

Brenda D. Smith  
LeeAnn Morris

# Bridging the Gap

Thirteenth Edition



**College  
Reading**

## SPECIAL FEATURES IN *BRIDGING THE GAP*, THIRTEENTH EDITION

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# Bridging the Gap

## College Reading

THIRTEENTH EDITION

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*In memory of my mother and father—B.D.S*

*In memory of Tim, who loved to read—L.M.*

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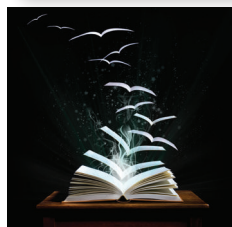
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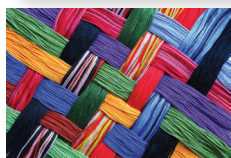
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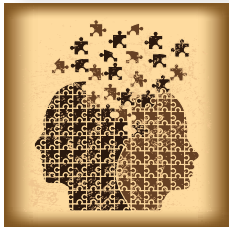
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Progress Chart for Reading Selections (inside back cover)



# PREFACE

Educators' knowledge of the learning process forms the foundation for curriculum and practice. Although instructors might not articulate their philosophy, classroom observers would see it in the resources, activities, policies, and daily routines that encompass the educational experience. Likewise, textbooks reflect but don't necessarily state authors' pedagogical principles. Musing on this notion, a conference speaker recently commented that textbooks rarely, if ever, contain an explanation of their undergirding philosophy. He went on to say that their authors may not even be guided by any particular theory or research but only by their personal experience and beliefs about how people learn. In its very title, though, *Bridging the Gap*, Thirteenth Edition, is suggesting the principles that guided the first edition, this thirteenth edition, and every edition between them. Bridging—making connections—is the focus of this text.

The structure, materials, and activities throughout this book rest on the constructivist view that learning works best when connections are made between new ideas and what the learner already knows. *Bridging the Gap* challenges students to build on their previous reading experiences to develop strategies for the independence and challenge of college reading and learning. The longer selections, as well as the shorter textbook excerpts, also build necessary schemata to absorb new concepts in criminal justice, health, history, philosophy, psychology, science, teacher education, technology, and other academic disciplines. Likewise, background exercises accompany longer reading selections to link academic topics to current events and place academic ideas in the context of the real world. Writing activities recognize the implicit connection between writing and reading. Perhaps more important than ever is the bridge to a career, job advancement, and a satisfying quality of life—the goal that most college students are seeking. Instructors will recognize the theories of Jerome Bruner and Lev Vygotsky in the structure of this textbook, but providing bridges to effective reading strategies, new knowledge, the real world, careers, and college success is at the heart of *Bridging the Gap*.

## NEW TO THE THIRTEENTH EDITION

The thirteenth edition of *Bridging the Gap* holds true to the long tradition of solid instruction supported with fresh, new readings and features to connect with students.

- **Eight brand new, major reading selections and completely new accompanying practice exercises. In addition, new versions of five popular readings from the twelfth edition have been included.**

The new and updated readings provide high-interest topics that enrich and support the practice skills taught throughout the book. Students will relate to selections about battling procrastination, conserving earth's resources, managing stress

in college, technology addiction, success as an entrepreneur, managing interpersonal conflict, ancient native cultures of North America, as well as a short story about an adventurous young man with autism, and selections focusing on climate change, teacher education, and global religious practices.

- **New, short excerpts** that serve as examples and practice exercises focus on sports, teacher education, and other engaging, high-interest topics to freshen the practice exercises.
- **Strong emphasis on critical thinking.** Based on the urging of the reviewers, this edition retains two features from the twelfth edition of *Bridging the Gap* that **focus on critical thinking**. An updated **collection of themed readings** concludes Chapter 10: Critical Thinking. The introduction and readings in the collection explore the interwoven threads of **technology, crime, and ethics**, and challenge students to analyze, synthesize, and respond. In addition, **Think Critically About the Selection** follows each of the 28 long reading selections to encourage extended thinking about topics that are raised in the readings. In some cases, this feature connects with the **Write About the Selection** feature that also follows each reading.
- **Two new Concept Preps** appear in this thirteenth edition. Concept Prep for Science and Concept Prep for Criminal Justice offer useful information on these disciplines and provide important background knowledge.
- **New “Career Facts” boxes** are included within each of the Concept Preps in the book. These boxes include important information about careers, salaries, and job prospects for each of the disciplines covered.
- **Build Background Knowledge Using the Internet** is a revised feature that accompanies each of the longer readings in the text and gets students doing their own research on the Internet in order to develop background knowledge and enrich understanding.
- **Discussion, Exploration, and Everyday Life** is a new feature placed after each of the longer reading selections. These collaborative exercises offer students yet another way to relate to the readings by encouraging them to work with topics covered and explore how those topics relate to their everyday lives.

## CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

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The thirteenth edition continues another tradition of previous editions by using actual college textbook material for instruction and practice. Designed for an upper-level course in college reading, each chapter introduces a new strategy, provides short practice exercises to teach it, and then offers practice through longer textbook selections.

Following the major restructuring in the twelfth edition, this thirteenth edition of *Bridging the Gap* begins with subjects that are critical to college reading success and then moves from lower to higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy to present students with gradually more challenging and sophisticated reading skills. Initial chapters discuss active academic learning, reading efficiency, and comprehension test-taking skills (Chapter 1), strategic reading and study (Chapter 2), organizing textbook material for study (Chapter 3), vocabulary (Chapter 4), main ideas and

supporting details (Chapter 5), and patterns of organization (Chapter 6). Later chapters teach inference (Chapter 7), point of view (Chapter 8), graphic illustrations (Chapter 9), and critical thinking (Chapter 10). The reading and study strategies discussions that appear early in the book stress the need to construct the main idea of a passage and to select significant supporting details. Exercises throughout the text reinforce and encourage “engaged thinking” with specific strategies to use before, during, and after reading. Annotating during reading and three different methods of organizing textbook notes for later study are explained and then reinforced in the remaining chapters. The critical thinking chapter brings all of the reading skills to bear on the essential ability to analyze and evaluate reading material.

## FEATURES

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- Actual **textbook selections** are used for practice exercises.
- **Many academic disciplines** are represented throughout, including psychology, history, communications, business, health, criminal justice, philosophy/religion, science, teacher education, and literature; the latter includes the essay, short story, poetry, and narrative forms, and persuasive and expository nonfiction forms.
- **Vocabulary is presented in context**; vocabulary exercises follow each of the longer textbook reading selections. In addition to the end-of-chapter **Vocabulary Booster** lessons, a broad range of **vocabulary development** topics and corresponding exercises are presented in Chapter 4.
- **Reader’s Tip** boxes give easy-to-access advice for readers, condensing strategies for improving reading into practical hints for quick reference.
- Each longer textbook reading selection has both **explicit and inferential questions**. Multiple-choice items are labeled as *main idea*, *inference*, *detail*, or *author’s purpose* questions.
- Although skills build and overlap, **each chapter can be taught as a separate unit** to fit individual class or student needs.
- Practice is offered on **identifying fallacies** and **recognizing and avoiding barriers to critical thinking** in the chapter on critical thinking (Chapter 10).
- The **capstone chapter on critical thinking** challenges students to analyze, evaluate, and respond to a variety of themed readings on the intersection of criminal justice, technology, and ethics.

### Additional features include:

- A list of **Learning Objectives** introduces each chapter and provides clear direction and purpose for reading. The objectives then appear next to the related content, and they are summarized at the *end* of the skills portion of each chapter in the **Summary Points** section.
- **Brain Boosters** add brief, well-researched conclusions from neuroscientific research. They offer insights about how human brains learn and how to make the most of the brain’s power.
- In **Concept Preps**, key concepts in a variety of academic disciplines are matched with the subjects in many of the longer reading selections. These selected concepts, reflecting common knowledge that lies at the core of each academic

discipline, are also an important part of the shared cultural heritage of educated thinkers. Career-related information specific to the discipline is also included.

The purpose of this innovative feature is to develop schematic and prior knowledge for students' later academic success. For example, the Concept Preps for Psychology discuss people and ideas at the heart of every introductory psychology course, including Sigmund Freud's and Carl Jung's theories, Ivan Pavlov's discovery of, and experiments with, classical conditioning, and B. F. Skinner's behaviorism.

- **Establish a Purpose for Reading** preview activities connect text-to-self by asking students to recall prior knowledge and experiences, to make predictions, and to establish a purpose for reading.
- **Build Background Knowledge Using the Internet** challenges students to prepare for reading the longer selections by searching for pertinent information online and briefly recording their findings.
- **Think Critically About the Reading** challenges readers to extend and deepen their thinking about ideas that are raised in the long reading selections.
- **Write About the Selection** questions encourage text-to-self and text-to-world connections by asking students to make a personal link to the textbook selection or a link to larger global issues.
- **Discussion, Exploration, and Everyday Life** collaborative exercises encourage students to extend their thinking about topics within the longer reading selections and to connect them with their own experience.
- **Vocabulary Booster** activities at the end of each chapter focus on linking and learning words through word parts or word families. The lessons can be assigned weekly, and student progress can be measured using the assessment quizzes in the Instructor's Manual. In addition, the thirteenth edition includes more than 160 vocabulary words in context after the longer reading selections.
- **Many new photos** have been carefully chosen to amplify the exposition.
- A **Progress Chart** is located on the inside back cover of the book so that students can record their progress in understanding the longer reading selections.

## THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PACKAGE

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MyLab™ is the teaching and learning platform that empowers you to reach *every* student. By combining trusted content with digital tools and a flexible platform, MyLab personalizes the learning experience and improves results for each student. When students enter your developmental reading course with varying skill levels, MyLab can help you identify which students need extra support and provide them targeted practice and instruction outside of class. Learn more at [www.pearson.com/mylab/reading](http://www.pearson.com/mylab/reading).

