.
- Think through the implications of a concept when it is applied in the real world.
TRIGGER YOUR EMOTIONS

This exercise will show you how to spark your emotions to make the following text paragraph on the history of hypnosis important and memorable:

In mid-eighteenth-century Europe, Anton Mesmer, a Viennese physician, fascinated audiences by putting patients into trances to cure their illnesses. Hence the term mes-merism was first used to describe the phenomenon now known as hypnosis (Hypnos was the Greek god of sleep). Mesmerism was initially discredited by a French commission chaired by Benjamin Franklin; but in the nineteenth century some respectable physicians revived interest in hypnosis when they discovered it could be used to treat certain forms of mental illness. Even today, disagreement persists about how to define hypnosis and even whether it is a valid altered state of consciousness.4

Activate your emotional response by . . .

■ . . . investigating these questions: Do I believe in the power of hypnosis to unlock my subconscious mind? Have I ever been hypnotized? What do I know about Benjamin Franklin's role in the French commission mentioned in the paragraph? What Greek myth involved Hypnos and what role did he play in the myth?

■ . . . asking friends what they think of hypnosis and if they’ve ever been placed in a hypnotic trance.

■ . . . thinking about how hypnosis is used in the real world—for example, its use in helping people to stop smoking and to deal with chronic pain.

Finally, evaluate how well this strategy worked for you, how you might change it, and whether you will use it again. Write your thoughts below:

Define Your Reading Purpose

When you define your purpose, you ask yourself why you are reading particular material. One way to do this is by completing this sentence: “In reading this material, I intend to define/learn/answer/achieve . . .” Write your goal down before you begin and look at it whenever you lose focus or get bogged down in details. With a clear purpose you can decide how much time and effort to expend on various assignments. Nearly 375 years ago,
Francis Bacon, the great English philosopher, recognized, “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.” Bacon’s philosophy is particularly true in college, where you may be overwhelmed by assignments unless you prioritize. In Chapter 5, you will find suggestions for evaluating and prioritizing the readings on your plate.

Achieving your reading purpose requires adapting to different materials. Being a flexible reader—adjusting your strategies and pace—will help you get what you want from each assignment. You are in control.

**Purpose Determines Reading Strategy**

Following are four reading purposes, examined briefly. You may have one or more for any “reading event.”

**Purpose 1: Read for understanding.** Studying involves reading to comprehend concepts and details. These components depend on each other. Details help explain or support general concepts, and concepts provide a framework for remembering details.

**Purpose 2: Read to evaluate critically.** Critical evaluation involves understanding. It means approaching material with an open mind, examining causes and effects, evaluating ideas, and asking questions that test the writer’s argument and assumptions. Critical reading brings a level of understanding that goes beyond basic information recall.

**Purpose 3: Read for practical application.** A third purpose for reading is to gather usable information that you can apply toward a specific goal. When you read a textbook preface or an instruction booklet for a new software package, your goal is to learn how to do or use something. Reading and action usually go hand in hand.

**Purpose 4: Read for pleasure.** Some materials you read for entertainment, such as *Sports Illustrated* magazine, the latest page-turner by *DaVinci Code* author Dan Brown, or even novels by Charles Dickens and Jane Austen. As Yale professor Harold Bloom points out, reading for pleasure gives you the opportunity to enlarge your life and to enter into “alternate realities.” “Why read?” Bloom asks. “Because you can know, intimately, only a very few people, and perhaps you never know them at all. After reading [the Thomas Mann masterpiece] *The Magic Mountain* you know Hans Castorp thoroughly, and he is greatly worth knowing.”

Use your class syllabus to help you define your purpose for each assignment. If, for example, you know that the topic of inflation will be discussed in
your next economics class, read the assigned chapter, targeting what your
instructor will expect you to know and do with the material. For example, she
may expect you to master definitions, economic models, causes and conse-
quences, government intervention strategies, and historical examples and to be
able to apply what you know to economic problems. In this case, depending
on what your instructor expects, you have three reading purposes—
understanding, critical evaluation, and practical application. If you are con-
fused about your purpose, e-mail your instructor for clarification.

