The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.
Conrad wanted to go home to his wife and children, but he just could not face them. He couldn’t. He knew that the first question out of their mouths would be, “How did you do, Daddy? How did you do?”

He had just taken his placement test at Almanac Career Institute. His wife and children were excited that he was going to school for Network Security. They were excited, and he was horrified. They seemed to have more faith in him than he had in himself. This placement test did not determine whether Conrad was able to enter the institute; it simply determined which courses he needed to take first.

He arrived on campus early, registered with the testing center, and took three placement tests before noon. First, he took the English placement test, then the math test, and finally the reading/vocabulary/spelling placement test. Since he had worked with numbers his whole life, he was not overly concerned with the math placement test. He was, however, very worried about the English and reading tests.

After a lunch break, Conrad was told to return to the campus for his scores and to see an advisor. He went back to the testing center and waited for his appointment time at 1:30. As he sat in the testing lobby, he saw many students—some younger, some older, some with their children in tow, and some as carefree as the wind. “I wonder how they did,” he thought. “What if I’m the only one who doesn’t do well on these tests?”

His name was called, and an advisor greeted Conrad and escorted him to her office. She began to speak. “Mr. Hunter, you did very well on your math placement test and you are free to register for any math course in your program. I would, however, advise you to start with the basic courses and work your way up. Math courses at Almanac are not easy. I know you’ll do well.” She continued, “Mr. Hunter, your scores in English and reading indicate the need for a great deal of remediation.”

“What does that mean?” Conrad asked.

“It means that you will need to register for English 090 and complete that course with a C or better before you can take English 101, the course required for your program in Network Security.” She continued, “You will also need to register for Reading 100. This course will help you become a stronger reader and help you use a more dynamic vocabulary.”

“Can I just not take the English 090 and reading courses? Can I opt out of them and just take the required courses?” Conrad asked.

“I’m afraid not, Mr. Hunter. These tests are very accurate when it comes to predicting your success in certain classes. In looking at your scores, you seem to have a problem with reading comprehension, analysis, and interpretation. To opt out of this reading class would be very detrimental to your success.”
“But I need to finish my degree as quickly as possible because my family is depending on me,” Conrad informed her.

“I do understand that, Mr. Hunter, but without this reading course, your scores indicate that you will have trouble in many of your classes. Do you realize that the books used for some courses are written on the fourteenth grade level, and you’re reading at the eighth grade level?”

Conrad knew in his heart that she was right. He had never been strong in English, reading, spelling, or vocabulary. He knew that he had trouble in these areas. He knew that he had trouble concentrating and remembering what he had just read. “But how am I going to face my wife and children?” he thought. “How can I tell them that I don’t read well?”

On the drive home, he struggled mightily with the questions in his head. “Should I just forget about this degree? Should I go to the dean and ask to be placed in the curriculum courses regardless of my scores? Should I tell my wife and children what happened? Should I just admit my shortcomings to my family and show them that I’m as determined as ever?”

Conrad pulled into the driveway still unsure of what he was going to tell his family. As he walked toward the front door, he heard his children yell, “Daddy’s home! Daddy’s home!” At that moment, he knew what he had to do.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Consider responding to these questions online in the Questions for Reflection module of the Companion Website.

1. What decision do you think Conrad made? Why?

2. How could this be a positive experience for Conrad’s entire family?

3. Has reading ever caused you problems in your academic work? If so, how have you dealt with this problem in the past?
Before reading this chapter, take a moment and respond to the following 10 questions. Consider each one carefully before answering, and then respond by circling the number in the appropriate box. When you have answered the questions, add your points and find your total score on the feedback chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>DON'T KNOW</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I usually look up definitions in a dictionary when I read words I don't understand.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Building a larger vocabulary isn't that important to me.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I believe I can do well in school without reading the books and papers assigned by the instructors.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am good at finding the main ideas of the paragraphs I read.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When reading textbooks, I use the SQ3R strategy (or another strategy) to aid my comprehension.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I know how to use a highlighter to aid me in my reading assignments.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I do not usually take notes from my books while I read.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. It is not possible for me to become better at understanding what I read.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I rarely give myself the time to reread materials that I don't understand.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I often read books, magazines, or newspapers simply for pleasure.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY**

43–50 You are exceptional in your reading skills. You know how to read for comprehension by employing a variety of reading strategies and how to incorporate your reading into your larger study structure. You likely get much enjoyment from reading and use that to your advantage.

