

Mastering the College Textbook

Previewing

- Step 1** Read the chapter title, introductory paragraphs, headings and sub-headings. Close the book and ask yourself:
- What is the chapter about?
 - Can I outline the chapter, recreating the headings?
- Step 2** Divide the chapter into sections. Preview each section turning headings and sub-headings into questions. Then, **read only the first sentence of each paragraph**. If the sentence is too long, stop after 2 lines. If it is too short, read a second sentence. If the first sentence seems unimportant, read the last sentence of the paragraph. Ask yourself:
- What is the section about?
 - Were my questions answered? Answer them.
- Step 3** Repeat Step 2 until you have previewed all sections of the chapter.

You should be able, at this point, to provide a reasonable outline of the chapter, including main and supporting ideas. It is also very important to retell in your own words as much as you can remember from previewing the chapter. Refer back to the text only when your memory falters.

Active Reading

Now that you have finished previewing the chapter and have a rough outline in your head, go back to the beginning and read through the entire chapter, section by section.

- Step 4** Reactivate the questions you posed at each heading and sub-heading. The entire time you read, look for answers to your questions. When you finish reading a paragraph or group of paragraphs,
- highlight or write notes in the margins what you now think is the most important point to remember.**
- (It is very important not to over-highlight. Entire sentences do not have to be highlighted or underlined, only the most important words.)
- Step 5** At the end of each heading, stop and ask yourself:
- What are the most important points to remember from this section of the chapter?
 - What are the supporting ideas?
 - What are the meanings of some key terms?