**Purpose Determines Pace**

“Good readers are flexible readers,” says George M. Usova, a Johns
Hopkins University education specialist. “They read at a variety of rates
and adapt them to the reading purpose at hand, the difficulty of the

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**Key 4.3**

**Link your reading pace to your reading purpose.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF MATERIAL</th>
<th>READING PURPOSE</th>
<th>PACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic readings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Textbooks</td>
<td>■ Critical analysis</td>
<td>Slow, especially if the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Original sources</td>
<td>■ Overall mastery</td>
<td>material is unfamiliar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Articles from scholarly journals</td>
<td>■ Preparation for tests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ On-line publications for academic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>readers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Lab reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Required fiction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Instructions</td>
<td>■ Practical application</td>
<td>Slow to medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Recipes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism and nonfiction for the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general reader</td>
<td>■ Understanding of general ideas, key concepts, and</td>
<td>Medium to fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Nonfiction books</td>
<td>specific facts for personal understanding and/or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Newspapers</td>
<td>practical application</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>■ Magazines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>■ On-line publications for the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonrequired fiction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Understanding of general ideas, key</td>
<td>■ Understanding of general ideas, key concepts, and</td>
<td>Variable, but tending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concepts, and specific facts for</td>
<td>specific facts for enjoyment</td>
<td>toward faster speeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enjoyment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

material, and their familiarity with the subject.”6 For example, you may need to read complex, unfamiliar text assignments more slowly than newspapers, magazine, and online publications. As Key 4.3 shows, good readers link the pace of reading to their reading purpose.

Spend Enough Time

You’ll need more than good intentions to finish assignments on schedule. You’ll have to put in many hours of work. One formula for success is this: For every hour you spend in the classroom each week, spend at least two hours preparing for the class. For example, a course load of 15 credit hours means that you should spend 30 hours per week studying and doing homework outside of class.

Students who fall far short of this goal are likely to have a hard time keeping up. According to a recent National Survey of Student Engagement, most students study far less than they should. As Key 4.4 indicates, in 2002 only about 23 percent of both freshmen and seniors studied 21 or more hours a week, and nearly the same percentages (19 percent of freshmen and 20 percent of seniors) studied 1 to 5 hours a week.

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**Key 4.4** Many college freshmen and seniors don’t study enough.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK SPENT PREPARING FOR CLASS,* 2002</th>
<th>PROPORTION OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS</th>
<th>PROPORTION OF SENIORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 or fewer</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 30</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 30</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Defined in the survey as studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, and other activities related to academic programs.

CONSIDER SIGNING AN ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY “CONTRACT”

University of Hawaii-Manoa classics professor Robert J. Ball has an unusual method for encouraging students to complete their reading and homework assignments, as explained in his quote below. In your study group, evaluate this unorthodox approach and discuss whether it would work for you by answering the questions that follow.

At the first class I distribute a detailed syllabus to all . . . students. The syllabus spells out everything relevant to the execution of the course: the goal, the books to be used, instructions on preparing homework, procedures to be followed in class, and the determination of the final grade. The syllabus specifies every date on which the students must submit homework and take examinations, as well as the penalties incurred unless they present a . . . medical note or other acceptable document. At the end of the first class, the students sign, detach, and return to [me] a form on the syllabus that reads: “I have read the . . . syllabus and understand the requirements of the course.” The teacher and the students have thus entered into a contract, a written agreement based on the syllabus . . . Although a few [students] may drop the course once they see how rigorously the teacher sticks to the syllabus, most will work hard to meet their deadlines.7

■ What does your study group think of Professor Ball’s method for increasing academic responsibility? Discuss the pros and cons of his approach.

■ Discuss whether signing a “contract” in each of your courses would motivate you to complete your assignments on schedule and to prepare for class.

■ Each group member should then read his or her own course syllabi to make sure reading assignment, homework submission, and examination dates are clear. If they are not, work with group members to transform each syllabus into a working document that will guide your semester’s work.

■ Finally, make a group pact to complete all the academic responsibilities that are defined in the syllabi. Write out the pact in your own “contract” and pass it around to sign.
A strong vocabulary increases reading speed and comprehension. The next section will help you learn strategies to expand your vocabulary.

HOW DO YOU BUILD A BETTER VOCABULARY?

As your reading materials become more complex, how much you comprehend—and how readily you do it—is influenced by your vocabulary. Is your word power minimal, general, and static? Or is it large, specialized, and ever-expanding? Use the following techniques to learn unfamiliar words as you encounter them.

Analyze Word Parts

If you understand part of a word, oftentimes you can figure out what the entire word means. This is true because many English words combine Greek and Latin prefixes, roots, and suffixes. Prefixes are word parts that are added to the beginning of a root. The root is the central part or basis of a word around which prefixes and/or suffixes are added to produce different words. Suffixes are added to the end of the root.