35–42 Your reading skills and habits are above average. You likely enjoy reading and know how to read for comprehension. A few additional strategies will help you get even more benefit from the time you spend reading.

26–34 Your reading skills are likely average. You probably realize how important reading is for successful progress in school. You could brush up on strategies to maximize your reading comprehension.

18–25 Your reading skills are below average, but can be improved with practice and patience. You will need to learn strategies for improving your reading skills. Your reading confidence will improve as you employ those strategies.

10–17 Your reading skills are limited. You need to learn reading strategies to help you understand what you read. Your dislike for reading doesn’t mean you can’t be successful in college, but it will be important to learn to get the needed information from what you read.
Based on the summary above, what is one goal you would like to achieve related to reading more effectively?

**Goal**

List three actions you can take that might help you move closer to realizing this goal.

1. 
2. 
3. 

Questions FOR BUILDING ON YOUR BEST

As you read this chapter, consider the following questions. At the end of the chapter, you should be able to answer all of them. We encourage you to ask a few questions of your own. Consider turning to your classmates or instructors to assist you.

1. What is the relationship between reading and building a vocabulary?
2. Why is it important for me to read with a dictionary?
3. What role does note taking play in my reading success?
4. What is SQ3R and how can it help me read better?
5. How can I improve my concentration?

What additional questions might you have about reading and comprehension?

1. 
2. 
3. 
Is Reading FUNdamental or Just Pure Torture?

THE ANSWER CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Quick question: What are the top two academic problems among students today? According to faculty members, assessments, national tests, and yes, even your peers around the nation, the two greatest problems students face today are math and reading comprehension—and some of the math problems can even be attributed to poor reading skills.

“I can read," you might say. “I’ve been reading since I was four years old!”

There is a monumental difference between knowing and reading the words on a page and being able to comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate those written words. Herein lies the problem. Just because you have hands, this does not make you a mechanic. Just because you have a voice, this does not make you a singer, and just because you can read words, this does not mean that you comprehend what the author intended.

How many times have you read to the bottom of a page or completed a section in a textbook and said to yourself, “I don’t know anything about what I just read, much less remember it.” In actuality, all of us have done this at one time or another. This chapter is here to help you eliminate this problem from your academic studies. This chapter is here to help you learn how to read a page, a section, or an entire chapter so that when you reach the end, you will comprehend what you just read.

FINALLY! A SIX-PACK THAT CAN ACTUALLY HELP YOU:
THE INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL READING

The material you’re reading
An open mind
Pencils
A highlighter
A tablet or loose-leaf paper
A dictionary

It may seem elementary, but without the tools shown above, you can’t improve your reading comprehension, analysis, or speed. Enough said!
WOULD YOU RATHER DRIBBLE OR SHOOT?

Discover If You Are a Passive or an Active Reader

Evaluate the following statements truthfully regarding your reading preferences right now.

1. I enjoy reading for pleasure.
   - TRUE  FALSE
2. Textbooks have little connection to my real life.
   - TRUE  FALSE
3. I look for the deeper meaning in words and phrases.
   - TRUE  FALSE
4. I seldom visualize what I am reading.
   - TRUE  FALSE
5. I look up words that I do not understand.
   - TRUE  FALSE
6. I read only what I have to read, and that is a stretch for me.
   - TRUE  FALSE
7. I stop reading to ponder what something means.
   - TRUE  FALSE
8. I never take notes when reading.
   - TRUE  FALSE
9. Reading brings me great joy.
   - TRUE  FALSE
10. My mind wanders constantly when I read.
    - TRUE  FALSE
11. I make time for reading even when I am not required to read.
    - TRUE  FALSE
12. Words are just words—they have no real meaning to my life or work.
    - TRUE  FALSE
13. I get excited about reading something new because I know I will learn something new and useful.
    - TRUE  FALSE
14. When reading, I just want to get it over with.
    - TRUE  FALSE
15. I usually have no trouble concentrating when reading.
    - TRUE  FALSE
16. I never look up words, I just read on.
    - TRUE  FALSE

