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</tbody>
</table>
OWNING YOUR OWN DICTIONARIES

You can benefit greatly from owning dictionaries. If you have the need for one at your school or work you should own a paperback you can carry with you. Any of the following would be a good choice:

* Webster's New World Dictionary, Paperback Edition

You should also have a desk-sized hardcover edition which should be kept in the room where you study. All the above dictionaries come in hardbound versions containing a good deal more information than the paperback editions. A desk-sized dictionary defines far more words than a paperback dictionary, and there are more definitions per word. While desk-sized dictionaries cost more, they are worth every penny. They will give you for more help in learning words than any other book.

Dictionaries are updated yearly to reflect changes in the language. New words come into use, and old words take on new meanings. You should not depend on a dictionary which has been lying around the house for a number of years. Instead, invest in a new one. You will find that it is money well spent.

You can use guidewords to find a word. The two words on top of each dictionary page are called guidewords. Guidewords are shown like this: breather / bridle. Breath will be the first word that will be defined on the page, and bridle is the last word defined on the page. All the other words on the page fall alphabetically between them. Therefore, if your word falls alphabetically between these two words it should be on this page. If it is not, you will need to check another dictionary. If it is a new word it may be best to check an online dictionary since they are able to be updated more often. However, be careful not to rely on Wikipedia since the entries may not be made by an expert.

You can also use spelling hints to find a word. Finding a word is difficult when you are unsure of the spelling. What you should do first is try to sound out the word. To sound out a word, apply the phonics principles you have learned, or think of other words that rhyme with your word. Pronouncing the word correctly will help you come closer to spelling it correctly. Write down, as best as you can, the word you want to look up. Then look up the word on the basis of how you think it is spelled. Here are some hints that will help you find a word when your first guess doesn't work:

Hints for Finding Words -

Hint 1: Look at the consonants in the word. If you used single consonants, try doubling them. If you wrote double consonants, try removing one of them.

Hint 2: Remember that vowels often sound the same. Try an i in place of an a, an i in place of an e, and so on. For example, if you can't find a word you think starts with hi, try looking under hy.

Hint 3: Try substituting a letter or group of letters from the pairs or groups below:
able/ible; ai/ay; al/el/e; ency/ency; ate/ite; au/aw; ea/ee; ei/ie; er/or; c/k; c/s; f/v/ph; g/j;
 oo/u; ou/ow; qu/kw/k; s/c/z; sh/ch; shun/tion/sion; w/wh; y/i/e.

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DIRECTIONS FOR YOUR DAILY WORD LOG

This is a place for you to store new words, or meanings, that you add to your vocabulary. Even though the name implies it, you are not expected to add a word every day of the week. However, you are expected to have a word for every day our class meets. These words will be collected for grading purposes. You will be given 25% for having each of the first three parts done correctly. The correct part of speech is worth 20%, and the date is worth 5%. Even though most words have multiple meanings (and in many cases may serve as more than one part of speech depending on the context), you need to use the meaning and part of speech it serves in the sentence in which it was found. You may add other meanings of the word in the margins outside the box with its part of speech.

Your words do not need to come from our readings. You may take them from wherever you need to increase your vocabulary. If you have other classes that give you new words, or new meanings for old words, you may use them. If you have a job that is expanding your vocabulary, you can use words and meanings you learn there.

EXAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word: in-fer</th>
<th>(divided as it is in the dictionary)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence it was found in:</td>
<td>What can you infer from the following sentence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning:</td>
<td>A logical conclusion, or guess, based on facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of speech: verb</td>
<td>Date of entry: 11/19/05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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PART OF SPEECH
Examples are underlined.
Abbreviations commonly found in the dictionary are in parentheses

noun (n.) – a person, place, or thing. It can be a thing you cannot see, like an idea.
➤ The plan came together quickly.

verb (vb.) – a word that shows action, or state of being.
➤ He ran to his house.
➤ Sam is a girl.

A sentence MUST have both a noun and a verb, and express a complete thought.

adjective (a.) or (adj.) – a word that describes a noun.
➤ She sat on the green grass.

adverb (adv.) – a word that describes a verb.
➤ He ran quickly.

pronoun (pron.) – a word that takes the place of a noun.
For example; he, she, them, or it.
➤ She was on the bus.

conjunction (conj.) – a linking word. It can connect words, or phrases.
➤ I have two dogs and a cat.
➤ I went to the store, but it was closed.

preposition (prep.) – a word, or group of words, that shows relationship or position between two nouns.
➤ The book was on the table.
➤ The ball went up on the roof. (prepositional phrase)

interjection (interj.) – an inserted remark that shows emotion, or surprise.
➤ He runs and... oh no... he went down.
THE MIX-UP MENU

accept & except: Accept is to take; except is to exclude.

adapt, adept & adopt: To adapt is to adjust; you’re adept if it’s easy; we adopt something to make it ours.

advice & advise: Advice is counsel that you are given (noun); to advise is to say what you think someone should do.

affect & effect: Affect is to act on, or influence; effect is the end result.

air, err & heir: Air is where airplanes fly; to err creates an error; an heir inherits.

all ready & already: We were all ready to go, but the show was already over.

all together & altogether: We were all together in the van, but our plans of where to go was altogether different.

any one & anyone: Any one of these tools can be used by anyone.