Key 4.5 contains just a few of the prefixes, roots, and suffixes you will encounter as you read. There are literally thousands more, including the roots you will learn in the end-of-chapter Get to the Root exercises. Taking the time to memorize these verbal building blocks will help you grow your vocabulary, since you will encounter them in many different words. (Keep in mind that although prefixes, roots, and suffixes are reliable language tools, they do not always apply to words with complex etymologies.)

Use a Dictionary

When reading a textbook, the first “dictionary” to search is the glossary. Textbooks often include an end-of-book glossary that explains technical words and concepts. The definitions there are usually limited to the meaning of the term as it is used in the text.

Standard dictionaries provide broader information such as word origin, pronunciation, part of speech, synonyms, antonyms, and multiple meanings. Buy a standard dictionary, keep it nearby, and consult it for help in understanding unfamiliar words. You may even want to invest in an electronic handheld dictionary, which you can take wherever you go. If you prefer an online version, websites like dictionary.com provide information similar to that found in dictionaries in book form.

The following suggestions will help you make the most of your dictionary.
**Key 4.5**  
Build your vocabulary with common prefixes, roots, and suffixes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Primary Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a, ab</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>abstain, avert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ad, af, at</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>adhere, affix, attain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>con, cor, com</td>
<td>with, together</td>
<td>convene, correlate, compare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>di</td>
<td>apart</td>
<td>divert, divorce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>illegal, illegible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ir</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>irresponsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post</td>
<td>after</td>
<td>postpone, postpartum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pro</td>
<td>before</td>
<td>prologue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub, sup</td>
<td>under</td>
<td>subordinate, suppose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Primary Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-logue</td>
<td>to speak</td>
<td>dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-com</td>
<td>fill</td>
<td>incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-strict</td>
<td>bind</td>
<td>restriction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-cept</td>
<td>take</td>
<td>receptacle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-chron</td>
<td>time</td>
<td>synchronize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ann</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>biannual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-sper</td>
<td>hope</td>
<td>desperate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-clam</td>
<td>cry out</td>
<td>proclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-voc</td>
<td>speak, talk</td>
<td>convocation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffix</th>
<th>Primary Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-able</td>
<td>able</td>
<td>recyclable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-arium</td>
<td>place for</td>
<td>aquarium, solarium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-cule</td>
<td>very small</td>
<td>molecule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ist</td>
<td>one who</td>
<td>pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-meter</td>
<td>measure</td>
<td>thermometer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ness</td>
<td>state of</td>
<td>carelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-sis</td>
<td>condition of</td>
<td>hypnosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-y</td>
<td>inclined to</td>
<td>sleepy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read every meaning, not just the first. Think critically about which meaning suits the context of the word in question, and choose the one that makes the most sense to you.

Say the word out loud—then write it down to make sure you can spell it. Check your pronunciation against the dictionary symbols as you say each word. Speaking and writing new words will boost recall.

Use your chosen definition. Imagine, for example, that you encounter the following sentence and do not know what the word indoctrinated means:

The cult indoctrinated its members to reject society’s values.

In the dictionary, you find several definitions, including brainwashed and instructed. You decide that the one closest to the correct meaning is brainwashed. With this term, the sentence reads as follows:

The cult brainwashed its members to reject society’s values.

Restate the definition in your own words. When you can do this with ease, you know that you understand the meaning and are not merely parroting a dictionary definition.

Try to use the word in conversation in the next 24 hours. Not only does this demonstrate that you know how the word is used, but it also aids memorization.

Learn Specialized Vocabulary

As you learn a subject, you will encounter specialized vocabulary (see Key 4.6 for examples from four college texts). Most of these words, phrases, and acronyms may be unfamiliar unless you have studied the topics before. Even if you feel like you are diving into a foreign language, know that continual exposure will create mastery as the semester progresses.

Apply a basic vocabulary-building approach to learn these terms. Understand words in the context of the chapter; then turn to the glossary.