TOTAL of even TRUE responses __________

TOTAL of odd TRUE responses __________

If you answered TRUE to more even numbers, you tend to be a more PASSIVE reader.

If you answered TRUE to more odd numbers, you tend to be a more ACTIVE reader.

Active reading is really nothing more than a mind-set. It is the attitude you have as you begin the reading process. For the next few days, try approaching your reading assignments with a positive, open-minded approach and notice the difference in your own satisfaction, understanding, and overall comprehension.

Now that you have discovered if you are an active or passive reader, the following section will help you determine your reading speed.
I Feel the Need ... for Speed!

DETERMINING YOUR PERSONAL READING RATE

There are people who do have an incredible gift for speed reading and a photographic memory, but those people are not the norm. Speed is not everything. Most instructors agree that comprehension is much more important than speed. If you are a slow reader, does this mean that you are not intelligent? Absolutely not! Reading speeds will vary from person to person depending on training, frequency in reading, comprehension, and the complexity of the material.

This section is included here to give you some idea about how long it will take to read a chapter so that you can plan your reading time more effectively. There are an average of 450 words on a college textbook page. If you read at 150 words per minute, each page may take you an average of 3 minutes to read.

This is a raw number for reading only. It does not allow for marking, highlighting, taking notes, looking up words, or reflecting. When these necessary skills are coupled with basic reading, they can sometimes triple the amount of reading time required. So, that page that you estimated would take you 3 minutes to read may actually take you 9 to 10 minutes.

If your instructor has assigned a chapter in your text that is 21 pages long and it takes you 9 minutes on average to read each page, you need to allow at least 189 minutes (or 3.15 hours) to read and comprehend the chapter. If you are reading below the average 250 words per minute rate, several factors could be contributing to this situation. They include:

- Not concentrating on the passage
- Encountering vocabulary words with which you are not familiar
- Stopping too long on any given word (called fixations; discussed later)
- Not reading often enough to build your speed

In the activity on page 87, you will find a passage from a book chapter. Read the section at your normal pace. Use a stopwatch or a watch with a second hand to accurately record your time, and then calculate your rate and comprehension level using the scales provided. Take a moment now and calculate your reading rate.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

According to Brenda D. Smith (1999), professor and reading expert, “rate calculators vary according to the difficulty of the material. Research indicates, however, that on relatively easy material, the average adult reading speed is approximately 250 words per minute at 70 percent comprehension. For students, the rate is sometimes estimated at closer to 300 words per minute.” The passage that you read in the activity would be classified as relatively easy.
BINGE DRINKING

Binge drinking is classified as having more than five drinks at one time. Many people say, “I only drink once a week.” However, if that one drinking spell includes drink after drink after drink, it can be extremely detrimental to your liver, your memory, your digestive system, and your overall health in general.

Most college students report that they do not mean to binge drink, but it is caused by the situation, such as a ballgame, a party, a campus event, or special occasions. Researchers at Michigan State University found that only 5 percent of students surveyed say they party to “get drunk” (Warner, 2002).

In their breakthrough work, Dying to Drink, Harvard researcher Henry Wechsler and science writer Bernice Wuethrich explore the problem of binge drinking. They suggest, “two out of every five college students regularly binge drink resulting in approximately 1,400 student deaths, a distressing number of assaults and rapes, a shameful amount of vandalism, and countless cases of academic suicide” (Wechsler and Wuethrich, 2002).