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- **Annotated Instructor's Edition.** This is an exact replica of the student edition but includes all answers printed directly on the fill-in lines that are provided in the text. The Annotated Instructor's Edition now includes Lexiles for each of the longer reading selections.  
(0-13-530019-3; 978-0-13-530019-0)
- **Instructor's Manual.** This manual contains Vocabulary-in-context exercises to reinforce the words in the longer textbook selections. In addition, it includes four appendixes that further support student reading skills: 1. Making Sense of Figurative Language and Idioms for Native & Non-Native English Speakers; 2. Practice for Reading Efficiency; 3. Test-Taking Preparation; and 4. The Reading Workshop: Topics and Formats for Book Discussions. Available for download.
- **Test Bank.** This supplement contains additional vocabulary and comprehension questions for each reading selection. The true-false, vocabulary, and comprehension quizzes can be used as pre-reading quizzes to stimulate interest or as evaluation quizzes after reading. Available for download.
- **MyTest.** This electronic test bank includes chapter tests and vocabulary tests in a Web-based format.
- **Power Point Presentations.** Classroom presentations for each chapter. Available for download.
- **Answer Key.** The Answer Key contains the solutions to the exercises in the student edition of the text. Available for download.

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# 1

## Active Academic Reading

### Learning Objectives

In this chapter, you will learn to:

- 1.1** Use active academic reading techniques
- 1.2** Improve concentration
- 1.3** Increase reading efficiency
- 1.4** Use active strategies before, during, and after a reading comprehension test
- 1.5** Recognize the question types on comprehension tests
- 1.6** Take control of your learning

**Vocabulary Booster:** Over, Under, Around, and Through





## WHAT IS ACTIVE ACADEMIC READING?

### Learning Objective 1.1

Use active academic reading techniques

**Active academic reading** is the purposeful use of attention, effort, strategies, and resources to learn through reading. Developing active reading habits is one of the best things that you can do to smooth your path through college. Professors expect students to read for background and depth to understand the information that professors provide during class time. Whether you read on a screen or a printed page, active reading will help you absorb ideas more thoroughly and more quickly.

In this chapter, we will discuss many factors that contribute to your ability to become an effective, active academic reader. First, however, let's consider what psychologists have to say about focusing your attention, thinking, and learning.

### What Can We Learn from Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience?

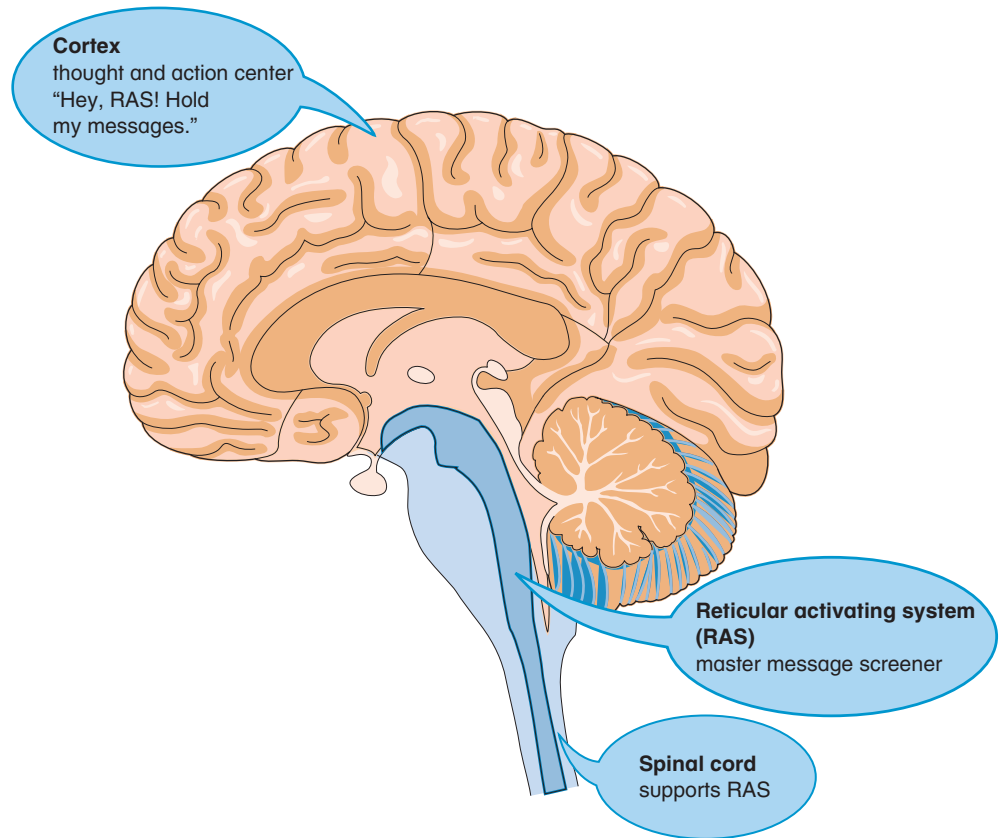
**Cognitive psychology** is the body of knowledge that describes how the mind works or, at least, how researchers think the mind works. Cognitive psychologists study how people process information from their five senses and how they think, learn, remember, express ideas, and solve problems. The information-processing model, which compares the human brain to a computer, has been useful to our understanding of brain function. However, as research continues, new concepts are also being developed.

**Neuroscience** is the scientific study of the molecular and cellular levels of the nervous system and of the systems within the brain. It includes the study of behavior produced by the brain. With the development of sophisticated medical imaging techniques, scientists can now view the changes that take place in the brain during cognitive, emotional, and physical activity. They can actually see what happens in the brain when people learn. Research in neuroscience is providing increasing information about the biological aspects of learning. The better we understand the process of learning, the more control we have over it.

**How Does the Brain Screen Messages?** Cognitive psychologists use the word *attention* to describe a student's uninterrupted mental focus. Thinking and learning, they say, begin with attention. During every minute of the day, millions of sensory messages bombard the brain. How does the brain decide which messages to pay attention to and which to overlook? At this moment, are you thinking about the temperature of the room, outdoor noises, or what you are reading? With all this information available to you at the same time, how can your brain choose what's most important?

#### BRAIN BOOSTER

Medical imaging techniques, such as PET scans, fMRI technology, EEGs, and newly developing methods, allow neuroscientists to "see" the brain as it works. These instruments have created an explosion of knowledge that helps us understand how we can make better use of our brains to attain our learning goals. Throughout this book, you will notice a feature called "Brain Booster." In these short pieces, you will find practical ways to keep your brain working at its best—all thanks to research in neuroscience. Look for boxes like this one for brain-boosting tips.



The brain relies on a dual command center to screen out one message and attend to another. Receptor cells send millions of messages per minute to your brain. Your reticular activating system (RAS)—a network of cells at the top of the spinal cord that runs to the brain—tells the cortex of the brain—the wrinkled outer layer that handles sensory processing, motor control, and memory storage—not to bother with most of the sensory input. For example, you are probably not aware at this moment of your back pressing against your chair or your clothes pulling on your body. Your RAS has decided not to clutter your brain with such irrelevant information and to alert the cortex only when there is an extreme problem, such as your foot going to sleep because you have been sitting on it.

The cortex can also make attention decisions and tell your RAS to hold some messages while you concentrate on others. How well are your RAS and cortex cooperating in blocking out distractions so that you can concentrate on learning?

**Is Divided Attention Effective?** Is it possible to do two things at once, such as watching television and doing homework? Is it safe to drive and talk on a cell phone? In a study on divided attention, researchers Rodriguez, Valdes-Sosa, and Freiwald<sup>1</sup> found that dividing your attention usually has a cost. You are more likely to perform one or both tasks less efficiently than if you were to concentrate

<sup>1</sup>V. Rodriguez, M. Valdes-Sosa, and W. Freiwald, "Dividing Attention Between Form and Motion During Transparent Surface Perception," *Cognitive Brain Research* 13 (2002): 187–93.



**Dividing your attention can have a cost.** Researchers have found that the auto accident rate among people who drive while talking on the phone (including those texting or using headsets) is four times that of drivers who do not use the phone while they drive. As a result, many states have made it illegal to use a cell phone while driving.

on a single task. Likewise, extensive studies on cell phone use while driving confirm the old adage, “You can’t do two things at once and do them well.”

**Can Tasks Become Automatic?** Can you walk and chew gum at the same time? Does every simple activity require your undivided attention? Many tasks—walking, tying shoelaces, and driving a car, for example—begin under controlled processing, which means that they are deliberate and require concentrated mental effort to learn them. After much practice, however, such tasks become automatic. Driving a car is

### BRAIN BOOSTER

#### Are You Paying Attention?

Of course you are! Human brains are always attending to something. Perhaps the question should be, “What are you paying attention to?” Keeping our focus on a classroom lecture, a reading assignment, or a project is sometimes a struggle, but paying attention is critical to learning. Research tells us that two factors are most important to paying attention: meaning and emotion. So, think of a way to connect new information to something that you already know. Recognizing your crazy Uncle Charlie in something you studied in psychology class will help you understand and remember it. Think of how you can apply a new concept at work or in your personal life. These are ways to give real meaning to what you’re learning. Likewise, link emotion to new concepts with a funny story, an interesting case study, or a real-life concern. Studying or sharing a new idea with a friend also lends emotional energy to learning.  $\text{Meaning} + \text{Emotion} = \text{Attention}$ . Make the equation work for you!

—Adapted from Patricia Wolfe, *Brain Matters*.

a learned behavior that researchers would say becomes an automatic process after thousands of hours of experience. You can probably drive and listen to the radio or a CD at the same time, but it is not a good idea to drive and talk on a cell phone at the same time. Similarly, a skilled athlete can dribble a basketball automatically while also attending to strategy and position. Attention is actually not divided because it can shift away from tasks that have become automatic.

