

Technical English, Lecture 3: Can you read me?

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- Reading Effectively
- Reading Efficiently
- Reading Critically
- Reading Intelligently

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The PSQ5R method

Purpose

Purpose: Why are you reading this?

Scan: Get a general overview and establish your purpose of the reading.

Question: Be active and ask questions regarding the section headings and what the author is presenting.

Read selectively: Read to find answers for your questions.

Recite: Without looking, recite the answers.

Record, Recall: Jot your answers in keywords, make your mind map, visualize the information, rewrite it in your own words.

Reflect: "Elaborate" new information, relate parts, connect with personal experience.

Review: Look at your questions, notes, answers, and what you recalled. Make any necessary corrections to your mind map.

Information: Skim over most things until you find it. (newspaper)

Reasons, learning: Read deliberately and critically. (research paper)

Enjoyment of writing: Several readings to feel the art. (poetry)

Get the idea: Skim some parts and dwell on others. (novel)

Revision: Read with your own notes, identify basic principles, re-view your earlier questions about the text. (studying for an exam)

Getting an overview

- Get a feel for the book: front cover, back cover, graphics, number of pages, length of chapters.
- Get some background: publication date, foreword, introduction, author biography.
- Key information: table of contents, chapter headings.

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Can this map help me?

- It shows you exactly how much you have learned.
- With enough time, you will actually recall more.
- You will learn how to use different strategies for remembering.

You should also be noting down questions about things you have forgotten, so you can look them up.

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Mind maps

- Make a Mind-Map of all you can remember in the chapter.
- Do not stop until at least half an hour is up. More will surface if you give yourself the time.
- *Do not refer to the text while doing this.*
- If you come to a dead end, try alternative memory techniques:
 - associating ideas, either from within the section itself or from other related material;
 - visualizing pages, pictures, graphs etc.;
 - recalling personal associations that may have come to mind;
 - staring out the window and blanking out your thoughts; . . .

This is strenuous, but it is rewarding.

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Reflections

When you are finished, you should try to figure out how all the material you have remembered fits together - not necessarily as it is presented in the book, but as it is organized in your own thinking.

Note down

- your opinions of it,
- questions about it,
- disagreements with it, and so on.

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What about books?

You should get a general overview of the book's structure.

1. Does the book have information on the inside cover?
2. Does the book have a Preface?
3. Does the book have a Table of Contents?
4. Does the book have Appendices? If yes, name them.
5. Does the book have a Glossary?
6. Does the book have an Author Index?
7. Does the book have a Subject Index?

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The background

Even more information about the book:

1. Who is the author, and what are his/her credentials?
2. What is the date and location of publication?
3. What is the author's purpose in writing this book?

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How is the book organized?

The organization of the material is also important.

1. How many chapters are in the book?
2. Where are the references located in the book?
3. Does the book have special Introductory and Summary chapters?
4. What are the focus and perspective of the entire book?
5. What chapter aids does the author provide?
6. How are the chapters organized (headings, sub-headings, italicized words and/or words in heavy print, etc.)?

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What about difficult texts?

If the content is complicated some steps can help you.

- Read aloud.
- Use a dictionary.
- Be an active reader: ask questions.
- Compare with other texts (lecture or tutorial notes, other books).
- Break the text into small sections.
- Discuss with colleagues, mentors, professors, ...

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This is another task. Use these hints in training.

- Determine your purpose before reading. If you only need main ideas, then allow yourself to skim the material.
- Try to avoid focusing on every word, but rather look at groups of about three words.
- Improve your vocabulary. Familiarize yourself with new words to be faster next time.
- Read more!
- For short periods every day, read faster than your normal speed.

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- Define your purpose.
- Read, read, and read.
- Map it in your mind, reflect on it, and write short summaries.

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