Individual academic subject areas often have their own dictionaries. Pictured is one page of the 34-volume Grove Dictionary of Art.
MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO LEARNING

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING VOCABULARY. Tap into these Multiple Intelligence strategies to build your vocabulary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTELLIGENCE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED STRATEGIES</th>
<th>WHAT WORKS FOR YOU? WRITE NEW IDEAS HERE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Verbal-Linguistic   | ■ For each new vocabulary word, make an entry in your journal that explains the context in which you learned the word.  
■ Write two sentences using the word.                               |                                        |
| Logical-Mathematical| ■ Learn new words by analyzing word roots, prefixes, and suffixes.                     |                                        |
|                     | ■ Learn new word in the order in which you encountered them in your text or class.      |                                        |
| Bodily-Kinesthetic  | ■ Record words and definitions into a tape recorder and learn the material as you walk between classes or while exercising.  
■ Learn five new words from the same textbook, and then, while taking a walk, think about how the words relate to one another. |                                        |
| Visual-Spatial      | ■ Create vocabulary flash cards with cartoon images that help you remember the words.  
■ Create word-root diagrams that link Greek and Latin roots to related vocabulary. |                                        |
| Interpersonal       | ■ Ask a study partner to test your knowledge of vocabulary terms.                       |                                        |
|                     | ■ Use ten new vocabulary words correctly while speaking with a study partner.            |                                        |
| Intrapersonal       | ■ Look at all the dictionary definitions of a word and recall whether you have ever used them.  
■ Take your flashcards to a quiet spot and start memorizing.           |                                        |
| Musical             | ■ Listen to music while you learn new words.                                           |                                        |
|                     | ■ Create a mnemonic in the form of a musical rhyme to help you memorize.                |                                        |
| Naturalistic        | ■ Study your flashcards while sitting outdoors.                                         |                                        |
for a review, record definitions in your notes, create vocabulary flash cards, use terms in your own sentences, and more. Don’t rush through unfamiliar words. Rather, look them up, ask other students about them, and relate them to concepts you already know.

Your instructors will test you on your ability to define and use course-specific vocabulary, so make sure you understand terms well enough to define them correctly on short-answer tests and to use them on essay exams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIOLOGY TEXT</th>
<th>CRIMINAL JUSTICE TEXT</th>
<th>PSYCHOLOGY TEXT</th>
<th>BUSINESS TEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>actin</td>
<td>biometrics</td>
<td>experimental method</td>
<td>double-entry accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaparral</td>
<td>detainee</td>
<td>great person theory</td>
<td>leverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exoskeleton</td>
<td>habitual offender</td>
<td>homeostasis</td>
<td>relationship marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gravitropism</td>
<td>RICO statute</td>
<td>trichromats</td>
<td>strategic alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prophase</td>
<td>writ of habeas corpus</td>
<td>vestibular senses</td>
<td>Uniform Commercial Code (UCC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Go For It!

START NOW TO BUILD YOUR VOCABULARY

List and define five words that you learn today in your classes or in your assigned readings. Use each word in a sentence to be sure you know its meaning.

New Vocabulary Word #1:
Describe the context in which you encountered this word:

Definition:

Use the word in a sentence:

New Vocabulary Word #2:

Describe the context in which you encountered this word:

Definition:

Use the word in a sentence:

New Vocabulary Word #3:

Describe the context in which you encountered this word:

Definition:

Use the word in a sentence:

New Vocabulary Word #4:

Describe the context in which you encountered this word:

Definition:

Use the word in a sentence:

New Vocabulary Word #5:

Describe the context in which you encountered this word:

Definition:

Use the word in a sentence:
Use Memory Aids to Ensure Recall

Most students find that their most important vocabulary-building tool is the flash card. Your efforts will pay off if you study several cards a day and push yourself to use your new words in conversation and writing. You may also want to work together with another student to review each other’s cards. A buddy system may motivate you to master your new vocabulary as it exposes you to your study partner’s words. Memorization tools, including mnemonic devices and flash cards, are discussed in Chapter 6.

HOW CAN YOU INCREASE YOUR READING SPEED?

Most students lead busy lives, carrying heavy academic loads while perhaps working or even caring for a family. With so much to do in so little time, it is often difficult to finish reading assignments on schedule. The workplace has similar pressures. For example, accountants must keep abreast of changing tax regulations and physical therapists read journals in search of research findings. Whether you are in school or at work, increasing your reading speed makes it possible to keep up—and it may free up some time to relax.

Rapid reading won’t do you any good if you can’t remember the material or answer questions about it. However, reading too slowly can eat up valuable time and give your mind the opportunity to wander. Your goal is to read for maximum speed and comprehension. Because greater comprehension is the primary goal and actually promotes faster reading, make comprehension a priority over speed.