avenge & revenge: To avenge is to right a wrong. To get revenge you must reduce yourself to the other person’s level.

are, our & hour: Are is the present form of be; our means owned by us; hour is what we must know if we are in a hurry.

been & being: Been is the form of be that has ended; being is the form of be that is now.

brake & break: You hit the brake if there is a rake in the road; if you work early in the morning, you may take a break for breakfast.

buy, by & bye: To buy is to purchase; by means near by; bye means goodbye.

capital & capitol: Capital is an asset such as money or property; capitol is the official seat of the government that tells you what you can, or cannot do with your capital.

cite, site & sight: To cite is to write down where your information was found; the site is the dirt where someone plans to build; the sight that brings delight may be what they build.

council & counsel: The city council meets today to hire a counselor to counsel them.

flour & flower: We use flour to make our bread; let the water flow through the flowers to keep them in bloom.

hair & hare: The hair on my head, I dry by air; a hare is a rabbit.

hear & here: To hear you need an ear; here is a place like there.
hem & him: You can hem your embroidery to finish it, and then give it to him.

its & it's: Its shows possession, but lost its apostrophe; it's means it is, the ' holds the place of an i.

knew, know, new & no: You knew what was not new; you know what is now; new is not used; and no is not yes.

knot & not: You can tie a knot in the tail of a kite, or you may not want to.

lay & lie: To lay is to place something; to lie recline or tell an untruth.

loose & lose: A tooth is loose; if you lose it, it is lost.

pain & pane: You can be in pain and look down the lane through the windowpane.

passed & past: Passed is what you did to a ball, or a test; in the past is when you did it.

pen & pin: You can put a pet in a pen, or write a letter with one; a pin can go in cloth.

plain & plane: Near the grain growing on the plain, the plane lands in the lane.

principal & principle: Your principal is the pal who takes care of you at school, or the most important thing (such as money in the bank); the principle is the rule that governs you.

quiet, quit & quite: Quite means no noise; quit is what you do if you stop it; quite means extremely.

raise, rise & rose: To raise is to cause to rise: to rise means to arise (get up); if you rose it is over, or past.

rite, right & write: A rite is a ritual; right means correct; to write is to put words in print.

sat, set & sit: Sat is the past tense of sit; to set is to put something down; to sit is to position yourself on a seat.

sew & so: A seamstress will sew, so what do you want?

than, that & then: Than compares one to another; that is what you look at; then answers the question “when”.

their, there & they’re: Their shows possession, maybe you’re an heir; there is a place that is not here; they’re means they are.

though & through: Though means although; but through is what you are at the count of three.

to, too & two: She went to town and saw too many moons. Two (2) were too many.

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COOKING-UP OR BREAKING-DOWN WORDS

Writers sometimes create, and define, their own words to better explain their thoughts. This is similar to a chef’s process of cooking up new dishes. They both create by combining ingredients. The ingredients of words are phonemes that make up roots and affixes.

- Phonemes are the letter, or letters that make up the sounds of our language. They are shown at the beginning of all good dictionaries with basic words that use them. This is called a “Pronunciation Key”.
- Roots are sometimes base words to which affixes are attached to create new words. However, they are not always words that we would recognize when the affixes are removed. They are sometimes simply word parts known as “combining forms”.
- Affixes are prefixes which are affixed to the front of a root, and/or suffixes which are affixed to the back of a root.

The following lists were created by the joint efforts of Carolyn Davidson & Peggy Setzer

Common combining forms (used as roots):