**Automatic Aspects of Reading.** The idea of doing certain things automatically is especially significant in reading. As a first-grade reader, you had to concentrate on recognizing letters, words, and sentences, as well as trying to construct meaning. After years of practice and overlearning, much of the recognition aspect of reading has become automatic. You no longer stop laboriously to decode each word or each letter. For example, when you look at the word *child*, you automatically think of the meaning. Thus, you can focus your mental resources on understanding the message in which the word appears, rather than on understanding the word itself.

## Help Your Brain Absorb New Information

Academic reading can be frustrating because it is not as automatic as everyday reading. For example, you may read through the sports section of your local newspaper with ease but stumble through a textbook chapter on human physiology. College textbooks often contain many unfamiliar words, new ideas, and complex concepts that the brain cannot automatically process. However, using the four strategies explained here can prepare your brain to accept, understand, and remember what you read.

**Strategy #1: Preview Your Textbooks.** Give yourself a head start on understanding the organization and content of your college textbooks with just a few quick steps: (1) Notice the cover and title. (2) Glance at the title page. What can you learn about the authors from the information on this page? (3) Do the flip: Quickly rifle the pages from the back to the front. What pops out? Are there pictures, exercises to complete, repeated features? (4) Examine the table of contents. What are the major topics? Is there a pattern to their order or content? Notice the features at the end of the book. Is there an index, a glossary of terms, an answer key?

### EXERCISE 1.1

## Preview This Textbook for the Big Picture

Preview this textbook to get an overview of its scope and its sequence of topics. Think about how the chapter topics fit the goals of college reading. Glance at the chapters to get a sense of the organization and then answer the following questions:

1. How many chapters are in this text? Which ones do you think will be especially useful for you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What seems to be the purpose of the Reader's Tip boxes throughout the text? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Does the text have specific exercises to help build vocabulary? Where are they located? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which chapter provides information about determining main ideas?

---

5. What is the purpose of the Brain Booster feature in the blue boxes?

---

---

6. Where do reading selections from history, science, and a variety of college subjects appear? \_\_\_\_\_

---

7. What is on the inside of the back cover? \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Strategy #2: Learn New Vocabulary Early.** Your attention to a book's message can be interrupted by the need to attend to unknown words, creating the dilemma of trying to do two things at once—trying to figure out word meaning as well as trying to understand the message. After the break in concentration, you can regain your focus, and little harm is done if such breaks are infrequent. However, frequent interruptions in the automatic aspect of reading can undermine your ability to concentrate on the message. Thus, mastering the jargon or vocabulary of a new course early on can improve your concentration. Make a list of terms that are repeated in your textbooks and by your professors. Use either printed or online flash cards to learn their meanings.

**Strategy #3: Read Assignments Before Class.** Activate your knowledge on the subject before class by reading homework assignments. Look at the illustrations and read the captions. Jot down several questions that you would like to ask the professor about the reading so that the lecture and class discussion can enhance your newly created knowledge network. Be aware that professors may not give a specific reading assignment, but they still expect you to read the textbook and other required materials for the course.

**Strategy #4: Review Lecture Notes Before Class.** *Always, always,* review your notes before the next class period. Review them with a classmate during a break, on the phone, or via e-mail. Fill in gaps and make notations to ask questions and resolve confusion. This habit helps to consolidate the information. That is, it unites new and existing information to expand knowledge networks in your brain.

## POOR CONCENTRATION: CAUSES AND CURES

### Learning Objective 1.2

Improve  
concentration

Knowing how to concentrate is critical to college success. Concentration is a skill that is developed through self-discipline and practice. It is a habit that requires time and effort to develop for consistent success. Athletes must have it, surgeons must have it, and successful college students must have it. *Concentration is essential for active academic reading and learning.*

**Concentration** can be defined as the process of *paying attention*—that is, focusing full attention on the task at hand. Someone once said that the mark of a genius is the ability to concentrate completely on one thing at a time. This is easy if the task is fun and exciting, but it becomes more difficult when you are required to read something that is not very interesting to you. In such cases, you may find yourself looking from word to word and spacing out.

Students frequently ask, “How can I keep my mind on what I’m doing?” Or they say, “I finished the assignment, but I don’t understand a thing I read!” The best way to increase concentration is to first identify external and internal distractions and then use a series of practical short- and long-range planning strategies to address these distractions.

## External Distractions

**External distractions** are the temptations of the physical world that divert your attention away from your work. They are the people in the room, the noise in the background, the time of day, electronic distractions such as texts, e-mails, and social media, or your place for studying. To control these external distractions, you must create an environment that says, “This is the place and the time for me to get my work done.”

**Create a Place for Studying.** Start by establishing a private study cubicle; it may be in the library or learning center, at the kitchen table, or in your bedroom. Wherever your study place is, choose a straight chair and face the wall. Get rid of electronics that you don’t need for study and other temptations that trigger the mind to think of play. Stay away from your bed because it triggers sleep. Spread out your papers, books, and other symbols of studying, and create an atmosphere in which the visual stimuli signal work. Be consistent by trying to study in the same place at the same time.

**Use a Calendar, Assignment Book, or Smartphone.** At the beginning of the term, record dates for tests, papers, and special projects on some kind of planner, such as a print or electronic calendar, assignment book, or smartphone. Use your planner to organize all of your course assignments, and set electronic reminders in advance of deadlines. The mere sight of your planner will remind you of the need for both short- and long-term planning. Your first job is to devise a plan for being ready.

**Schedule Weekly Activities.** Successful people do not let their time slip away; they manage time, rather than letting time manage them. Plan realistically and then follow your plan. After calculating the total study hours needed using the formula below, complete the weekly activity chart shown on the next page:

1. Enter your classes and all other fixed commitments such as work hours into the chart.
2. Calculate the number of study hours you should plan.

Number of classes I’m taking: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours each class meets each week: × \_\_\_\_\_

Total hours in class each week = \_\_\_\_\_

Two study hours for each hour in class (some experts recommend three hours of study for each hour in class) × 2

**Total number of study hours I should plan each week** =

- 3. Distribute your total recommended study hours in reasonable places during the week. Make good use of time between classes as well as the longer blocks of time.
- 4. When you have a workable schedule, make copies of it.

Each week, make a list of the class assignments, divide them into small tasks, and write them into the schedule during the study hours that you have already planned. Be specific about each task (e.g., “read first half of Ch. 8 in psychology, brainstorm research paper topic for English”). Always include time for a regular review of your lecture notes.

WEEKLY ACTIVITY CHART							
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00–8:00							
8:00–9:00							
9:00–10:00							
10:00–11:00							
11:00–12:00							
12:00–1:00							
1:00–2:00							
2:00–3:00							
3:00–4:00							
4:00–5:00							
5:00–6:00							
6:00–7:00							
7:00–8:00							
8:00–9:00							
9:00–10:00							
10:00–11:00							
11:00–12:00							



Examinations require special planning. Many students do not realize how much time it takes to study for a major exam. Spread out your studying over several days and avoid last-minute cramming sessions late at night. Plan additional time for special projects and papers to avoid deadline crises.

Even though it is not necessary to write this on the chart, remember that you need short breaks. Research shows that studying in chunks rather than long spans is most efficient. Try the 50:10 ratio—study hard for 50 minutes, take a 10-minute break, and then promptly go back to studying for another 50 minutes.

## Internal Distractions

**Internal distractions** are the concerns that come repeatedly into your mind as you try to keep your attention focused on an assignment. You have to run errands, do laundry, send e-mails, make telephone calls, and pay bills. How do you stop worrying about getting an inspection sticker for the car or about picking up tickets for Saturday's ball game when you need to be concentrating completely on your class assignment?

**Make a "Worry" List.** To gain control over mental disruptions, make a list of what is on your mind and is keeping you from concentrating on your studies. Jot down on paper your mental distractions and then analyze each one to determine if immediate action is necessary or possible. If you decide that you must do something right away, get up and do it. It will have been worthwhile if the quality of your study time—your concentration power—has improved.

For a big problem that you can't tackle immediately, ask yourself, "Is it worth the amount of brain time that I'm dedicating to it?" Take a few minutes to think and make notes about possible solutions. Jotting down necessary future action and forming a plan of attack will help relieve the worry and clear your mind for studying.

**Make a "To Do" List.** Right now, list five things that are on your mind that you need to remember to do. Many successful people start each day with such a **To Do List**, (and some make a list before they go to sleep at night). Rank the activities on your list in order of priority and then do the most important things first.

To Do List	Sample
1. ....	1. <i>Get hair cut</i>
2. ....	2. <i>Do rough draft of essay</i>
3. ....	3. <i>Revise rough draft</i>
4. ....	4. <i>Finish math homework</i>
5. ....	5. <i>Pay phone bill</i>

**Increase Your Self-Confidence.** Saying "I'll never pass this course" or "I can't get in the mood to study" is a huge internal distraction and the first step to failure.