Use the following formula to calculate how quickly you read:

- Note the time it takes you in minutes to read a passage—a half a text page, for example. Use decimals for fractions of a minute. That is, if it takes you 1 minute and 45 seconds, then write 1.75 minutes.
- Divide the number of words in the passage by your reading time.
- The number you come up with is your reading speed in words per minute.
Although today’s college campuses are filled with 18- to 22-year-olds, they are also filled with older, nontraditional students who are returning to school. Nearly 1.5 million women and more than 700,000 men over the age of 35 are attending college—as 4-year students, in 2-year degree programs, and as graduate students. While there has been a dramatic increase in this segment of the college population, the percentage of typical college students—men and women between the ages of 18 and 22—has actually declined since 1980.

This dramatic demographic shift coincides with the recognition that humans are lifelong learners with cognitive abilities that adapt to life demands. Despite societal stereotypes that the primary period for learning is over after adolescence, we now know that it is during middle age that adults acquire the information and skills they need to meet the changing demands of their jobs. This is as true for bankers as it is for computer scientists, both of whom work in fields that have changed radically in recent years as a result of an explosion in technology.

In large part, middle-aged students are returning to school because they have to. Many are unemployed—the victims of corporate downsizing. Others are moving into the job market after spending time at home as full-time parents. A financial planner who stopped working for 5 years to raise her daughter may need recertification before any firm will hire her. Even adults who worked part-time during their child-rearing years may have to return to school to acquire the knowledge they need to qualify for a full-time job. This is especially true in fields with a high degree of professional obsolescence.

Whatever the reason for their return, studies show that the majority of middle-aged students are conscientious about their work. They attend classes regularly and get better grades, on average, than other segments of the student population.

The decision to return to school involves personal introspection and assessment of one’s skills and abilities. The student role is generally different from the other roles middle-aged adults assume, and it requires considerable
adaptation. A student is in a subordinate position as a learner. Also, mature adults may find themselves among a large number of students who are considerably younger than they are, and the faculty may also be younger. Initially, the age difference may be a source of discomfort.

Family members must often take on new responsibilities when a middle-aged member assumes the role of college student. A husband may have to do more household chores, while a wife may have to return to work to supplement the family income. In addition, the student may need emotional support. Sometimes this involves awkward role reversals and the disruption of familiar interaction patterns.

With the realization that middle-aged students are here to stay, community colleges and universities are making substantial adjustments to meet their needs. In addition many students receive the training they need at work. Many large corporations run training departments designed to maintain a competent workforce.


Now answer the following questions without looking back at the text. You’ll find the correct answers upside down at the end:

1. How many men and women over the age of 35 are now enrolled in various college programs?
   A. approximately 1.5 million women and 700,000 men
   B. 5 million men and women
   C. approximately 1.5 million men and 700,000 women

2. How has the enrollment of 18- to 22-year-old college students changed since 1980 in relationship to the total college population?
   A. The percentage of students in this age group has increased.
   B. The percentage of students in this age group has remained the same.
   C. The percentage of students in this age group has decreased.

3. According to the passage, which one of the following reasons does not describe why older adults return to school?
   A. Unemployed adults return to school to acquire new work-related skills.
   B. After spending time at home raising children, many adults are moving on to another stage of life, which involves returning to work.
   C. Adults with discretionary income are choosing to invest money in themselves.
4. According to the text, why is the student role different from the other roles middle-aged adults assume?
   A. As learners, students are in a subordinate position, which can be uncomfortable for mature adults.
   B. Adults are not used to studying.
   C. Middle-aged adults often find it difficult to talk to young adults.

   **Correct answers:** 1A, 2C, 3C, 4A

In general, your comprehension percentage, as judged by the number of questions like these that you answer correctly, should be above 70 percent, so you should have answered three out of the four questions correctly. Lower scores mean that you are missing or forgetting important information.

---

**Problems and Solutions for Slower Readers**

The average American adult reads between 150 and 350 words per minute. Slow readers fall below this range while faster readers are capable of speeds of 500 to 1,000 words per minute and sometimes faster. Researchers point to a number of specific causes for slow reading. Identifying these problems, such as those in the list that follows, is your first step to correcting them. You are then ready to apply proven solutions.

**Word-by-word reading.** When you first learned to read, your teachers may have told you to read one word at a time as you moved systematically from one line to the next. This technique limits your reading speed. As a speed reader, you must train your eyes to “capture” and read groups of words at a time. Try swinging your eyes from side to side as you read a passage instead of stopping at various points to read individual words. When reading narrow columns, focus your eyes in the middle of the column and read down the page. With practice, you’ll be able to read the entire column width.