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<th>Root:</th>
<th>Meaning:</th>
<th>Sample words:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>hear, listen</td>
<td>audiology, auditorium, audio-visual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auto</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>autograph, automatic, automobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bio</td>
<td>life</td>
<td>biology, bionics, biotic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capt, capi</td>
<td>head</td>
<td>captain, capitol, decapitate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chron</td>
<td>time</td>
<td>chronicle, chronological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cide</td>
<td>to kill</td>
<td>pesticide, genocide, homicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crat, cracy</td>
<td>to rule</td>
<td>autocrat, bureaucrat, democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dict</td>
<td>speak, words</td>
<td>dictate, diction, dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gen</td>
<td>create</td>
<td>generate, Genesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logy</td>
<td>study of</td>
<td>geology, psychology, zoology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>micro</td>
<td>very small</td>
<td>microcosm, microscope, microbe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mit, miss</td>
<td>send</td>
<td>missile, transmit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nom, non, nym</td>
<td>name</td>
<td>nominate, synonym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ped, pod</td>
<td>foot</td>
<td>pedal, podiatry, tripod (suf.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phon</td>
<td>sound</td>
<td>microphone, phonemes, telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>port</td>
<td>carry</td>
<td>export, import, transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tele</td>
<td>distance</td>
<td>television, telephone, telepathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terra, terri</td>
<td>land, earth</td>
<td>terrain, territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>therm</td>
<td>heat</td>
<td>thermometer, thermos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans</td>
<td>across</td>
<td>transport, transcontinental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vid, vis</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>video, vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root:</td>
<td>Meaning:</td>
<td>Sample words:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a, an</td>
<td>without, not</td>
<td>amoral, anaerobic, atheist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ant(i)</td>
<td>against</td>
<td>antibiotic, anti-venom, antonym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auto</td>
<td>self</td>
<td>automatic, automobile, autograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi</td>
<td>two</td>
<td>bilingual, bicepts, binomial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bene,</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>benefit, benevolent, benefactor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cent</td>
<td>hundred</td>
<td>century, centgrade, centipede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circum</td>
<td>around</td>
<td>circumference, circumnavigate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de</td>
<td>remove, reverse</td>
<td>defuse, decode, dehumidify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dec</td>
<td>ten</td>
<td>decimal, decade, decagon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>du</td>
<td>two</td>
<td>duo, duel, duet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en, in, im</td>
<td>in, inside</td>
<td>encode, import, invade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ex</td>
<td>out, outside</td>
<td>export, exterior, expel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hemi, semi</td>
<td>half, part</td>
<td>hemisphere, semicircle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in, im, ir, il</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>inactive, impossible, illicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mal</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>malfunction, malaria, malevolent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>midmorning, midriff, midsection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mis</td>
<td>wrong</td>
<td>misfire, mistake, misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mono</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>monogram, monorail, monotheist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multi</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>multicolored, multicultural, multiply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oct</td>
<td>eight</td>
<td>octagon, octave, octopus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non</td>
<td>not, won’t</td>
<td>nonstick, nontaxable, nonrefundable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
<td>before</td>
<td>prefix, pretest, preview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poly</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>polygamy, polygon, polytheist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post</td>
<td>after</td>
<td>postpone, postgame, posttest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quad, quart</td>
<td>four</td>
<td>quadrangle, quadruplets quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>re</td>
<td>do again</td>
<td>recycle, renew, reuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sol(i)</td>
<td>one, alone</td>
<td>solitary, solitude, solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub</td>
<td>under</td>
<td>subfloor, submarine, subway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>super, supr</td>
<td>above, more</td>
<td>superman, supervisor, supreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sym, syn</td>
<td>similar</td>
<td>sympathy, synonym, synchronize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans</td>
<td>across</td>
<td>transport, transcontinental, transmit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tri</td>
<td>three</td>
<td>triangle, triceps, tripod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>unfriendly, unlikely, unnecessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uni</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>union, unique, unite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While prefixes are usually used to change an aspect of the word, such as changing the description of a person from “friendly” to “not friendly”, suffixes usually establish the part of speech. Therefore, these lists of suffixes are divided into lists according to the part of speech they create.

Suffixes that create nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffix:</th>
<th>Meaning:</th>
<th>Sample words:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ance, ence</td>
<td>action, quality</td>
<td>resistance, preference, existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ant, ent</td>
<td>one who does</td>
<td>assistant, pollutant, resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cian</td>
<td>one who does</td>
<td>beautician, musician, physician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dom</td>
<td>domain</td>
<td>boredom, freedom, kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eer</td>
<td>one who does</td>
<td>auctioneer, engineer, volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>er</td>
<td>one who does</td>
<td>invader, teacher, writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hood</td>
<td>nature of</td>
<td>childhood, neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ism</td>
<td>process, doctrine</td>
<td>alcoholism, baptism, socialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ist</td>
<td>one who does</td>
<td>artist, cyclist, geologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ity</td>
<td>condition</td>
<td>complexity, rigidity, simplicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ment</td>
<td>action, product</td>
<td>government, refreshment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ness</td>
<td>state of</td>
<td>happiness, sadness, tiredness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>one who does</td>
<td>actor, contractor, dictator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ship</td>
<td>position, quality</td>
<td>citizenship, friendship, hardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tion, sion</td>
<td>action, condition</td>
<td>education, comprehension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suffixes that create verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffix:</th>
<th>Meaning:</th>
<th>Sample words:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ate</td>
<td>cause to be</td>
<td>communicate, domesticate, originate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en</td>
<td>cause to be</td>
<td>frighten, shorten, tighten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fy</td>
<td>cause to be</td>
<td>beautify, glorify, simplify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ize</td>
<td>cause to be</td>
<td>modernize, sympathize, terrorize</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suffix that create adverbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffix:</th>
<th>Meaning:</th>
<th>Sample words:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ly</td>
<td>characteristic of</td>
<td>beautifully, happily, simply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suffixes that create adjectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Sample words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>able, ible</td>
<td>able to be</td>
<td>capable, portable, incredible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al</td>
<td>characteristic of</td>
<td>natural, mechanical, sensational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ful</td>
<td>characteristic of</td>
<td>joyful, peaceful, thankful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ish</td>
<td>characteristic of</td>
<td>childish, foolish, Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ive</td>
<td>characteristic of</td>
<td>defective, destructive, expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less</td>
<td>without</td>
<td>careless, fruitless, joyless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ous</td>
<td>characteristic of</td>
<td>adventurous, joyous, rebellious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>characteristic of</td>
<td>creepy, dusty, shaky</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Readers need to recognize these word parts in order to comprehend new vocabulary. When breaking down new words you need to separate them into; prefix (es), root, and suffix(es). Watching the context clues should help you pick out the root.

Writers need to consider these word parts when creating words. A word I created to describe one of my major philosophies is *antienvirovictimist*, [anti (against), enviro (of the environment), victim - root, ist (a person skilled in)]. I use this word to show that I refuse to be a victim of my environment, and I work toward helping others to not be victims of theirs.