Concentration requires self-confidence. Your enrollment in college indicates that you have made a commitment to a long-term goal. Ask yourself, “Who do I want to be in five years?” In the following space, describe how you view yourself, both professionally and personally, five years from now:

Five years from now I hope to be \_\_\_\_\_

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Sometimes, identifying the traits that you admire in others can give you insight into your own values and desires. Think about the traits that you respect in others and about your own definition of success. Answer the two questions that follow and consider how your responses mirror your own aspirations and goals:

Who is the person you admire the most? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you admire this person? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Believe in yourself and in your ability to be what you want to be. Turn your negative feelings into a positive attitude. What are some of your positive traits? Are you a hard worker, an honest person, a loyal friend? Take a few minutes to pat yourself on the back. Think about your good points and, in the following spaces, list five positive traits that you believe you possess:

### Positive Traits

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

What have you already accomplished? Did you participate in athletics in high school, win any contests, or master any difficult skills? Recall your previous achievements and, in the following spaces, list three accomplishments that you view with pride:

### Accomplishments

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**BRAIN BOOSTER****Are you curious?**

Think about how babies learn that they can make a toy squeak or that a kitten might bite. Is there a quiz or a flash card involved? Human brains are wired to explore and learn from the results. As you pursue this adventure called a college education, remember that curiosity about new ideas can be one of your best assets. In every class, find something that you want to know more about and go for it! The spark that ignites your interest might lie waiting in the textbook, in a lecture, or in an assignment. Fan that spark by going to the Internet, asking your professor, reading a book, doing an experiment, or talking to other students. Your natural curiosity may lead to a college major, a career, a lifelong hobby, or an A in the class.

—*John Medina: Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School.*

**Reduce Anxiety.** Have you ever heard people say, “I work better under pressure”? This statement contains a degree of truth. A small amount of tension can help you direct your full attention on an immediate task. Yet, too much anxiety can cause nervous tension and discomfort, which interfere with the ability to concentrate. The causes of high anxiety can range from fear of failure to lack of organization and preparation. The problem is not easily solved, but some people like to go for a run or a brisk walk to relieve anxiety. Sustained physical activity can change the blood chemistry, bring oxygen to the brain, and improve mood, increasing the odds of focusing successfully on what needs to be done.

Another immediate, short-term fix for tension is muscle relaxation exercises and visualization. Use your imagination to visualize a peaceful setting in which you are calm and relaxed; then focus on this image as you breathe deeply to help relax your muscles and regain control. Take several deep breaths and allow your body to release the tension so that you can resume reading and concentrate on your work. Try that right now.

**Spark an Interest.** Make a conscious effort to stimulate your curiosity before reading, even if it feels contrived. First, look over the assigned reading for words or phrases that attract your attention, glance at the pictures, check the number of pages, and then ask yourself the following questions: “What do I already know about this topic?” and “What do I want to learn about it?”

With practice, this method of thinking before reading can create a spark of enthusiasm that will make the actual reading more purposeful and will make concentration more direct and intense. We will cover this in greater depth in Chapter 2.

**Set a Time Goal.** An additional trick to spark your enthusiasm is to set a time goal. Short-term goals create a self-imposed pressure to pay attention, speed up, and get the job done. After looking over the material, predict the amount of time that you will need to finish it. Estimate a reasonable completion time and then push yourself to meet the goal. The purpose of a time goal is not to “speed read” the assignment but to be realistic about the amount of time that is needed to spend on a task and to learn how to estimate future study time.

The Reader’s Tips on the next page summarize how to raise your level of concentration while studying and offer strategies for managing electronic distractions.

**READER'S TIP****Improving Concentration**

- Create an environment that says, “Study.”
- Use a calendar, assignment book, or smartphone calendar for short- and long-term planning.
- Make a list of distracting “worries.”
- Keep a daily To Do List.
- Increase your self-confidence with positive self-talk.
- Reduce anxiety.
- Spark an interest by previewing class assignments.
- Set time goals for completing daily assignments.

**READER'S TIP****Managing Electronic Communication**

College, work, and personal communication are most often done by e-mail, text message, or through social media platforms such as Twitter. And, while electronic communication is efficient, it sometimes provides yet another distraction for students. Follow these guidelines to manage electronic communication.

- Turn off or reduce notifications that you receive from social media such as Facebook and Twitter. (Is it necessary to know each time someone likes your latest post?)
- When sending and receiving text messages, set ground rules for yourself. Turn off your cell phone when you are studying or set strict times for checking text messages.
- Turn off your cell phone when you go to bed. The “ping” and/or vibration of an incoming text message interrupts sleep. Turn off your phone while you are sleeping or at least move it to another room. Developing good sleep habits increases concentration and academic performance.
- Control how much time you spend online.
- Don’t feel that you have to reply to everything.
- If you are pressed for time, save e-mail messages as “new” or “unread” and reply later.
- Discourage back-and-forth communication chains by addressing issues with a phone or video call.
- Organize and delete e-mails often. Organize incoming e-mails into separate folders and delete unnecessary e-mails.
- Decrease the number of e-mails that you receive by using a spam filter to weed out useless e-mails.
- Unsubscribe to unwanted advertisements. There is usually a way to unsubscribe noted at the very bottom of the e-mail.

## IS READING RATE IMPORTANT?

### Learning Objective 1.3

Increase reading  
efficiency

Professors of college reading are more concerned with comprehension than with a student's **rate** of reading. They would say that students should not attempt to "speed read" textbooks, and they would be right. However, when students are asked what they would like to change about their reading, many will say, "I read too slowly. I would like to improve my reading speed." Whether or not this perception is accurate, reading rate is definitely a concern of college students.

### Varying Rate and Technique to Fit Purpose

Reading efficiently is a much more helpful concept than reading fast. **Reading efficiency** means adjusting your reading rate to the material and the purpose for reading it. The most important outcome of reading is achieving your purpose. Mature readers take several factors into account before they begin to read. First, they identify what they want to get out of the material. Most of the reading that college students do is in textbooks, and textbooks usually demand complete comprehension and long-term recall. No matter what your *baseline* reading rate is (see pages 14–15 for an explanation of baseline reading rates and to determine your rate), this purpose requires a slow rate and a thorough *study reading* technique. (Refer to Chapter 3, page 125 for an explanation of study reading.) If your purpose is pleasure, read at your normal, baseline rate using your standard method. However, if all you need from the material are the main ideas and major details, your rate will be fast, and **skimming** is the most efficient method. Faster yet is the rate used to locate small details, such as a date, a name, or a definition, within a large quantity of information. **Scanning** is the best technique for this purpose. (Skimming and scanning are explained briefly in the Reader's Tip on page 14.)

Use the Reader's Tip on page 14 to connect typical purposes and materials with the most efficient reading rates and techniques.

### Rate Variations and Prior Knowledge

In addition to the reader's purpose, other reasons that textbooks usually require a slower reading rate than other materials are that the sentences are longer, the language is more formal, the vocabulary and ideas are new, and your prior knowledge may be limited. If you already have a lot of knowledge on a topic, you can usually read about it at a faster rate than if you are exploring a totally new subject. For example, a student who has some experience in the field of advertising will probably be able to read through the advertising chapter in a business textbook at a faster rate than a chapter on a less familiar topic, like supply-side economics. The student may need to slow to a crawl at the beginning of the economics chapter to understand the new concepts, but as the new ideas become more familiar, he or she may be able to read at a faster rate toward the end of the chapter.

Now, let's return to the question posed in the beginning of this section: Is reading rate important? While achieving your reading purpose with the intended level of comprehension is the ultimate goal, doing this faster is still worthwhile. Most college students would probably like to spend less time achieving the desired result. By acquiring certain reading habits, readers can increase their rate in every reading situation. Practice the suggestions in the following section to become aware of efficient reading habits. Begin by determining your baseline reading rate.

**READER'S TIP**

**Efficient Reading: Adjusting Rate and Technique to Material and Purpose**

Material	Purpose for Reading	Technique	Rate
Textbooks	Complete comprehension and long-term recall	Study reading (thorough, careful, note taking). Refer to Chapter 3 (page 125).	Slow
Novels	Pleasure, short-term recall	Standard (usual, personal method)	Medium
News and magazine articles, webpages	General information, main ideas, and major details	Skimming (reading titles, headings, and first sentences only).	Fast
Television schedule, Internet surfing, Googling, dictionary, reference books, etc.	Specific information	Scanning (focusing only on needed information).	Fastest

**What Is Your Baseline Reading Rate?**

How many words do you read on the average each minute? To find out, read the following selection at your usual reading rate, just as you would have read it before you started thinking about speed. Time your reading of the selection so that you can calculate your rate. Read carefully enough to answer the ten comprehension questions that follow the selection. When you have determined your baseline rate, you can work to increase it.

**EXERCISE**

**1.2**

**Assessing Baseline Rate**

Time your reading of this selection so that you can compute your words-per-minute rate. To make the calculations easier, try to begin reading on an exact minute, with zero seconds. Record your starting and finishing times in minutes and seconds, and then determine your rate from the rate chart at the end of the passage. Answer the ten questions that follow and determine your comprehension rate

by calculating the percentage of correct answers. Remember, read the selection at your normal rate.

Starting time: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes \_\_\_\_\_ seconds

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LOVE

Many romantics believe there is only one true love awaiting them. Considering the presence of 7 billion people on the planet, the odds of finding said person are a bit daunting. What if you're in Omaha and your true love is in Dubrovnik? You could wander for years and never cross paths. Fortunately, evolution has made it possible for human beings to form deep and lasting attachments without traveling the world. In fact, the first major predictor of whom we love is plain *proximity*: We tend to choose our friends and lovers from the set of people who live, study, or work near us. The second major predictor is *similarity*—in looks, attitudes, beliefs, values, personality, and interests. Although it is commonly believed that opposites attract, the fact is that we tend to choose friends and loved ones who are most like us.

The Internet has made it possible to match people on all kinds of dimensions: age, political attitudes, religion or secularism, sexual orientation, disabilities, preferences for particular sexual activities, and preferences for pets. Matchmaking companies administer lengthy questionnaires and personality inventories, claiming to use scientific principles to pair up potential soul mates; one, called Chemistry, promises to match you according to your pattern of neurotransmitters and sex hormones, and GenePartner claims it will find you a DNA match. However, these sites typically do not make public the studies on which they base their claims, and the premises of these sciency-sounding matchmaking sites may be faulty, especially those based on unvalidated personality or neurotransmitter types and anecdotal testimonials.