It is a situation reminiscent of the old saying, “Letting the fox guard the hen house.” After a few drinks, it is hard to “self-police,” meaning that you may not be able to control your actions once the drinking starts.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of drug and alcohol abuse is the residual damage of pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, traffic fatalities, verbal/physical abuse, and accidental death. You know that drugs and alcohol lower your resistance and can cause you to do things that you would not normally do, such as drive drunk or have unprotected sex.

Surveys and research results suggest that students who participate in heavy episodic (HE) or binge drinking are more likely to participate in unprotected sex with multiple sex partners. One survey found that 61 percent of men who do binge drink participated in unprotected sex as compared to 23 percent of men who do not binge drink. The survey also found that 48 percent of women who do binge drink participated in unprotected sex as compared to only 8 percent of women who do not binge drink (Cooper, 2002).

These staggering statistics suggest one thing: alcohol consumption can cause people to act in ways in which they may never have acted without alcohol—and those actions can result in personal damage from which recovery may be impossible.

(387 words)
Example: Convert your reading time to seconds. For example, if you read this passage in 2 minutes and 38 seconds, your reading time in seconds would be 158 (2 × 60 seconds equals 120 seconds plus 38 equals 158). Using the Rate Calculator Chart, your reading rate would be about 146 words per minute.

**Rate Calculator for relatively easy passages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time in Seconds</th>
<th>Words per Minute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 (1 minute)</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 (2 minutes)</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180 (3 minutes)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Answer the following questions with T (true) or F (false) without looking back over the material.

_____ 1. Binge drinking has resulted in the deaths of students.

_____ 2. Men who binge drink have unprotected sex more often than men who do not binge drink.

_____ 3. Women who binge drink have unprotected sex no more often than women who do not binge drink.

_____ 4. “Self-policing” means that you are able to look out for yourself.

_____ 5. Binge drinking is classified as having more than three drinks at one time.

(Answers can be found on page 89.)

Each question is worth 20 percent. Comprehension = \[
\frac{\text{Number of correct answers}}{5 \times 20}\% = \frac{\text{Number of correct answers}}{100}\%
\]

Example: If you answered two correctly, your comprehension rate would be 40% (2 × 20%). If you answered four correctly, your comprehension rate would be 80% (4 × 20%).
Pr  onunciation
Syllable breakdown
The word
Pronunciation
Part of speech
Usage
Meanings

FIGURE 4.1 Annotated dictionary entry.


It’s Not Just a Doorstop
USING YOUR DICTIONARY

Your dictionary will become a good friend to you. There will be many words and phrases that you will not understand when reading texts that are written on the thirteenth and fourteenth grade levels. There is nothing to be ashamed of if you resort to “looking up” a word. You’ll be smarter because of it. When you look up a word in the dictionary, you are given more than just a definition. You are given the phonetic pronunciation, the spelling, the meaning, the part of speech in which the word can be used, the origin of the word, and usually several definitions (see Figure 4.1).

There are several ways to begin your collection of unfamiliar words as you read. You can write them in the margin of the page in your text, you can put the word on an index card (word on the front, definition on the back), or you can put the definition in a special column when taking notes.

Improving Speed and Comprehension

As you begin to practice your reading comprehension, review the following tips for helping you read the material more quickly and understand the material more clearly. Whenever you are faced with having to choose between comprehension and speed, choose comprehension every time.
CONCENTRATION

Speed and comprehension both require deep, mindful concentration. Neither can be achieved without it. Your body needs to be ready to concentrate. You need sleep, rest, and proper nutrition. It will be nearly impossible to concentrate without them.

To increase your concentration for active reading, consider the following:

- Reduce outside distractions such as people talking, rooms that are too hot or cold, cell phones ringing, etc.
- Reduce internal distractions such as fatigue, self-talk, daydreaming, hunger, and emotions that cause you to think of other things.
- Set a goal for reading “X” amount of material by “Y” time. This goal can help you focus.
- Take a short break every 20 minutes. Don’t get distracted and do something else; come back to your reading in 3 to 5 minutes.
- Take notes as you read. This helps reading become an active process.