Whether reading or writing, we need to understand the dynamic usage of the English language. That means that the way we use it changes. Our language comes from many different languages, sometimes combined in many different ways. We also have new words that are created for new inventions, or technologies. Developing sciences and technologies are coming up with new words daily. English is being created, and recreated, constantly.

The suggestions above are commonly used, but are not the only options. Our existing word parts create maps to new words. When you see new words that you want to gain an understanding of try to find them on Dictionary.com. There, it will not only tell you how the word is being used, it will usually tell you where it came from. Then pay attention to the roots and affixes used, and see if you can gain a better understand of the thought processes used to create that word. The most important thing to do in this progression is have fun. Have fun, and learn as you go deeper into the understanding of the crazy English language.

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MAKING SENSE OF SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

To have a complete sentence you **must have** two things:

- Subject – a word or group of words that shows what or whom the sentence is about.
- Predicate – a word or group of words that tells what the subject is doing or what is happening to the subject.

A sentence must also express a complete thought. It can be as simple as, “Joe ran”. Good writing includes simple sentences such as this, but it also includes many complex sentences such as, “My son Joe ran quickly up the bank and across the bridge toward me”. In this last sentence, “My son Joe” is the complete subject. It tells who the sentence is about. The predicate, which tells what Joe did, is more complex. It consists of the verb “ran”, the adverb “quickly” that tells how Joe ran, and the phrases that tell where he ran. These are called prepositional phrases because they start with a preposition that shows position, or relationship.

Even though the second sentence is more complex, it is still referred to as a simple sentence. Simple sentences can get even more complex by the addition of another subject, or predicate. “Michael and Kristy live in Oregon”, has a compound subject that names the two people it is about. “Dusty called and said she was fine” has a compound predicate. A sentence that is not considered simple is a compound sentence.

A compound sentence has two strongly related independent clauses. An independent clause is a group of words that can stand alone as a sentence. They become a complex sentence when joined by a semicolon ( ; ), alone or the addition of a coordinating conjunction such as; consequently, furthermore, however, indeed, in fact, moreover, nevertheless, then, or therefore. However, you need a comma between these conjunctions and your second independent clause. You can also connect two independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction such as; and, but, for, nor, or, so, or yet. See the examples below:

- Jolene has four children; she is my daughter.
- Jolene has four children; furthermore, she is my daughter.
- Jolene has four children, and she is my daughter.

You can also join an independent clause with a subordinate, or dependent clause using conjunctions. If the independent clause comes first the conjunction comes in the middle. You can use; after, although, as, as if, because, before, if, since, unless, until, when, whenever, whereas, or while, without any other punctuation other the period at the end. You may also put the dependent clause at the end by putting the conjunction at the beginning. However, when you do that there must be a comma between the two clauses. See the examples below;

- Bob went to the store before going home.
- Before going home, Bob went to the store.

Whether you are reading, or writing it is more enjoyable if the text has a variety of these methods of sentence construction. If you are writing remember to also use punctuation properly. A text without a variety of sentence construction, or proper punctuation is very hard to read.

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PERFECTING YOUR PUNCTUATION

Effective punctuation is very important whether you are reading or writing. Punctuation marks are signals from the writer to the reader. Think of them as traffic signals. Signals and signs on our highways were designed to direct the flow of traffic. Punctuation was created to direct the flow of reading.

Ending punctuation is the stop sign of text. It tells the reader to make a quick stop to see if the sentence makes sense. If it doesn’t, it sometimes helps to read on for another sentence or two. If it still doesn’t make sense you may need to reread the section, and possibly look up some of the words. Ending punctuation uses the following marks:

. The period is used at the end of a declarative or imperative sentence. It is also used after a request that is worded as a question such as, “May I send you our new catalogue”. Another way it is used is after abbreviations such as, Dr., Mr., A.M., Jan., P. D. Setzer, B.S., and Ph.D.

? The question mark is used after direct questions. They are used even when the question is part of another sentence such as, “This is our problem: What should we do?”

! An exclamation mark stops readers at the end of all exclamatory sentences. These are sentences that express surprise or deep emotion.

Other punctuation can be used to indicate a pause, a series of items, a separation of a portion of text for various reasons, or an indication of possession or contraction.

, The comma is the yield sign which tells you to slow down a little, but there are more words coming. Its usage is a little more complex. Use a comma after any dependent clause, or single word such as “Yes, that answer is right”. See “Making Sense of Sentences” for more examples. If you give an aside in the middle of a sentence it should be set apart with commas. An example of this is, “Bob, I think, is the oldest”. A common use of commas is in a series like, “We need milk, bread, eggs and butter”.

; The semicolon is a stronger separation between parts of a sentence. Two examples of its use can be found in “Making Sense of Sentences”. If you give a series of items that include commas in one or more parts you need to mark the main separations with semicolons. “You should be able to find me in MC 260, my classroom; LRC 117, my computer lab; or the staff lounge”.

: The colon is the strongest break in a sentence. It is used before a list of items or details (see my use of it in “Making Sense of Sentences”). It is also used before appositive phrases like, “Our motto has always been this: The customer is always right”. Where we see colons most often is in the time (i.e. 9:30), or after the salutation of a letter (i.e. Dear Jane).