A review of the research on Internet dating found that these sites often don't deliver the love of your life (or even the love of your month), and they don't do better than old-fashioned methods of meeting people in generating *long-term* relationships. Can you think why?

- Matching attitudes are important at first, but other things are more important for the long haul, such as how the two partners cope when faced with decisions and stresses, and how they handle conflict.
- People's self-reports are often inaccurate and distorted; they lie to themselves as well as on the questionnaire.
- Most people don't know why they are attracted to one person and not another. You can like the characteristics on a potential partner's profile, but that has little connection to whether you will like that person in person, so to speak. Similarly, many people think they know exactly what they "must have" in a partner, and then they meet someone who has few of those qualities but a whole bunch of others that suddenly become essential.

The latest trend in digital dating may circumvent some of these problems but create others. Smartphone apps such as Tinder, Zoosk, or Hinge allow people to make swift decisions about whether they are attracted to one another, and often set up equally swift dates. Although these apps bring back an important element of interpersonal attraction—the face-to-face exploration of rapport, interests, and

chemistry that can't be gained from simply reading a carefully groomed online dating profile—they have also been criticized for encouraging casual sex or superficial relationships.

**The Ingredients of Love** When people are asked to define the key ingredients of love, most agree that love is a mix of passion, intimacy, and commitment. Intimacy is based on deep knowledge of the other person, which accumulates gradually, but passion is based on emotion, which is generated by novelty and change. That is why passion is usually highest at the beginning of a relationship, when two people begin to disclose things about themselves to each other, and lowest when knowledge of the other person's beliefs and habits is at its maximum, when it seems that they have nothing left to learn about the beloved. Nonetheless, according to an analysis of a large number of adult couples and a meta-analysis of 25 studies of couples in long- and short-term relationships, romantic love can persist for many years and is strongly associated with a couple's happiness. What diminishes among these happy couples is that part of romantic love we might call *obsessiveness*, constant thinking and worrying about the loved one and the relationship.

Biological factors such as the brain's opiate system may contribute to early passion, as we noted, but most psychologists believe that the ability to sustain a long and intimate love relationship has more to do with a couple's attitudes, values, and balance of power than with genes or hormones. One of the most important psychological predictors of satisfaction in long-term relationships is the perception, by both partners, that the relationship is fair, rewarding, and balanced. Partners who feel overbenefited (getting more than they are giving) tend to feel guilty; those who feel underbenefited (not getting what they feel they deserve) tend to feel resentful and angry. A couple may tootle along comfortably until a stressful event—such as the arrival of children, serious illness, unemployment, or retirement—evokes simmering displeasure over issues of “what's fair.”

Another key psychological factor in couples' ability to sustain love is the nature of their primary motivation to maintain the relationship: Is it positive (to enjoy affection and intimacy) or negative (to avoid feeling insecure and lonely)? Couples motivated by the former goal tend to report more satisfaction with their partners. We will see that this difference in motivation—positive or negative—affects happiness and satisfaction in many different domains of life.

The critical-thinking guideline “define your terms” may never be more important than in matters of love. The way we define love deeply affects our satisfaction with relationships and whether our relationships last. After all, if you believe that the only real love is the kind defined by obsession, sexual passion, and hot emotion, then you may decide you are out of love when the initial phase of attraction fades, as it eventually must—and you will be repeatedly disappointed. Robert Solomon argued that “We conceive of [love] falsely. . . . We expect an explosion at the beginning powerful enough to fuel love through all of its ups and downs instead of viewing love as a process over which we have control, a process that tends to increase with time rather than wane.” However, people fall in love in different ways: some couples do so gradually, over time, after “falling in friendship” first; and couples in arranged marriages may come to love each other long after the wedding. All the fMRIs in the world can't capture the rich variety of how people grow to love one another.

(1090 words)

—Carole Wade and Carol Tavis, *Psychology*, 10th, © 2011.  
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Pearson Education Inc., Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

Time (Min)	Words per minute	Time (Min)	Words per Minute
2:00	545	4:40	233
2:10	505	4:50	226
2:20	468	5:00	218
2:30	436	5:10	211
2:40	408	5:20	205
2:50	385	5:30	198
3:00	363	5:40	192
3:10	345	5:50	187
3:20	327	6:00	182
3:30	312	6:10	177
3:40	297	6:20	172
3:50	285	6:30	168
4:00	272	6:40	163
4:10	262	6:50	160
4:20	252	7:00	155
4:30	242	7:10	152

Finishing time: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes \_\_\_\_\_ seconds

Reading time in minutes and seconds: \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

Words per minute: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark each statement with *T* (true) or *F* (false).

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. According to this article, we're most likely to find true love far from where we live and work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. This article supports the idea that we're most attracted to people who are different from ourselves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. One reason that Internet matchmaking sites don't always work is that many people don't really know what kind of person will make them happy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Most people agree that love is a mixture of passion, intimacy, and commitment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Commitment is usually at its peak at the beginning of a relationship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Passion usually, but not always, declines over time in a relationship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Over time, couples in happy, long-term relationships obsess more about the loved one and the relationship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. One of the best predictors of happiness in a relationship is the belief by both partners that the relationship is fair and rewarding.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. A person's definition of love affects his or her satisfaction in relationships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. According to this article, being friends first cannot result in a successful, long-term love relationship.

Comprehension rate (percentage of correct answers) \_\_\_\_\_ %

### BRAIN BOOSTER

#### Music to Our Ears and to Our Brains

Music is experienced in many parts of the brain and can have several effects on the mind and body. For example, our pulse rates tend to synchronize with the beat of the music we hear. Certain music, then, causes us to be more alert and to learn better. Linking music with studying can help encode information into long-term memory. Music can also stimulate creativity, relieve fatigue, reduce pain and stress, and influence our emotional state. The specific effects vary from person to person, depending partly on culture, personality, and type of music, but researchers have little doubt that music is a helpful tool for improving reasoning, memory, and intelligence. Try playing something in the background with a quick, even beat while you practice the rate improvement habits in this chapter. See if this helps you read faster and concentrate better.

—Adapted from Eric Jensen, *Brain-Based Learning: The New Paradigm of Teaching*, 2nd ed.

### Habits for Faster Reading

Regardless of your purpose and the reading technique that you select (see the Reader's Tip on page 14), you can improve your reading rate by developing efficient habits and dropping habits that interfere with speed and comprehension. All of the methods described on the next few pages require conscious effort at first, but with practice they will eventually become automatic.

**Concentrate.** Fast readers, like fast race-car drivers, concentrate on what they are doing; they try to think quickly while they take in the important aspects of the course before them. Although we use our eyes, we actually read with our minds. If our attention is veering off course, we lose some of that cutting-edge quickness that is necessary for success. Slow readers tend to become bored because ideas are coming too slowly to keep their minds alert. Fast readers are curious to learn, mentally alert, and motivated to achieve.

Distractions that interfere with concentration, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, fall into two categories: external and internal. Take action to control the distractions that keep you from concentrating fully.

**Stop Regressing.** While reading, have you ever realized halfway down the page that you have no idea what you have read? Your eyes were engaged, but your mind was wandering. Do you ever go back and reread sentences or paragraphs? Do you reread because the material was difficult to understand or because you were not concentrating? The second type of rereading is called **regression**—a habit that wastes time and causes confusion.

If regression is a problem for you, analyze when and why you are regressing. If you discern that your regression is due to distracting thoughts, start denying

yourself this privilege in order to break the habit. Be demanding on yourself and expect 100 percent attention to the task. Visualize the incoming ideas and relate the new material to what you already know. Don't just read the words; think about the ideas. Until they have eliminated the habit of regressing, some readers use an index card to cover lines that they have already read.

Rereading because you did not understand is a legitimate correction strategy used by good readers who monitor their own comprehension. Rereading because your mind was asleep is a waste of time and a habit of many slow readers.

**Expand Fixations.** Your eyes must stop in order to read. These stops, called **fixations**, last a fraction of a second. On the average, 5 to 10 percent of reading time is spent on fixations. Thus, reading more than one word per fixation will reduce your total reading time.

Research on vision shows that the eye is able to see about one-half inch on either side of a fixation point. This means that a reader can see two, three, or possibly four words per fixation. To illustrate, read the following phrase:

in the car

Did you make three fixations, two, or one? Now read the following word:

entertainment

You can read this word automatically with one fixation. As a beginning reader, however, you probably stopped for each syllable for a total of four fixations. If you can read *entertainment*, which has 13 letters, with one fixation, you can certainly read the 8-letter phrase *in the car* with only one fixation.

Use your peripheral vision on either side of the fixation point to help you read two or three words per fixation. When expanding your fixations, take in phrases or thought units that seem to go together automatically. To illustrate, the following sentence has been grouped into thought units with fixation points:

After lunch,            I studied            in the library            at a table.

By expanding your fixations, the sentence can easily be read with four fixations rather than ten, thus reducing your total reading time.

**Stop Vocalizing.** Vocalizers move their lips while reading to pronounce each word. **Vocalization** is an immature habit that should be stopped. Putting a slip of paper or a pencil in your mouth while you are reading will alert you to lip movement and inspire you to stop.

**Subvocalization**, on the other hand, is the little voice in your head that reads for you. Some experts say that subvocalization is necessary for difficult material, and others say that fast readers are totally visual and do not need to hear the words. Good college readers will probably experience some of both. With easy reading tasks, you may find yourself speeding up to the point that you are not hearing every word, particularly the unimportant “filler” phrases. However, with more difficult textbook readings, your inner voice may speak every word. The voice seems to add another sensory dimension to help you comprehend. Because experts say that the inner voice can read up to about 400 words per minute, many college students can make a considerable improvement in speed while still experiencing the inner voice.