VOCABULARY

Building a strong vocabulary is not easy and it does not happen overnight. However, it is very important that you work on this aspect of reading as often as possible. If you do not know a word, you must stop and look it up. Having to stop and look up a word that you do not know will slow you down and cause you to lose concentration; however, the more words you have in your vocabulary, the fewer times you will need to stop. To increase your vocabulary for active reading, also consider the following:

- Keep those words on a list that you can review daily.
- Make time to study your vocabulary list.
- Work crossword puzzles or other word games.

FIXATION

Fixation is when your eyes stop on a single word to read it. Your eyes stop for only a fraction of a second, but those fractions add up over the course of a section or chapter. Your mind sees the words something like this:

Nutrition is important to good health.

As you read this, you probably had six fixations because the words are spaced out. However, if they were not spaced, many people would still have six fixations. To increase your speed, try to see two words with one fixation; this will cut your reading time nearly in half. Try to see the sentence like this:

Nutrition is important to good health.
Smith (1999) states that “research has shown that the average reader can see approximately 2.5 words per fixation.”

To reduce your fixation time for active reading, consider the following:

- Practice seeing two or more words with one fixation.
- As you practice, try to read in phrases like the example below:

  Nutrition is important to good health. Therefore, you should work hard to eat proper meals every day. By doing this you can maintain good health.

**FREQUENCY**

Not reading often enough to build your speed is a problem with many people. In order to build your speed and work on your concentration, you must read as much as possible. The more you read, the more you improve your skills. Quite simply, nothing helps you read better than actually reading.

To increase your frequency for active reading, consider the following:

- Read every chance you get.
- Read a variety of materials (texts, magazines, newspapers, novels).
- Don’t read just for learning, read for pleasure as well.

Get to the Point, Would You!

**FINDING THE TOPIC AND MAIN IDEAS IN PARAGRAPHS AND SECTIONS**

Typically, each paragraph has a main idea. It is usually called a topic sentence. The topic statement is what the paragraph is about. Identifying the main idea of a paragraph can greatly aid your comprehension of that paragraph and eventually the entire section or chapter. Read the following paragraph and determine the main idea—the point.

Without exception, the conclusion should be one of the most carefully crafted components of your paper or speech. Long after your reader has finished reading or your listener has finished listening, the last part of your work is more than likely going to be the part they remember the most. Some writers and speakers suggest that you write your conclusion first, so that your paper or speech is directed toward a specific end result. That decision, of course, is up to you. However, a great piece of advice from writing experts tells us that captivating writers always know how their stories will end long before they begin writing them.

—Cornerstone: Building on Your Best

According to Dorothy Seyler (2001), professor and reading expert, you can identify the topic of a paragraph in four easy steps:

- The topic is the subject of the paragraph.
- You can identify the topic by answering the question, “What or who is the paragraph about?”
I have always been struck by the power of the written word to provide insight and to transform.

Reading informs everything we do in life. Through reading and by connecting to the material, we are able to experience things we might never know. In and of itself, reading is a solitary practice. It is what you do with what you have read that matters.

In my job I read constantly, whether in the form of e-mails, financial or management reports, or product proposals. Reading is the primary vehicle for learning and it is the foundation for everything I do in business. Being able to read, extract the salient points from what I’m reading, and translate and transfer that information into action items is the basis for ensuring success in business, and indeed, for you in college.

You might say to yourself, “I’m not majoring in a field that will require me to read and analyze information every day.” This may be true, but it is always better to have the skill and not need it every day than to need the skill and not have it at all.

Reading and comprehending what you have read is not a luxury; it is a demand of the modern work world. Reading is important to everyone from auto mechanics who have to read and study manuals to nurses who have to read and comprehend charts and reports to graphic artists who have to read and analyze information to enable them to create the proper message in an advertisement or a poster.

In addition to being extremely practical, reading has an emotional component. In the same way that reading books for pleasure allows us to connect with characters, I try to connect with the writer and with the material being presented. Doing this allows me to personalize the information and make it come alive in a more meaningful way.