(…) Parentheses are used to enclose words, phrases, or sentences which are used as an explanation. I have several examples of their use above.

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Chunking is a method of dissecting a sentence into meaningful chunks, or phrases. In many cases, chunking is done for you with punctuation marks such as commas, semicolons and colons. A sentence that is properly punctuated aids understanding. However, poor punctuation leads to poor understanding.

“In the ground, squirrels were digging legumes”.

If you know that peanuts are a type of legume, you might picture squirrels happily collecting peanuts for winter storage. On the other hand, if the comma was not there and you did not know what a legume was you might picture poor little ground squirrels with parasites such as fleas.

“He was on a horse cart, traveling behind them”.

With the sentence above you probably picture a man, or boy, sitting on a cart behind a horse and following other people. If the comma came after “horse” you might picture him sitting on the horse, with the cart traveling behind them.

When you are reading something that is difficult to understand you can use chunking to put the sentence in smaller, more easily understood, chunks. The following sentence comes from one of my textbooks. The lines show where I would break the chunks to aid my understanding. If anyone but a genius tried to read this “particular selection” without chunking they would have difficulty understanding it.

“Students | who have a limited ability | to deal with oral language | could receive | vocabulary development | and | direct experiences | with | the prerequisite concepts | that are necessary | to read a particular selection | with understanding”.

I understand that we are talking about students. | These are struggling students. | They have problems dealing with oral language. They may be students with English as a second language. On the other hand they may be hearing, or orally impaired. | Here comes a remedy. | Vocabulary development may help. | and | Direct experiences could help | if they involved | the ideas that form a base for the knowledge | needed | to read a passage | and understand it.

The method of chunking is not important. The important thing is that it helps, rather than hinders, your understanding. Try this method on any reading material that you find difficult.
HOW TO BE A TEXT DETECTIVE

When you find an unfamiliar word in your reading, knowing the purpose of that word makes it easier to discover the meaning. The following information may help you become a text detective who can more easily discover that meaning. Let’s look at an example:

“The swirling water created a vortex that pulled the little boat under”.

If you did not understand the underlined word you might look it up in a dictionary, or type it into a word document on your computer and use the thesaurus. However, if you did not have access to either of them you could start by taking the sentence apart.

To have a complete sentence, you must...

- have a subject [This subject is the noun (person, place, or thing) that is doing, or being, something.]
- have a predicate [This is a verb and its helpers that expresses the action, or state of being of the subject.]
- and express a complete thought.

The sentence above expresses something that you should be able to see in your mind, if you could understand all the words. It has a subject, “The swirling water”. It has a verb, “created”. Therefore, the sentence is complete once you know what was created.

Words like “a”, “an”, or “the” indicate that the word following it is a noun. That means it has to be a person, place, or thing. Since the underlined word has “a” in front of it, it must be a noun. It tells you what person, place, or thing was “created”. Since water cannot create a person it must be a place, or thing. Once you know that, you need to think of something that can be created by swirling water and pull a small boat under. Put this picture in your mind and the mystery is solved. A vortex is a whirlpool.

Being a text detective can be fun. More importantly, it can give you a new tool to help you build a greater understanding of what you read. This also makes reading itself more enjoyable.

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THE MAIN IDEA AND SUPPORTING DETAILS ARE THE ROOTS OF THE PARAGRAPH

A functional root system supports and feeds a plant. A main idea and its supporting details do the same for a paragraph. The main idea can be compared to the seminal root shown above. Notice that the seminal root is the strongest looking, and most direct root. All the other roots feed into it. The main idea is the strongest and most direct idea in the paragraph. It is the topic (what or who) being discussed and what the author wants you to know about that topic. Major supporting details feed directly into the main idea in the same way that the 1\textsuperscript{st} order laterals feed into the seminal root. The minor supporting details are like the 2\textsuperscript{nd} order laterals. They feed into the 1\textsuperscript{st} order laterals. In some paragraphs we also have details that feed into the minor supporting details. These are like the 3\textsuperscript{rd} order laterals.

Let's look at a paragraph and see how it works. I will label the main idea \textbf{seminal root}, the major supporting details \textbf{1\textsuperscript{st} O.L.} (Order Lateral), the minor supporting details that feed into the major details \textbf{2\textsuperscript{nd} O.L.}, and any that feed into them will be \textbf{3\textsuperscript{rd} O.L.}