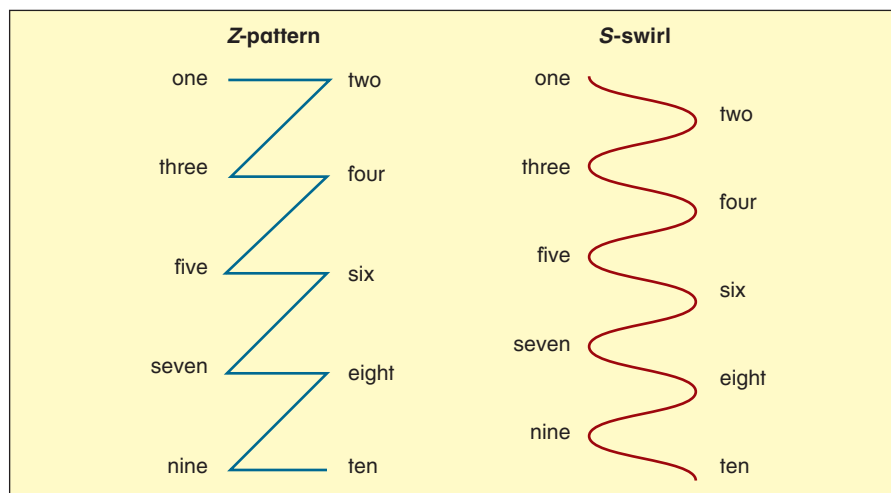
**Preview.** Size up your reading assignment before you get started. If it is a chapter, glance through the pages and read the subheadings. Look at the pictures and notice the italicized words and boldface print. Make predictions about what you think the chapter will cover. Activate your schema, or prior knowledge, on the subject and prepare to learn something new.

**Use Your Pen as a Pacer.** The technique of using your pen or fingers as a pacer means pointing under each line in a smooth, flowing motion, moving back and forth from line to line. Although as a child you were probably told never to point to words, guiding your eyes with a pen is a very effective technique for improving reading speed. The physical act of pointing tends to improve concentration by drawing your attention directly to the words. The forward motion of your pen tends to keep you from regressing because rereading would interrupt your established rhythm. By pulling your eyes down the page, the pen movement helps set a rapid, steady pace for reading and tends to shift you out of word-by-word reading and move you automatically into phrase reading.

The technique is demonstrated by the dotted lines in the passage in Exercise 1.3. Your pen moves in a Z pattern from one side of the central column to the other, allowing peripheral vision to take in the words to the left and right ends of the lines of print. Because you are trying to read several words at each fixation, your pen does not have to go to the extreme end of either side of the column.

Rapid reading requires quick thinking  
and intense concentration. The reader  
must be alert and aggressive. Being  
interested in the subject helps improve speed.

As you begin to read faster and become more proficient with the Z pattern, you will notice the corners starting to round into an S. The Z pattern is turning into a more relaxed S swirl. When you get to the point of using the S swirl, you will be reading for ideas and not reading every word. You will be reading actively and aggressively, with good concentration. Use the Z pattern until you find your pen or hand movement has automatically turned into an S. The following illustration compares the two patterns.



**Push and Pace: Set a Time Goal.** Be alert and aggressive, and try to read faster. Sit up straight and read the text. Get uncomfortable and force yourself to concentrate. Changing old habits is difficult, but you will never read faster unless you try to read faster.

Set a time goal and pace yourself. Count the number of pages in your homework assignments and estimate according to your reading rate how many pages you can read in 30 minutes. Use a paper clip or a sticky note to mark the page you are trying to reach. Push yourself to achieve your goal.

EXERCISE 1.3

Pacing

Apply the methods for faster reading that are presented in this section to the passage and then calculate your reading rate. (The vertical lines in the passage help guide your reading in the Z pattern. Focus in the center of each line and use your peripheral vision to absorb the words at the left and right ends.)

COCA-COLA

Although not as important as textiles or tobacco in 1900, a soft drink developed by an Atlanta pharmacist, Dr. John Pemberton, eventually became the most renowned southern product in the world. Pemberton developed the drink—a mixture of oils, caffeine, coca leaves, and cola nuts—in his backyard in an effort to find a good-tasting cure for headaches. He called his concoction Coca-Cola. It was not an overnight success, and Pemberton, short of cash, sold the rights to it to another Atlantan, Asa Candler, in 1889. Candler tinkered with the formula to improve the taste and marketed the product heavily. By the mid-1890s, Coca-Cola enjoyed a national market. Southerners were such heavy consumers that the Georgia Baptist Association felt compelled to warn its members “the more you drink, the more you want to drink. We fear great harm will grow out of this sooner or later, to our young people in particular.” The Baptists may have been onto something, as Coca-Cola’s original formula did, in fact, include chemically active coca leaves.

—David Goldfield et al.,  
*The American Journey*, 3rd ed.

(171 words)

Time (Min)	Words per Minute	Time (Min)	Words per Minute
0:30	346	1:00	173
0:40	260	1:10	94
0:50	208	1:20	86

Finishing time: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes \_\_\_\_\_ seconds

Words per minute: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark each statement with *T* (true) or *F* (false).

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Coca-Cola was initially developed by a southern pharmacist to soothe ordinary headaches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Dr. Pemberton made a fortune from his soft drink once it became a nationally marketed product.

## PLAN FOR SUCCESS ON READING COMPREHENSION TESTS

### Learning Objective 1.4

Use active strategies before, during, and after a reading comprehension test

Throughout your school life, you have probably taken many tests that assess your understanding of reading material. Your college experience will be no exception. Professors in any course might give a test to determine how well you read and understand a reading assignment. In a reading course, you might have a comprehension test to measure your progress or how well you apply reading strategies. Comprehension tests differ from **content tests**, such as a final exam or unit test, that measure your knowledge of a subject that you have been studying. **Standardized reading tests**, such as the SAT or ACT, also measure comprehension, but they are designed for a very large population and are carefully constructed, administered, and scored in a consistent, or “standard,” manner. Standardized test scores often help you qualify to enter or exit specific college programs. Sometimes they are used to screen job applicants.

The purpose of this section is to highlight strategies that will help you perform at your best on any reading comprehension test. Some of the suggestions may repeat what you already know, but take them seriously. Sadly, many students neglect to use methods that might seem to be common sense. As you read, use a highlighter or pen to mark the key tips for taking reading comprehension tests.

Successful students recognize that some of the best learning experiences arise from reflection on their preparation and performance on tests. Take advantage of this opportunity to perfect your test-taking skills. Consider the following advice that involves specific actions before, during, and after taking a reading comprehension test.

### Before Taking a Test

**Get Plenty of Sleep the Night Before.** The mental alertness that you derive from a good night’s sleep can add as much as six points to your score and mean the difference between passing or failing a test. Why gamble by staying up late? Prioritize tasks and budget your time during the day so that you can go to bed on time.

**Arrive Five or Ten Minutes Early and Get Settled.** If you run into class flustered at the last second, you will spend the first five minutes of the test calming yourself rather than getting immediately to work. Avoid unnecessary stress by arriving for the test early.

**Know What to Expect on the Test.** Ask beforehand what will be expected on the test. Reading comprehension tests often present reading selections and predictable question types. Explanations and practice answering such questions begin in this chapter on page 25. You might also be expected to write a brief summary or to respond to an essay question about something that you have read outside of class or on the test itself. Know how the test will be scored so that you can plan your strategy accordingly. Is it better to guess or to leave a question unanswered? (Almost always, leaving an answer blank counts as an error.) Also, know how your test results will be used.

**BRAIN BOOSTER****Balance Memorization and Application in Test Preparation**

Information from the senses generally goes to the back cortex area of the brain. Creativity and decision making occur in the front cortex. The two parts are connected by very important bundles of nerves called *fasiculi*. How does this biological structure affect learning in college? The answer has to do with the connection between learning facts and making use of them. Some students memorize information and feel they have studied well, but professors expect students to apply knowledge rather than merely repeat it. Strengthening the connections between the back and front cortex requires learning material first and then using it in new situations. Don't stop with memorizing information; practice applying it.

—Adapted from James E. Zull, *The Art of Changing the Brain*.

**Have Confidence in Your Abilities.** Achieve self-confidence and avoid anxiety by being well prepared. Be optimistic and approach the test with a positive mental attitude.

**During the Test**

**Read to Comprehend Each Passage as a Whole.** Most experts recommend reading a selection before attempting to answer the questions about it. The reasoning is convincingly logical. Examining the questions first burdens the reader with a confusing collection of key words and phrases. Trying to remember many bits of information interferes with comprehending the author's message. Few people are capable of reading with five or six purposes in mind. Not only is the reading-of-questions-first method confusing, but also, because it is detail oriented, it does not prepare you for more general questions concerning the main idea and implied meanings.

Instead, think about the main point. If you understand the central theme or main idea, the rest of the ideas will fall into place. Attempt to understand what each paragraph contributes to the central theme. Don't fret over remembering details but attempt to see how they contribute to the main point. If you find later that a minor detail is needed to answer a question, you can quickly use a key word to locate and reread to find the answer.

**Anticipate What Is Coming Next.** Most test passages are untitled and thus offer no initial clue for content. Before reading, glance at the passage for a repeated word, name, or date. In other words, look for any quick clue to let you know whether the passage is about Queen Victoria, pit bulls, or chromosome reproduction. Do not rush through the first sentence. The first sentence further activates your schemata and sets the stage for what is to come. In some cases, the first sentence may give an overview or even state the central theme. In other cases, it may simply pique your curiosity or stimulate your imagination. You may begin to guess what will come next and how it will be stated.

**Read Rapidly but Don't Allow Yourself to Feel Rushed.** Use your pen as a pacer to direct your attention both mentally and physically to the printed page.

