

5 Keys to Unlocking Textbooks

#1 – Slower reading speed increases understanding.

Textbooks require slower reading speeds than do novels, journals, or newspapers. If text material is difficult, reread it several times by emphasizing **each word** aloud or in your mind.

#2 – Find the meanings of vague or unknown terms.

Do this **before** reading further when a word or term isn't understood the **first time** it is encountered. It only takes a few unknown words before a chapter becomes difficult to impossible to understand. Look for definitions in text or lecture notes, glossaries, and dictionaries.

#3 – Use a proven textbook study system.

There are many systems for getting the most from your textbook in the minimum amount of time such as SQ3R, OK5R, and SUPER SQUARE. If you can follow directions, you can get more from your textbooks immediately and save time.

#4 – Form a study group.

An exchange of perceptions and opinions on important ideas and details adds to understanding. For most students, discussing and hearing material discussed helps fill in textbook notes, speeds learning, and promotes later recall.

#5 – Discuss unclear material with the instructor.

Have **specific** questions ready when you meet with instructors. This conveys interest and effort and makes it easier for instructors to help because they see more quickly precisely what it is you don't understand.