

# Muscle Reading

## *Before You Read*

**Step 1: Preview.** Read the chapter outline. Flip through the chapter page by page, looking for familiar ideas that will help you link the new information to previously learned material. Read all the chapter headlines, section titles, and paragraph headlines. Read the summary at the end of the chapter.

**Step 2: Outline.** This can be done mentally or on paper. Consider looking at the chapter outline in the table of contents so you can organize the material in your mind. Section titles and paragraph headlines can serve as major and minor topics for your outline.

**Step 3: Question.** Ask yourself questions as you preview the material. Consider turning chapter headings (e.g., Market Research) into questions (What is market research? How do businesses use it?). Make questions playful or creative. You don't need to get an answer to every question you ask; the idea is to get your brain involved in the reading assignment. Asking questions helps you stay alert as you read. Boredom tends to disappear when you're looking for answers to questions instead of just passively reading.

## *While You Read*

**Step 4: Read.** Find a quiet, distraction-free place. Sit up. Keep your spine straight. Avoid reading in bed, except for fun. Be conscious of where you are and what you're doing. When you notice your attention wandering, gently bring it back into focus. Avoid marathon reading sessions – schedule breaks. Visualize the material – form mental pictures as you read. Try reading aloud, especially for complex material.

**Step 5: Highlight.** This creates signals for reviewing later and will save you lots of time when studying for exams later. Only highlight when you understand the paragraph or page enough to know exactly what is important. Highlight sparingly; usually no more than 10%. Write comments and questions in the margins of the text for review later.

**Step 6: Answer.** As you read, answer the questions you asked yourself before you began reading and write them down. Fill in your outline.

## *After You Read*

**Step 7: Recite.** Talk to yourself or someone else about what you have read. Explain as much as you can about the material using the chapter headings as prompts. Form a group and practice teaching each other what you have read.

**Step 8: Review.** Plan to do your first review within 24 hours of reading the material. This will help move the information from your short-term to your long-term memory. During this review, look over your notes and clear up points you didn't understand. Recite the main points again. This review can be short. You might spend as little as 15 minutes reviewing a two-hour reading assignment.

**Step 9: Review again.** This final step is a weekly or monthly review. This can be even shorter than the previous review and will help keep the neural pathways to the information open. Three-by-five cards with ideas, formulas, concepts, and facts can be handy and portable. Sometimes longer review periods are appropriate for difficult material. Starting over, as if you have never read the material can provide surprising insights.