Using your pen will help you focus your attention, particularly at the times during the test when you feel more rushed. Ignore students who finish early and remind yourself that the goal is to do your best, not to win a race. Continue working with control and confidence.

**Read to Learn and Enjoy.** Reading a passage to answer five or six questions is reading with an artificial purpose. Usually, you read to learn and enjoy, not for the sole purpose of answering questions. Most test passages can be fairly interesting to a receptive reader. Use the thinking strategies of a good reader to become involved in the material. Picture what you read and relate the ideas to what you already know.

**Self-Test for the Main Idea.** Pull it together before pulling it apart. At the end of a passage, self-test for the main idea. Take 10 or 15 seconds to review the point that the author is trying to make. Again, if you understand the main point, the rest of the passage will fall into place.

**Consider All Alternatives Before Choosing an Answer.** In fact, a good strategy is to answer the question mentally before looking at the answer choices. Then, read all of the options and select the one that best meshes with yours. Do not rush to record an answer without considering all of the alternatives. Multiple-choice test items usually ask for the best answer choice rather than merely any choice that is reasonable.

## After the Test

**Analyze Your Preparation.** Were you ready for the test? Did you prepare appropriately? Were you mentally and physically alert enough to function at your full capacity? How will you prepare for the next comprehension test?

**Analyze the Test.** Was the test what you expected? If not, what was unexpected? Use your memory of the test to predict the patterns of future tests.

**Analyze Your Performance.** Take note of the kinds of questions that caused you trouble. Take time to review the strategies and allow time for more practice. Standardized tests are not usually returned, but you do receive scores and subscores. What do your scores tell you about your strengths and weaknesses? What can you do to improve? Meet with your professor if you are confused or disappointed and ask for suggestions for improvement. Find out if tutorial sessions or study groups are available for you to join.

Read the Practice Passage on page 26 and pretend it is part of a reading comprehension test. Read it using the suggestions just discussed. Note the handwritten reminders to make you aware of a few aspects of your thinking. When you finish reading the Practice Passage, return to finish reading the section “Major Types of Comprehension Questions” that begins on page 25.



**BRAIN BOOSTER****Turn Mistakes Into Successes**

Mistaken information exists in neural networks just like correct information. Unless you do something about them, mistakes will persist. This is why the “after-test” analysis is so important. To change the erroneous information in neuronal networks, uncover the reasons for the mistake. Ask for help understanding the correct answer and connect it to what you already know. Build this understanding into a new or expanded neuronal network by repeating the correct information and using it. Instead of focusing on the mistake, focus on the new learning that you have created and reinforce it.

Certainly, your reading of the passage contained many more thoughts than the notes on the page. The gossip at the beginning of the passage humanizes the empress and makes it easier for the reader to relate emotionally to the historic figure. Did you anticipate Peter’s downfall and Catherine’s subsequent relationships? Did you note the shift from gossip to accomplishments, both national and international? The shift signals the alert reader to a change in style, purpose, and structure.

Before proceeding to the questions that follow the passage, take a few seconds to regroup and think about what you have read. Self-test by pulling the material together before you tear it apart. Think about the focus of the passage and then work through the section about the types of questions that you will find on comprehension tests. Look for clues to recognizing the question type, strategies for determining the best answers, and examples based on the Practice Passage.

## MAJOR TYPES OF COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

**Learning  
Objective 1.5**

Recognize the question types on comprehension tests

Learn to recognize the types of questions that are often asked on reading comprehension tests. Although the wording might vary slightly, most tests will include one or more questions on the main idea, details, inference, the author’s purpose, and vocabulary. Take note of the strategies for finding the best answers. The example questions are based on the Practice Passage.

### Main Idea Questions

Main idea questions test your ability to find the central theme, central focus, gist, controlling idea, main point, or thesis of a passage. These terms are largely interchangeable in asking the reader to identify the main point of the passage. Main idea items are stated in any of the following forms:

The best statement of the main idea is . . .

The author’s main point is . . .

The central theme of the passage is . . .


The best title for this passage is . . . (This wording is asking for the topic of the passage but is sometimes, confusingly, called a main idea question.)




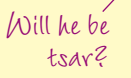
No title, so glance for key words. Dates?

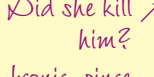
Names?

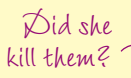
### Practice Passage

Great image  In January 1744 a coach from Berlin bumped its way eastward over ditches and mud toward Russia. It carried Sophia, a young German princess, on a bridal journey. At the Russian border she was met with pomp, appropriate for one chosen to be married to Peter, heir to the Russian throne. The wedding was celebrated in August 1745 with gaiety and ceremony. Why wait 1 1/2 years?

Surprise!  For Sophia the marriage was anything but happy because the seventeen-year-old heir was "physically less than a man and mentally little more than a child." The "moronic booby" played with dolls and toy soldiers in his leisure time. He neglected his wife and was constantly in a drunken stupor. Moreover, Peter was strongly pro-German and made no secret of his contempt for the Russian people, intensifying the unhappiness of his ambitious young wife. This dreary period lasted for seventeen years, but Sophia used the time wisely. She set about "russifying" herself. She mastered the Russian language and avidly embraced the Russian faith; on joining the Orthodox church, she was renamed Catherine. She devoted herself to study, reading widely the works of Montesquieu, Voltaire, and other Western intellectuals. What is that? How?

Will he be tsar?  What is she planning? When Peter became tsar in January 1762, Catherine immediately began plotting his downfall. Supported by the army, she seized power in July 1762 and tacitly consented to Peter's murder. It was announced that he died of "hemorrhoidal colic." Quickly taking over the conduct of governmental affairs, Catherine reveled in her new power. For the next thirty-four years the Russian people were dazzled by their ruler's political skill and cunning and her superb conduct of tortuous diplomacy. Perhaps even more, they were intrigued by gossip concerning her private life. What gossip? Lovers?

Did she kill him?  Ironical, since she's not Russian Unusual term Long before she became empress, Catherine was involved with a number of male favorites referred to as her house pets. At first her affairs were clandestine, but soon she displayed her lovers as French kings paraded their mistresses. Once a young man was chosen, he was showered with lavish gifts; when the empress tired of him, he was given a lavish going-away present.

Did she kill them?  Catherine is usually regarded as an enlightened despot. She formed the Imperial Academy of Art, began the first college of pharmacy, and imported foreign physicians. Her interest in architecture led to the construction of a number of fine palaces, villas, and public buildings and the first part of the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg. Attracted to Western culture, she carried on correspondence with the French philosophes and sought their flattery by seeming to champion liberal causes. The empress played especially on Voltaire's vanity, sending him copious praise about his literary endeavors. In turn this philosophe became her most ardent admirer. Yet while Catherine discussed liberty and equality before the law, her liberalism and dalliance with the Enlightenment was largely a pose—eloquent in theory, lacking in practice. The lot of serfs actually worsened, leading to a bloody uprising in 1773. This revolt brought an end to all talk of reform. And after the French Revolution, strict censorship was imposed. Changes to foreign policy accomplishments

Now moving from personal into to accomplishments Double-check years — not long So, she did little toward human progress In her conduct of foreign policy, the empress was ruthless and successful. She annexed a large part of Poland and, realizing that Turkey was in decline, waged two wars against this ailing power. As a result of force and diplomacy, Russian frontiers reached the Black Sea, the Caspian, and the Baltic. Well could this shrewd practitioner of power tell her adopted people, "I came to Russia a poor girl. Russia has dowered me richly, but I have paid her back with Azov, the Crimea, and Poland." What was the point?

—Walter T. Wallbank,  
*Civilization Past and Present*

Incorrect responses to items about the main idea and topic tend to fall into two categories. Some responses will be too general and express more ideas than are actually included in the passage. Other incorrect items will be details within the passage that support the main idea. The details may be interesting and grab your attention, but they do not describe the central focus of the passage. If you are having difficulty with the main idea, reread the first and last sentences of the passage. Sometimes, though not always, one of the two sentences will give you an overview or focus.

The following items apply to the Practice Passage on Catherine the Great.

**EXAMPLE**

Read the following main idea items. The italicized parenthetical remarks reflect the thinking involved in judging a correct or incorrect response.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Which is the best statement of the main idea of this passage?
- a. Peter lost his country through ignorance and drink. (*Important detail, but focus is on her.*)
  - b. Gossip of Catherine's affairs intrigued the Russian people. (*Very interesting, but a detail.*)
  - c. Progress for the Russian people was slow to come. (*Too broad and general, or not really covered.*)
  - d. Catherine came to Russia as a poor girl but emerged as a powerful empress and a shrewd politician. (*Yes, sounds great.*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ The best title for this passage is
- a. Catherine Changes Her Name. (*Detail.*)
  - b. Peter Against Catherine. (*Only part of the story, so detail.*)
  - c. Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia. (*Sounds best.*)
  - d. Success of Women in Russia. (*Too broad—this is only about one woman.*)

## Detail Questions

Detail questions check your ability to locate and understand explicitly stated material. Frequently, such items can be answered correctly without a thorough understanding of the passage. To find the answer to such an item, note a key word in the question and then scan the passage for the word or a synonym. When you locate the term, reread the sentence to double-check your answer. Lead-ins for detail questions fall into the following patterns:

The author states that . . .  
According to the author . . .  
According to the passage . . .  
All of the following are true except . . .  
A person, term, or place is . . .

Incorrect answers to detail questions tend to be false statements. Sometimes, the test maker will trick the unsophisticated reader by using a pompous or catchy phrase from the passage as a **distractor**—a word on a multiple-choice test that is meant to divert your attention away from the correct response. The phrase might indeed appear in the passage and sound authoritative, but on close inspection, it means nothing.