If I could pass along one thing to you, I’d pass along the concept that reading is a gateway. It is the gateway to learning, to compassion, to understanding, to growing, to experiencing parts of the world to which we may never have the privilege of traveling, and it is the gateway to your own self-enrichment. The beauty of having this gateway is that you don’t have to depend on anyone else to provide it for you—it is yours simply by doing.

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

Consider responding to these questions online in the World of Work module of the Companion Website.

1. How can reading more effectively help you in your professional life like it helps Ms. Baliszewski?
2. Has reading ever taken you to another place and time? If so, how did this make you feel? If not, why?
3. What advantages do you believe improving your reading skills can have in your studies and in your future career?

**Robin Baliszewski, President, Career, Health, Education, and Technology Division—Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ**
The topic statement should be **general enough** to cover all of the specifics of the paragraph.

The topic statement should be **specific enough** to exclude other paragraphs on related topics.

**Doing It Right the First Time**

**SQ3R TO THE RESCUE**

There are as many ways to approach a chapter in a textbook as there are students who read textbooks. Most would agree that there is no “right” or “wrong” way to begin the process. However, many would agree that there are a few ways of approaching a chapter that are more effective than others. One such approach is SQ3R.

The most basic and often-used reading and studying system is the SQ3R method, developed by Francis P. Robinson in 1941. This simple, yet effective system has proved to be a successful study tool for millions of students. SQ3R involves five steps: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. The most important thing to remember about SQ3R is that it should be used on a daily basis, not as a method for cramming.

**Only you** can improve your reading skills, and reading is a skill—just like driving a car.

—DOROTHY SEYLER

**Step 1: Survey** The first step of SQ3R is to survey, or pre-read, an assigned chapter. You begin by reading the title of the chapter, the headings, and each sub-heading. Look carefully at the vocabulary, time lines, graphs, charts, pictures, and drawings included in each chapter. If there is a chapter summary, read it. Surveying also includes reading the first and last sentence in each paragraph. Surveying is not a substitute for reading a chapter. Reading is discussed later.

**Step 2: Question** The second step is to question. There are five common questions you should ask yourself when you are reading a chapter: Who? When? What? Where? and Why? As you survey and read your chapter, try turning the information into questions and see if you can answer them. If you do not know the answers to the questions, you should find them as you read along.

Another way to approach the chapter is to turn the major headings of each section into questions. When you get to the end of the section, having carefully read the material, taken notes, and highlighted important information, answer the question that you posed at the beginning of the section.

**Step 3: Read** After you survey the chapter and develop some questions to be answered from the chapter, the next step is to read the chapter. Remember, surveying is not reading. There is no substitute for reading in your success plan.
Read slowly and carefully. The SQ3R method requires a substantial amount of time, but if you take each step slowly and completely, you will be amazed at how much you can learn.

Read through each section. It is best not to jump around or move ahead if you do not understand the previous section. Paragraphs are usually built on each other, and so you need to understand the first before you can move on to the next. You may have to read a chapter or section more than once.

Another important aspect of reading is taking notes, highlighting, and making marginal notes in your textbook. If you own your textbook, you should personalize it as you would your lecture notes. Highlight areas that you feel are important, underline words and phrases that you did not understand or that you feel are important, and jot down notes in the margins.

As you begin to read your chapter, mark the text, and take notes, keep the following in mind:

- Read the entire paragraph before you mark anything.
- Identify the topic or thesis statement of each paragraph and highlight it.
- Highlight key phrases.
- Don’t highlight too much; the text will lose its significance.
- Stop and look up words that you do not know or understand.

While reading, you will want to take notes that are more elaborate than your highlighting or marginal notes. Taking notes while reading the text will assist you in studying the material and committing it to memory. There are several effective methods of taking notes while reading (see Figure 4.2). They include:

- Charts
- Mind maps
- Summaries
- Outlines
- Flash cards
- Time lines
- Key words

As you read through a chapter in your textbook, you may find that you have to use a variety of these techniques to capture information. Try them for one week. Although taking notes while reading a chapter thoroughly is time consuming, you will be amazed at how much you remember and how much you are able to contribute in class after using these techniques.