**Lack of concentration.** Word by word reading leads to poor concentration. That is, you may be reading too slowly to keep your mind occupied, and soon your thoughts begin to wander. Reading groups of words, instead of single words, will help counteract this effect as you provide your mind with the stimulation it needs to remain engaged.

**Vocalization and subvocalization.** Vocalizers tend to speak words as they read them or move their lips while reading. In contrast, subvocalizers pronounce inwardly every word they read. Both habits will slow your reading.
speed. Your first step to changing this behavior is awareness. Monitor your reading; if you notice either habit, make a conscious effort to stop what you’re doing. Attaching a self-adhesive note to the page with the reminder *Don’t vocalize* may help your efforts in the early stages.

**Limited vocabulary and knowledge gaps.** If your vocabulary is small, you may be puzzled by the meanings of different words. Trying to figure out meaning from context or consulting a dictionary will slow you down. The suggestions from the vocabulary-building section earlier in the chapter will help you build your vocabulary.

Similarly, if you failed to master material that is the foundation for what you are currently reading, you will struggle with concepts. The solution: Make sure you are comfortable with the subject and have the basics under your belt.

**Unconscious regression.** This involves rereading words that you’ve already read because your eyes stay on the same line instead of moving ahead. If you find yourself doing this, use your index finger or a six-inch ruler as a visual guide. Reading expert Steve Moidel explains the technique:

> When you finish a line, bring your index finger to the beginning of the next line with a motion as fast and smooth as you can make it. It is important that the return be fluid. If you jerk your finger back, it may become a distraction and ultimately hurt your comprehension. Pretend that your finger is gliding, skiing, or ice skating back to the beginning of the next line: fast yet smooth.10

As they learn new material, even the best readers move their eyes back and forth as they return to material of which they’re not quite sure. But these eye movements are purposeful. Instead of randomly jumping back to different parts of difficult material, good readers look back at the start of sentences that are giving them trouble, then move their eyes smoothly through the material they want to reread.

**Slow recovery time.** The time it takes your eye to move from the end of one line to the beginning of the next is known as *recovery time*. Slow readers spend far too long searching for the next line. Using your finger as a guide will also help speed recovery time.

**Treating all reading assignments the same.** Slow readers may fail to prioritize their reading assignments, ignoring the advice from Sir Francis Bacon quoted earlier in this chapter. Learning to skim and scan less important material is critical to your success and to having time to read important materials in depth.
The key to building reading speed is practice and more practice. To achieve your goal of reading between 500 and 1,000 words per minute, Moidel suggests that you start practicing at three times the rate you want to achieve, a rate that is much faster than you can comprehend. For example, if your goal is 500 words per minute, speed up to 1,500 words per minute. Reading at such an accelerated rate will push your eyes and mind to adjust to the faster pace. When you slow down to 500 words per minute—the pace at which you can read and comprehend—the rate will feel comfortable even though it is much faster than your original speed.

“I find television very educational. Every time someone turns it on, I go in the other room and read a book.”

GROUCHO MARX
legendary comedian
Building Skill, Will, and Self-Management

Monitoring Your Progress

Test Competence: Measure What You’ve Learned

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Circle or highlight the answer that seems to fit best.

1. Making meaning from written words is a personal process because
   A. you may not want to read the material.
   B. you connect to the concepts on the page.
   C. reading comprehension is always objective.
   D. it is unrelated to your reading purpose.

2. Taking an active approach to a difficult text includes all of the following strategies except:
   A. having an open mind.
   B. being willing to study the material more than once.
   C. continually asking questions.
   D. refusing to challenge yourself.

3. The most important goals in choosing a particular setting for reading are to
   A. minimize distractions and maximize focus and discipline.
   B. find the best people with whom to read and work with them.
   C. learn how to concentrate in a library and study there regularly.
   D. learn how to read with children around and decide how to distract them.

4. A reading purpose can be described as
   A. the list of required texts you receive from your instructors.
   B. what you intend to learn or gain from your reading material.
   C. how quickly you intend to complete an assigned work.
   D. not related to any specific goals.
5. You can improve your concentration with all but which of the following?
   A. Being very clear why you are studying the material.
   B. Working with a friend and taking regular breaks.
   C. Carving out study time.
   D. Writing down unrelated thoughts and getting back to them when you are finished studying.