\textbf{Seminal root} = This just wasn't my week. \textbf{1\textsuperscript{st} O.L.} = Sunday at the women's meeting I spoke out against Hitler's Bible burning raid, and I don't think anyone was listening. \textbf{2\textsuperscript{nd} O.L.} = The only one who was quiet was Mrs. Harris, the fifth grade teacher. \textbf{3\textsuperscript{rd} O.L.} = After five days of screaming at thirty kids a body isn't too noisy on the weekend. \textbf{1\textsuperscript{st} O.L.} = Monday I was bitten by a dog, a German Shepard. \textbf{2\textsuperscript{nd} O.L.} = Maybe someone was listening to my ranting on Sunday after all. \textbf{1\textsuperscript{st} O.L.} = Tuesday I called my lawyer's office to see if my permit went through for our Wednesday morning bazaar to raise money for the church. \textbf{2\textsuperscript{nd} O.L.} = The secretary put me on ignore so long that the office was closed by the time she got back to me. \textbf{1\textsuperscript{st} O.L.} = Wednesday morning I was fined $50 for selling without a license. \textbf{1\textsuperscript{st} O.L.} = Thursday went ok for a Thursday. \textbf{1\textsuperscript{st} O.L.} = However, Friday was terrible. \textbf{2\textsuperscript{nd} O.L.} = I had to rush home from work to pack for our camping trip. \textbf{3\textsuperscript{rd} O.L.} = I got a ticket for speeding. \textbf{2\textsuperscript{nd} O.L.} = I burned the chicken I was making to take with us. \textbf{2\textsuperscript{nd} O.L.} = When I packed the sandwiches I had to make instead, the ice poked a hole in the Styrofoam ice chest. \textbf{2\textsuperscript{nd} O.L.} = Worst of all I broke the tip off my husband's favorite fishing pole. \textbf{1\textsuperscript{st} O.L.} = Today (Saturday) to top off my wonderful week, I got poison oak. \textbf{1\textsuperscript{st} O.L.} = Oh well, at least tomorrow is the start of a new week. \textbf{2\textsuperscript{nd} O.L.} = It has got to be better than this one.

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STRATEGIC READING

Prediction strategies: Before reading you predict what will be said or done. These predictions are based on your prior knowledge. While reading you monitor and revise your predictions based on the background painted by the author.

Monitoring strategies: You stop and think about how the author’s verbal picture backs or counters your prediction. Ask yourself if what you predicted agrees with what the author is saying. Ask yourself if what you think the author is saying makes sense. If not, reread the passage.

Elaboration strategies: You relate new information to your prior knowledge and the background painted by the author. This interlocks the new data with what you already know, making it easier to understand and remember.

To use these strategies effectively it may help to follow these steps:

1. Note the title. It should be a clue to the content of the text.
2. Underline the main ideas. Outlining might help you identify them if they are not clear to you. These points should be supported by the lesser points.
3. Write your reactions, and questions, in the margins. Some questions may be generated by headings, others will come from anything that is unclear to you.
4. Circle unfamiliar words. These should be used later in your Daily Word Log that was covered in a previous Tool.
5. Adjust your reading rate according to the difficulty and/or importance of the text.
6. Reread any unclear passage. This may work better if you start a sentence or two before the unclear section. If it is still unclear, write your questions in the margin. If you are not sure what questions to ask just put a question mark. Read on to see if your questions are answered. You may need to look up any words you don't understand. If you still have unanswered questions ask them. Good sources for answers are teachers, classmates, educational staff (this includes aides, tutors, library staff, etc.), or any of the more trustworthy web sites.
7. Take note of good topics for class discussion, compositions, or research. Asking your questions in class where you may generate discussions can help your classmates (including the teacher), as well as yourself gain a better understanding of the topic.

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A GUIDE TO COMPREHENSIVE READING

Most reading is done passively. This is letting the author do all the original and final thinking. In this process, the reader simply absorbs the information like a sponge. Passive reading can cause:

- poor concentration and daydreaming,
- hazy understanding,
- short term memory recall,
- loss or prevention of motivation,
- failure to gain or understand organization,
- slow, and/or no reading because it is too boring.

Passive reading kills the interest of more people than poor writing. It is a deadly habit which must be stopped. The best way to read is through active reading. This allows the reader to create an effective connection with the author and his ideas, or characters, while reading. Active reading is done by asking yourself these questions:

- What is the thesis (statement of central idea)?
- How does each idea tie in?
- What are the most important facts? How do they support the thesis?
- How does each fact relate? Are they all relevant?
- Is it written to inform, persuade, or entertain the reader?
- If it is to inform or persuade, does it provide truth that can be supported?
- Is this text directed to my purpose?

This phase of active reading is the evaluative phase. First you need to be aware of your purpose and the author’s major points. Then you need to filter out anything that does not help you.

The other portion of active reading is the original thinking phase. This is where the ideas are taken in and studied critically. Active readers take the ideas presented by the author and evaluate them on the basis of their own experiences and needs. If they are of interest or value they are integrated into the reader’s existing understandings and learning. When the following course of action is taken the reader can experience real learning rather than programming. This second phase of active reading includes these aspects:

- Recall and think about what you already know about the topic.
- Read to uncover the author’s ideas, prejudices and expertise.
- Relate each idea to the next to form a continuous chain of ideas.
- Develop statements which summarize relationships between those ideas.
- Mentally highlight points by repeating and reflecting on any that are new and/or important.
- Keep bringing out the overall theme from all the points as each new point is added. This process strengthens and lengthens your chain. As you do this your theme
statement should grow to the point that it describes the topic clearly, and its boundaries are clearly defined.