**EXAMPLE**

Read the following detail questions on Catherine the Great and note the remarks in parentheses:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Catherine changed all the following *except* (look for the only false item to be the answer)
- a. her religion. (*True, she joined the Orthodox church.*)
  - b. her name. (*True, from Sophia to Catherine.*)
  - c. Russia's borders. (*True, she gained seaports.*)
  - d. the poverty of the serfs. (*The serfs were worse off and still in poverty, so this is the best answer.*)

### Inference Questions

Questions concerning inference test your ability to look beyond what is directly stated and your understanding of the suggested meaning. Items testing inference deal with the writer's attitudes, feelings, or the motivation of characters. They may appear in the form of sarcastic comments, snide remarks, favorable and unfavorable descriptions, and a host of other hints and clues. Lead-ins for such items include the following:

The author believes (or feels or implies) . . .  
It can be inferred from the passage . . .  
The passage or author suggests . . .  
It can be concluded from the passage that . . .

To answer inference items correctly, look for clues to help you develop logical assumptions. Base your conclusions on what is known and what is suggested. Incorrect inference items tend to be false statements.

**EXAMPLE**

Study the following inference question. The parenthetical italicized remarks reflect the thought process involved in selecting the correct answer.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The author implies that Catherine
- a. did not practice the enlightenment that she professed. (*Yes, "eloquent in theory but lacking practice."*)
  - b. preferred French over Russian architecture. (*Not suggested.*)
  - c. took Voltaire as her lover. (*Not suggested.*)
  - d. came to Russia knowing her marriage would be unhappy. (*Not suggested.*)

### Author's Purpose Questions

The purpose of a reading passage is not usually stated; it is implied. In a sense, the purpose is part of the main idea; you probably need to understand the main idea to understand the purpose. Generally, however, reading comprehension tests include three basic types of passages, and each type tends to dictate its own purpose. Study the following three types of passages.

1. Factual

*Identification:* gives the facts about science, history, or other subjects.

*Strategy:* if complex, do not try to understand each detail before going to the questions. Remember, you can look back.

*Example:* textbook.

*Purposes:* to inform, to explain, to describe, or to enlighten.

## 2. Opinion

*Identification:* puts forth a particular point of view.

*Strategy:* the author states opinions and then refutes them. Sort out the opinions of the author and the opinions of the opposition.

*Example:* newspaper editorial.

*Purposes:* to argue, to persuade, to condemn, or to ridicule.

## 3. Fiction

*Identification:* tells a story.

*Strategy:* read slowly to understand the motivation and interrelationships of characters.

*Example:* novel or short story.

*Purposes:* to entertain, narrate, describe, or shock.

### EXAMPLE

Read the following test item and identify the purpose:

- \_\_\_\_\_ The purpose of the passage on Catherine is
- to argue. (*No side is taken.*)
  - to explain. (*Yes, because it is factual material.*)
  - to condemn. (*Not judgmental.*)
  - to persuade. (*No opinion is pushed.*)

## Vocabulary Questions

Vocabulary items test your general word knowledge as well as your ability to use context to figure out word meaning. The typical form for vocabulary items on reading comprehension tests is as follows:

As used in the passage, the best definition of \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.

Note that both word knowledge and context are necessary for a correct response. The item is qualified by “As used in the passage,” so you must go back and reread the sentence (context) in which the word appears to be sure you are not misled by multiple meanings. To illustrate, the word *pool* means *a body of water* as well as *a group of people* as in *the shrinking pool of job applicants*. As a test taker, you need to double-check the context to see which meaning appears in your test passage. In addition, if you know only one definition of the word *pool*, rereading the sentence perhaps will suggest the alternate meaning to you and will help you answer the item correctly.

### EXAMPLE

Read the following vocabulary test item and note the reader’s thought process in the parenthetical statements:

- \_\_\_\_\_ As used in the passage, the best definition of *dreary* (see the second paragraph) is
- sad. (*Yes, unhappiness is used in the previous sentence.*)

- b. commonplace. (*Possible, but not right in the sentence.*)
- c. stupid. (*Not right in the sentence.*)
- d. neglected. (*True, but not the definition of the word.*)

## Essay Questions

Essay answers demand more effort and energy from the test taker than multiple-choice answers. On a multiple-choice test, all of the correct answers are before you. On an essay exam, however, the only thing in front of you is a question and a blank sheet of paper. This blank sheet can be intimidating to many students. Your job is to organize ideas relating to the question and create a response in your own words. The following suggestions can help you respond effectively.

**Translate the Question.** Frequently, an essay “question” is not a question at all but a statement that you are asked to support. When you see this type of question on a test, your first step is to read it and then reread it to be sure you understand it. Next, reword it into a question. Even if it begins with a question, translate it into your own words. Simplify the question into terms that you can understand. Break the question into its parts.

Convert the translated parts of the question into the approach that you will use to answer each part. Will you define, describe, explain, or compare? State what you will do to answer the question.

### EXAMPLE

The following example demonstrates the translation process:

- **Test item:** It is both appropriate and ironic to refer to Catherine as one of the great rulers of Russia.
- **Question.** Why is it both appropriate and ironic to refer to Catherine as one of the great rulers of Russia?
- **Translation:** The question has two parts:
  1. What did Catherine do that was great?
  2. What did she do that was the opposite of what you would expect (irony) of a great Russian ruler?
- **Response approach.** List what Catherine did that was great and then list what she did that was the opposite of what you would expect of a great Russian ruler. Relate her actions to the question. (See page 31.)

**Answer the Question.** Make sure that your answer is a response to the question that is asked rather than a summary of everything that you know about the subject. Padding your answer by repeating the same idea or including irrelevant information is obvious to graders and seldom is appreciated. Refer to the Reader’s Tip on page 32 for guidance to the meaning of key action words that are often used in essay questions.

### EXAMPLE

The following is an inappropriate answer to the question, “Why is it both appropriate and ironic to refer to Catherine as one of the great rulers of Russia?”

*Catherine was born in Germany and came to Russia as a young girl to marry Peter. It was an unhappy marriage that lasted 17 years. She . . .*

**EXPLANATION** This response does not answer the question; rather, it is a summary.

**Organize Your Response.** Do not write the first thing that pops into your head. Take a few minutes to brainstorm and jot down ideas. Number the ideas in the order in which you wish to present them and use the plan as your outline for writing.

In your first sentence, establish the purpose and direction of your response. Then list specific details that support, explain, prove, and develop your point. Reemphasize the points in a concluding sentence and restate your purpose. Whenever possible, use numbers or subheadings to simplify your message for the reader. If time runs short, use an outline or a diagram to express your remaining ideas.

**EXAMPLE** To answer the previous question, think about the selection on Catherine and jot down the ideas that you would include in a response.

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| I. <u>Appropriate</u>                  | II. <u>Ironic Opposite</u> |
| 1. Acquired land                       | 1. Not Russian             |
| 2. Art, medicine, buildings            | 2. Killed Peter            |
| 3. 34 years                            | 3. Serfs very poor         |
| 4. Political skill & foreign diplomacy | 4. Revolt against her      |

**Use an Appropriate Style.** Your audience for this response is not your best friend but your learned professor who is giving you a grade. Be respectful and formal. Do not use slang. Do not use phrases like “as you know,” “like,” or “well.” They may be appropriate in conversation, but they are not appropriate in academic writing.

Avoid empty words and thoughts. Words like *good*, *interesting*, and *nice* say very little. Be more direct and descriptive in your writing.

State your thesis, supply proof, and use transitional phrases to tie your ideas together. Words like *first*, *second*, and *finally* help to organize details. Terms like *however* and *on the other hand* show a shift in thought. Remember, you are pulling ideas together, so use phrases and words to help the reader see relationships.

**EXAMPLE** Study the following response to the question for organization, transition, and style:

Catherine was a very good ruler of Russia. She tried to be Russian but she was from Germany. Catherine was a good politician and got Russia seaports on the Baltic, Caspian, and Black Sea. She had many boyfriends and there was gossip about her. She did very little for the serfs because they remained very poor for a long time. She built nice buildings and got doctors to help people. She was not as awesome as she pretended to be.

**EXPLANATION** Notice the response's lack of organization, weak language, inappropriate phrases, and failure to use transitional words.

**Be Aware of Appearance.** An essay written in a clear, legible hand is likely to receive a higher grade than one that is hard to read. Be particular about appearance and be considerate of the reader. Proofread for correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

**View Your Response Objectively for Evaluation Points.** Respond in order to earn points. Some students feel that simply filling up the page deserves a passing grade. They do not understand how a whole page written on the subject of Catherine could receive no points.

Although essay exams seem totally subjective, they cannot be. Students need to know that a professor who gives an essay exam grades answers according to an objective scoring system. The professor examines the paper for certain relevant points that should be made. The student's grade reflects the quantity, quality, and clarity of these relevant points.

## READER'S TIP

### Key Words in Essay Questions

The following key words of instruction appear in essay questions.

- **Compare:** List the similarities between things.
- **Contrast:** Note the differences between things.
- **Criticize:** State your opinion and stress the weaknesses.
- **Define:** State the meaning so that the term is understood and use examples.
- **Describe:** State the characteristics so that the image is vivid.
- **Diagram:** Make a drawing that demonstrates relationships.
- **Discuss:** Define the issue and elaborate on the advantages and disadvantages.
- **Evaluate:** State positive and negative views and make a judgment.
- **Explain:** Show cause and effect and give reasons.
- **Illustrate:** Provide examples.
- **Interpret:** Explain your own understanding of a topic that includes your opinions.
- **Justify:** Give proof or reasons to support an opinion.
- **List:** Record a series of numbered items.
- **Outline:** Sketch out the main points with their significant supporting details.
- **Prove:** Use facts as evidence in support of an opinion.
- **Relate:** Connect items and show how one influences another.
- **Review:** Write an overview with a summary.
- **Summarize:** Retell the main points.
- **Trace:** Move sequentially from one event to another.