6. To become emotionally involved with what you are reading, you should try all but which of the following?
   A. Try to find material in the text that will make you cry.
   B. Think about your reactions to the material.
   C. Discuss the material with your classmates.
   D. Think about real-world applications.

7. You can build a better vocabulary by focusing on all but which of the following elements?
   A. prefixes
   B. word roots
   C. sentence structure
   D. suffixes

8. For maximum comprehension when you use a dictionary, you should
   A. read only the first meaning of a word.
   B. memorize the exact wording of the dictionary definition.
   C. list all the new words you learn in a journal, without including their definitions.
   D. restate the definition in your own words and use it in a sentence.

9. Slow readers tend to do all but which of the following?
   A. Believe that slow reading is better reading.
   B. Read words one at a time.
   C. Vocalize and subvocalize.
   D. Lose their place as they read and read the same line more than once.

10. At work your vocabulary is likely to do all but which of the following?
    A. Grow as you are exposed to specialized words, phrases, and initials linked to your field.
    B. Remain static since your vocabulary-building years are now behind you.
C. Give your coworkers information about your educational background.
D. Affect your career advancement.

**TRUE/FALSE.** Place a T or an F beside each statement to indicate whether you think it is true or false.

- 1. For every hour you spend in the classroom, you should spend at least two hours studying.
- 2. The specialized vocabulary you learn in an introductory-level course will have little value to you after the course is over.
- 3. Reading comprehension is influenced by the knowledge you have gained through previous reading and studying.
- 4. Academic writing is no more difficult than any other writing.
- 5. While regression and slow recovery time can slow your reading speed, one solution is to use your index finger as a visual guide on the page.

**Target and Achieve a Goal**

Commit to one specific reading comprehension, vocabulary building, or reading speed enhancement strategy from this chapter to improve your study skills.

**Name the strategy here:**

**Describe your goal—what you want to gain by using this strategy:**

**Describe how you plan to use this strategy through the semester to achieve this goal:**
Brain Power: Build Vocabulary Fitness

Here is a selection from the current media. Read the material, paying special attention to the context of the vocabulary words shown in bold type. Then choose the correct definition for each word in the table that follows. Use a dictionary to check your answers. Finally, on a separate sheet, use each vocabulary word in a sentence of your own to solidify your understanding.

In the following excerpt, New York Times columnist David Brooks reflects on a reality that you might be discovering yourself—namely, that being successful in high school does not necessarily prepare you for college or life success. Brooks also focuses on the importance of choosing a college that is right for you and that allows you to soar.

Once you reach adulthood, the key to success will not be demonstrating . . . competence across fields; it will be finding a few things you love and then committing yourself passionately to them.

The traits you used [in high school] getting good grades might actually hold you back [in college]. To get . . . high marks . . . you were encouraged to develop a prudential attitude toward learning. You had to calculate which reading was essential and which was not. You could not allow yourself to be obsessed by one subject because if you did, your marks in . . . other subjects would suffer. . . .

You learned to study subjects that are intrinsically boring to you. . . . You just knew that each class was a hoop you must jump through. . . . You learned to thrive in adult-supervised settings.

If you have done all these things and you are still an interesting person, congratulations, because the system has been trying to whittle you down into a bland, complaisant achievement machine.

But in adulthood, you’ll find that a talent for regurgitating what superiors want to hear will take you only halfway up the ladder, and then you’ll stop there. The people who succeed most spectacularly . . . venture out and thrive where there is no supervision, where there are no preset requirements.

As for the quality of education [you’ll find in college], that’s a matter of your actually wanting to learn and being fortunate enough to meet a professor who electrifies your interest. . . .

There are a lot of smart . . . people in this country, and you will find them at whatever school you go to. . . . Your [challenge is to find a college] with the personality and character that complements your own.