- Organize related steps mentally, then write down key words in summary, or outline form (See “In Other Words” and “Patterns of Organization” for help).
- As you summarize (whether in summary or outline form) use the shortest, most meaningful statements or key words. Be sure to add any key supporting points even if you do not need them at the time. They may come in handy later.
- Show relationships between what you already know and the important ideas being presented.
- Supplement new ideas with examples from your own experiences. Compare your experiences with those given to determine the differences, as well as the similarities.
- When the author uses a new term, try to discover his meaning in that first usage. Use the term yourself when expressing your understanding of, or your questions about his view of the topic.
- List any new understandings that you gain from the reading. Your ideas are very important and deserve a place in your records. These points should be brought up during discussions on the topic because they may help others to gain a better understanding of the topic.
- Review your notes when you are finished reading. At this time you should have everything you need from the text. See if the questions you had at the beginning are answered in later notes. If they are not you need to find a way to fill in the gaps in your knowledge. This may be done by asking the right person the right question, or possibly doing some research on your own. For research you can use professionally written books, or professionally produced web sites on the topic. Since views differ among even the most professional sources it is best to find agreement on an answer to your question from at least three sources.
- Now try to create a new summary, or outline in which all your questions are answered. This may not be entirely possible because some questions do not have universally agreed upon answers. However, this process should give you the information required to have the best possible knowledge base on the topic.

By using this process of active reading you should learn 50% to 80% of what you read. Your resulting notes should be shorter, clearer, and easier to review. What you learn should stay with you a long time. The knowledge can be recalled forever, if you use it. Each step shown on these two pages should be used throughout important readings created to inform or persuade you. The first phase is designed to give you full awareness of your purpose and the direction of the author’s views. You should be able to filter out most of the useless or repetitious material, and be able to focus on actively reading the essential content. While this process looks more time consuming than passive reading, it will actually be far more time saving if you need to understand and remember the material. Many of us have been taught to memorize information through the rote memorization process. This requires many repeated readings. The time this takes would be much better spent using active reading. Once this process is learned practice will cut down the amount of time it takes to complete.
IN OTHER WORDS…

If you were talking with someone and wanted to be sure you understood what he or she were saying you might say, “In other words you mean…”. With written material the same thing is possible. Authors use many words that are not necessary for comprehension. In fact, they sometimes confuse more than clarify. These words are usually used to flavor the message. If you circle the subject and predicate (verb with its necessary modifiers and direct, or indirect object) you may more easily comprehend the sentence. Once this is done you can restate it in your own words. This is paraphrasing. According to the Concise Index to English by Ehrlich and Murphy, “Paraphrase differs from direct quotation in two ways: the words must be your own, and the paraphrase should be shorter than the original. Of course, it must be faithful to the meaning of the original” (85).

When you summarize a passage, you always condense it. Keys to Better College Reading states on page 106, “A summary can be defined as the reduction of information to its more important points”. On the next page they give two important points about summarizing. I will paraphrase these guidelines for you.

1. Summaries include the main idea and normally the major supporting details of the passage. The length of your summary will depend on your purpose and the material. A paragraph may be summarized in a sentence, or two. A chapter may be condensed to about three pages.

2. A summary may be in the author’s words, or you may paraphrase it. You may use both choices in one summary. With textbooks or lectures you may be better off to stick with the originator’s words, unless you are told otherwise.

In one of my textbooks, Diagnostic Teaching of Reading: Techniques for Instruction and Assessment by Walker, there is a useful guide on how to evaluate summaries.

Did the summary have or show –

- important information?
- relevant content and concepts?
- information directly stated in the text?
- information inferred from the text?
- a connection to prior knowledge?
- appropriate language?
- an organizational structure?
- a sense of purpose?

Using these guidelines to evaluate your own summaries before turning them in to a teacher may improve your success rate.

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PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION
HOW DOES IT FIT AN OUTLINE?

Reading material that is well organized is much easier to understand than text that skips back and forth between topics. Well organized text is also easier to remember. A good way to explore the organization of written material is to put it in outline form.

Outlines are basically summaries that use letters and numbers to show the pattern of organization of the text. Below are a simple, and a more complex example of an outline:

1. Bears
   a. Black
   b. Grizzlies

2. Deer
   a. White Tail

1. Animals
   a. Birds
      1. Owls
      a. Barn

Patterns of organization are usually determined by the purpose of the text. The purpose of expository text is to inform. Expository text should follow one of five patterns: description, sequence, comparison, cause and effect, or problem and solution. When the purpose of the material is to tell a story, it will most likely follow one of the patterns of expository text. However, it should also include plot, characters, setting, point of view and theme. Poetry is harder to categorize. The way to recognize poetry is to determine if it meets the purpose of inspiring the senses, and/or evoking emotion. Different forms of poetry are rhymes, narration, haiku (or similar patterned poems), or format poems such as the “I am” poems.

Some materials have organizational aids that are designed to make it easier to outline, or summarize, them. “How to Read Typographical Cues" covers this in detail. Size and color of print are used to make headings stand out. Italics are used to make important words in the body of the material stand out. Other aids that may help are graphics, diagrams, illustrations, charts and maps.

No matter what pattern of organization is used, material can still be difficult to understand if the flow is choppy. The flow of most well written material will have peaks and valleys, but not sheer cliffs and drop offs. Authors of good mysteries use sheer cliffs and drop offs; however, they do not tire the reader out with too many of them. Use of verbal cliffs and drop offs need practice to perfect. If you would like to try these methods the phrase, “Don’t try this at home” should be reversed. Do this at home, and have friends and/or family members check them for comprehension. When you feel more comfortable with them, bring them to me, or other teachers for feedback. English tutors are another wonderful resource. If you use this method in other classes without refining the technique you may run the risk of lost points because the teacher lost your point.