While reading, always keep a dictionary handy. It is nearly impossible to read, comprehend, and remember a paragraph or section when you don’t know or understand one or more words within it. For instance, it would be difficult to get at the meaning of the following sentence if you did not understand the words. “It is easier to answer affirmatively to a question that even an anonymous respondent knows would evoke an excruciating response.” When you look up a word, circle it and write the definition in the margin.
Step 4: Recite  Recitation is simple, but crucial. Skipping this step may result in less than full mastery of the chapter. Once you have read a section, ask yourself this simple question: “What was that all about?” Find a classmate, sit down together, and ask questions of each other. Discuss with each other the main points of the chapter. Try to explain the information to each other without...
**Yes You Can!**

Consider the following tips for making the most of your reading time:

- Reduce the distractions around you. Try to find an atmosphere that is comfortable and effective for you.
- Discover what time of day is best for you to read and concentrate on your material.
- Read with a healthy snack.
- Read in sections. Don’t try to read an entire chapter in one sitting. Break it down and take breaks.
- Form questions about the material from headings as you are reading.
- Never skip over words or phrases that you don’t understand. Look them up in a dictionary.
- Allow yourself enough time to read the material effectively. Time management and reading comprehension go hand-in-hand.

Looking at your notes. If you are at home, sit back in your chair, recite the information, and determine what it means. If you have trouble explaining the information to your friend or reciting it to yourself, you probably did not understand the section and you should go back and reread it. If you can tell your classmate and yourself exactly what you just read and what it means, you are ready to move on to the next section of the chapter.

**Step 5: Review**  After you have read the chapter, immediately go back and read it again. “What?? I just read it!” Yes, you did. And the best way to determine whether you have mastered the information is to survey the chapter once again; review marginal notes, highlighted areas, and vocabulary words; and determine whether you have any questions that have not been answered. This step will help you store and retain this information in your long-term memory.

**SQ3R can be a lifesaver** when it comes to understanding material that is overwhelming.

It is an efficient, comprehensive, and DOABLE practice that can dramatically assist you in your reading efforts.

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**CHAPTER 4 READ**

**Yes You Can!**

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Understanding the difference between reading the words on a page and comprehending the words and their meanings can literally save your academic life. Reading, while easy and fun for some, is daunting and torturous for others. Regardless of your situation at the moment, you can improve your reading ability, your comprehension, and your speed. But you are the only person on earth who can do it. You are the only one who can make these improvements, and you are the only one who can make the commitment to yourself to improve your skills. It has been said that if you can effectively read and write the English language, there is nothing that you can’t understand in the world. Good luck in your journey.

**what’s it ALL ABOUT?**

Below is a real-life situation faced by Joey. Read the brief case and respond to the questions.

I have never enjoyed reading. I was not a good reader in high school and that trend continued when I first enrolled in my program. I registered for 12 hours and, soon into the semester, dropped my English class because of the reading assignments. Later in the semester, I dropped two other courses and remained only in math.

The reason I stayed in the math course was that so little reading was required. I was able to do the work without a commitment to reading a textbook or reading outside materials.

What advice would you give to Joey for Monday?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

If Joey were enrolled at your school, where could he have turned for help?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Why is note taking important to the reading process?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
What relationship do reading and math have with each other?

Why do you think Joey is doing better since he started taking notes while reading?

What advice would you give to a student who has struggled with reading comprehension in the past?
Commit yourself to becoming a better reader.
Approach the text, chapter, or article with an open mind.
Free your mind to focus on your reading.
Always read with your "six pack" at your side.
Underline and look up words you do not understand.
Write down your vocabulary words, and review them often.
Use SQ3R to increase and test your comprehension.
If you're having trouble, get a tutor to help you.
Understand that the more you read, the better you'll become at it.