
TAKING NOTES ON TEXTBOOK READINGS: COMING TO LECTURE PREPARED

The purpose of this exercise is to help you learn how to effectively read your textbook before class so that you will get the most out of lecture. The process of taking notes on your reading before class should not take very long; maybe 30 - 60 minutes for most assigned readings. The purpose at this point is not for you to understand everything you read; that's what lecture and studying after lecture are for. Rather, the goal is to get an overview of the big ideas and new terms that are in the assigned reading so you won't be hearing things for the first time when you go to lecture.

Part I: Instructions

- A) Start with the next empty, right-hand page in your lecture notebook.
 - B) Write the date and the sections of the textbook that you read at the top of the page.
 - C) Write responses to the *reading prompts* (see #1-4 below) in your notebook as you read the assigned pages in your textbook. If you need to go on to a second page, use the next empty, right-hand page.
 - D) After the last *reading prompt*, write "Lecture notes begin here".
 - E) Bring the notebook to class and continue where you left off with that day's lecture notes.
 - F) Be sure to note whether your questions (see *reading prompt #4* below) were answered in lecture. If they weren't answered, consider asking them. Remember that if you have a question, there are most likely a lot of other students in class who also have the same question.
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Part II: Reading prompts (to be written in your lecture notebook)

- 1) For each section that you read, write down any subheadings and any main ideas that seem most important. Do your best to put the ideas in your own words (don't just copy down what the textbook says).
- 2) List any important definitions and new terms with which you are unfamiliar. If the definition is not given in the body of the reading, use the glossary at the back of your textbook (for technical terms) or a dictionary (for non-technical terms). Again, try to put the definitions in your own words.
- 3) In your own words, write a brief summary of what you just read. As part of your summary, you may want to reflect on how the material relates to your personal experience.
- 4) Write down any questions you still have after completing your reading. What did you have a hard time understanding? Try to be as specific as possible and be sure to come up with at least one question!