

KNOW HOW TO WORK WITH SOS SUBJECTS

When you know how to read a text, you comprehend and remember what you read.

Textbook authors have already done a lot of your work for you. They've inserted boldface subtitles that tell you exactly what you are going to be reading about. They've put all the important words in bold or italic print, and they've added pictures, charts, graphs, lists of vocabulary words, summaries, and review questions. The textbook authors have done all of this to make it easier for you to learn and retain the information they are presenting. Once you know how to scan, read, and review, you will be able to comprehend and remember what you read the first time through.

Scan.

Scanning gives you a quick overview of the material you're going to read. To scan, read the title, the subtitles, and everything in bold and italic print. Look at all pictures, graphs, and charts, and read review questions and summaries. Scanning provides you with a great deal of information in a very short amount of time. In addition to providing you with an excellent overview of the material, scanning also provides you with a kind of "information framework." Once you have this framework, it's easier to understand and to make sense of the rest of the material. You can take the more detailed information, and just fit it into the framework that you've already established.

Read.

When your reading has a purpose, your comprehension improves and it's easier for you to stay focused. To give your reading purpose and focus, turn each boldfaced subtitle into a question. Keep your question in mind as you read. At the end of the section, see if you can answer it. Your question gives you something specific to look for, but more importantly, it helps keep your mind from wandering, and so you remember more of what you've read. Before you start to read a section, look to see if there are any vocabulary words, names, places, or events in bold or italic print and ask yourself, "Why is this word, person, place, or event important?" You should, of course, have an answer to that question when you finish reading the section. When you have completely finished your reading, you should also know the answers to the Review Questions.

Review.

Okay, you've scanned and read the material. This is when most students will say, "I'm done," and close their book. Taking a few extra minutes for review, however, will make a huge difference in what you are able to remember later. When you review, you lock the information into your brain before it has a chance to evaporate. To review, go back to the beginning and go through the same process you did when you scanned the material. This time, as you read the boldfaced subtitles, briefly restate the purpose or point of each section to yourself, using your own words. As you look at vocabulary words and the words in bold and italic print, think about what they mean and why they are significant. If you really want to lock the information into your brain, review everything again a day or two later. When you begin studying for the test, you'll be amazed at how well you already know it. It may take a little practice to get the Scan, Read, and Review process down. You'll soon realize, however, that this process does not mean more work, it just means better comprehension, better retention, and better grades.