Reading Textbooks

• What we’ll be covering:
  – previewing
  – annotating
Why preview?

• improves concentration, memory, and understanding
• only takes 5 minutes to preview an entire chapter
• if you don’t have enough time to read before class, previewing may give you enough information to understand what is being discussed
Steps to previewing material

1. Read the chapter title
   – The title announces the topic or subject. Try to remember what you already know about the topic.
Steps to previewing material

2. Read the introduction or first paragraph
   - This is a lead-in to the material and will often itemize what the chapter will cover. If it is long, read only the first 5 or 6 lines.
Steps to previewing material

3. Read the closing paragraph or chapter summary
   - These sections are often used to draw conclusions based on the facts that have already been presented or to restate key ideas.
Steps to previewing material

4. **Read questions or vocabulary at the end of the chapter**
   - This section is used to test your knowledge of the material. Reading them beforehand alerts you to what is most important within the chapter.
Steps to previewing material

5. Read each boldface heading
   – Headings separate chapters into main divisions and indicate important concepts. By looking at these headings, you can detect the organization of the chapter and the general approach of the author.
Steps to previewing material

6. Look at any pictures, graphs, or charts
   - Pictures, illustrations, or captions may help you clarify ideas and give direction to your thinking.
Why annotate?

- Have you ever felt that you’ve been reading for hours and can’t remember what you’ve read?
- annotating can keep you focused
- annotations tell you WHY important points are important
- Download a sample page of annotated text
Steps to Annotating Text

1. First, preview a chapter or subunit of text
2. Next, read one or more paragraphs. Then stop (the amount will vary, so judge according to your text’s difficulty and organization).
Steps to Annotating Text

3. After reading, go back and underline the key word, phrase, or idea to which your annotation will refer.
   - These key ideas often occur as: definitions, examples, lists, causes/effects, characteristics, similarities/differences, and names/dates.
Steps to Annotating Text

4. Check your annotations to be sure that they make sense and that you are not merely copying the text into the margins.
   – In order to be most effective, your annotations must be in your own words, except in the case of technical definitions.
5. If you have no annotating, you should have no underlining.
Steps to Annotating Text

6. Go on to the next paragraph or section.
   – Remember, not every section of text will have a key concept that should be annotated, but every page or section usually does.
Summary

• Reading your text numerous times is often not enough to insure that you have understood and retained the information covered.

• You must actively participate in the reading process by thinking about what you already know, identifying topics that you don’t understand and picking out important points that are likely to be on a test.
Apply what you’ve learned

• Pick a chapter from a textbook that you haven’t read yet.
• Preview the text. On a separate sheet of paper outline the contents of the text and identify the two main concepts in it.
• Annotate the text.