Circle the word or phrase that best defines each term as it is used in this excerpt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VOCABULARY WORDS</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. prudential (adj.)</td>
<td>casual</td>
<td>stingy</td>
<td>cautious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. intrinsically (adv.)</td>
<td>superficially</td>
<td>by their very nature</td>
<td>apparently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. whittle (verb)</td>
<td>reduce</td>
<td>mold</td>
<td>broaden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. complaisant (adj.)</td>
<td>passionate</td>
<td>narrow</td>
<td>amiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. regurgitating (verb)</td>
<td>parroting</td>
<td>reframing</td>
<td>analyzing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. venture out (verb)</td>
<td>remain secluded</td>
<td>take a risk</td>
<td>hold on to the status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. electrifies (verb)</td>
<td>gives an electric shock</td>
<td>molds</td>
<td>excites intensely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. complements (verb)</td>
<td>differs from</td>
<td>expresses respect for</td>
<td>fills up; completes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Get to the Root

Every time you learn a Greek or Latin root, you increase your ability to recognize English vocabulary words that include that root and to figure out their meaning. Grow your vocabulary by studying the root word on page 151 and its related words, writing in two more words from the same root, and including definitions for both new words.

Investigate Using Research Navigator

Access Research Navigator using the Internet address shown on page 32. Then sign on to the service using your Login Name and Password. Scroll through the subject titles listed for The New York Times on the Web. Choose a subject linked to a major that interests you and select a related keyword. For example, if you are thinking of majoring in Health Administration, you could choose the Health Administration database and enter “hospitals” as a keyword.

When the database generates a list of articles, choose one that seems interesting and open its full text. Read the article using the strategies you have examined in this chapter. Then evaluate your comprehension, vocabulary, and speed in writing.

- Which area—comprehension, vocabulary, or speed—do you feel is your strong point?
- Which is toughest for you?
- What can you do to improve your area of challenge?
Building Will and Self-Awareness

Make Responsible Choices

Answer the following question on a separate piece of paper or in a journal.

In most jobs you are constantly faced with material you need to read and understand. With this in mind:

- Think about, and describe, your greatest challenge in reading. How might this problem affect your performance when you begin working? If you have chosen a career—or are thinking about one—try to answer in terms of the kind of reading you are likely to do for work.
- Describe your plan for addressing this challenge, using any of the strategies in this chapter that you think will help you improve.
- From an ethical perspective, think about and discuss whether it’s all right to shortcut important job-related readings—for example, to skim material instead of reading it in depth or to ask coworkers for a quick summary.
Are these shortcuts acceptable if they do not affect job performance? Are they acceptable if they lessen your performance? How do you think time pressure will affect your reading? With too much to read and too little time, are you likely to cut corners or are you likely to work longer hours?

**Chapter Summary**

As you use the summary below to review the concepts you learned in this chapter, focus also on its format—in this case a formal outline, in other chapters a think link or the Cornell system. As you become comfortable with the organization and style of these formats, try using each of them to take notes, seeing which approach works best for you in particular situations.

**CHAPTER 4**

I. Measures to improve reading comprehension
   A. Understanding material requires time, persistence, critical thinking, and an active approach.
   B. It also requires a positive attitude and the use of studying (SQ3R) and vocabulary-building tools.

II. Setting the stage for reading success
   A. When college texts are difficult, strategies are needed to master content.
      1. Start with a positive attitude, an open mind, and a willingness to wade through difficult material several times. Take a critical-thinking approach to the material and define unclear concepts as you become actively involved with them.
      2. Choose the right time and spot for studying to maximize concentration.
      3. Learn to concentrate by choosing a location without distractions, dealing with internal problems, making to-do lists of things that are on your mind, studying for a period and then taking a break, and rewarding yourself for your accomplishments.
      4. Familiarize yourself with what's ahead before you start studying.
         a. Use SQ3R.
         b. Read a primer on the topic.
   5. Become emotionally involved with the material.
   6. Define your reading purpose to determine how you read and your reading pace.
      a. Purpose 1: read for understanding
      b. Purpose 2: read to evaluate critically
c. Purpose 3: read for practical application
d. Purpose 4: read for pleasure

7. Spend enough time studying: a course load of 15 credit hours means that you should spend 30 hours per week studying and doing homework outside of class.

III. Building a strong vocabulary improves reading comprehension and speed.
   A. Analyze word parts including roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
   B. Use a dictionary or text glossary to look up unfamiliar words.
   C. Learn the specialized vocabulary of academic fields.
   D. Use various memory aids to cement recall.

IV. Increasing your reading speed will enable you to handle large reading loads.
   A. Among the problems slow readers face are word-by-word reading, lack of concentration, vocalization and subvocalization, a limited vocabulary and knowledge base, unconscious regression, slow recovery time, and treating all assignments the same.
   1. Studying and mastering strategies for each of these problems will help you read faster and understand more.

Endnotes

9. Ibid., pp. 18–25.
10. Ibid., p. 32.