If flow is the major problem with difficult reading material outlining, or summarizing should make it more understandable. Try these methods with what you read, and what you write, to improve comprehension. If written material is not understood its message will not be delivered.

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THE ESSAY TRAIN

Understanding the framework of a good essay is important to the process of reading, or writing an essay. In order to create a more physical picture, I will compare the framework of an essay to that of a train. A five-paragraph essay should resemble the train shown on the right. The engine, or introductory paragraph, pulls the weight of the entire thing. The couplers (connecting hooks) between each paragraph are transitions. The three cars that follow are paragraphs that rename, explain and elaborate on the points mentioned in the introduction. These are the main points, with their supporting details. The caboose is the final car, or paragraph. It holds the conclusion.

The thesis statement, or leading point, should be the bright light, or focal point, of the essay. The light of the train shows the way it is going. The thesis statement will show the way the essay is going. This leading point is the main idea of the entire essay. The remainder of the first paragraph contains supporting details for this main point. In a five-paragraph essay there will be three supporting details. These details become the main points for the three paragraphs that follow.

The paragraphs that follow will be more connected if there is a transition. The transition could be the last sentence of the leading paragraph, or the first sentence of the one that follows. It could also be both, just as you see on the train. An example of an ending transitional sentence is: “As a result the next day was a disaster”. The next paragraph would tell about the day. A beginning transitional sentence could start with a conjunction such as “although”, or “because”. These connectors help readers to journey through the essay just as easily as they could through a well-connected train.

Now we will journey into the supporting details. Be sure that the details you mentioned in the introductory paragraph actually support your thesis statement. Then support each one in a paragraph dedicated to only that statement. A good five-paragraph essay will put these paragraphs in an order that will lead the reader into the conclusion.
The conclusion resembles an old time caboose in the fact that it does not just bring you to an abrupt end. There is no dangling coupler, or transition, that leaves you looking for more, (unless you are writing a series and want to leave a hook to bring the reader to the next essay). The conclusion completes the essay with a final point, question, or call to action that leaves the reader with the thought, “well said”. It can also leave them with an image of a smiling face and a waving hand, just as the trains of yesteryear did.

Use these transitions to improve what you write, or better understand what you read.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use:</th>
<th>Transitional Expressions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to add</td>
<td>also, and, and then, as well, besides, beyond that, first (second, etc.), last, furthermore, in addition, moreover, next, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to compare</td>
<td>also, as well, both (neither), in the same way, likewise, similarly, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to contrast</td>
<td>although, even though, however, in contrast, nevertheless, on the contrary, whereas, yet, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to concede a point</td>
<td>certainly, granted, of course, no doubt, to be sure, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to emphasize</td>
<td>above all, especially, indeed, in fact, in particular, most important, surely, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to illustrate</td>
<td>as a case in point, as an illustration, for example, for instance, in particular, one such, yet another, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to show place</td>
<td>above, below, beside, beyond, farther, here, inside, nearby, next to, on the side, opposite, outside, to the east (south, etc.), etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to show a result</td>
<td>and so, as a result/consequence, because of this, consequently, for this reason, hence, so, thus, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to summarize</td>
<td>all in all, finally, in brief in other words, to sum up, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to place in time</td>
<td>afterward, at last/present, during, eventually, finally first (second, etc.), later, meanwhile, next, then, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Fact**: A fact is a statement that can be proven. The proof must come from a reliable source. This proof may come from experts, eyewitnesses, or experiments. For example:

Fact – The Statue of Liberty is 151 feet high.

This fact may be found in an encyclopedia, which is considered a reliable source. It can also be measured. It is an unchanging fact unless there is damage done to the statue, or the earth under it settles or is worn away. Some facts are changeable. Your age can be proven by documents, but it changes each year. Another changeable fact that can be proven by document is your educational level. This is a fact you can change.

**Opinion**: This is a statement of belief that can’t be proven. It may be true for one person, but not for another. For example:

Opinion – Green is the best color in the world.

Just because green is my favorite color it does not follow that everyone will feel the same. Another difference between fact and opinion is that all opinions are changeable.

**Theory**: A theory is a more complex opinion of an expert based on the majority of the known facts. For example:

Theory – The first peoples of the Americas came across the Bering Land Bridge.

This is the accepted theory of Native America origin. However, some experts disagree because the oldest human remains on the American continents were found at the tip of South America.

**Propaganda**: This is information that blends facts with theories and opinions to try to influence people’s choices.

Propaganda – You will lose more weight if you eat our product.

It may be a fact that the product has fewer calories than other products. However, it may increase the appetite where another product may decrease it.

Unfortunately, in our world many things are taught as fact that may fall into one of the other categories above. Because of this you should be careful about accepting something as fact just because it was presented as such by someone who claims to be an authority on the subject. If something is presented to you as a fact (even in a textbook) that does not seem right to you – research it. Socrates declared, "It is as important to question answers as it is to answer questions". As a student you have many ways to research a topic. There is a wide variety of books in the library and bookstore. More information can be found on web sites maintained by experts. However, beware of relying on sources such as "Wikipedia" where data can be altered, or added to by anyone. There is also a wide variety of experts on campus. Wherever you find the information, you should find at least three sources that give the same view on the topic before accepting information as fact.

DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES continued
**Conclusion:** To draw a conclusion, you need to use multiple facts to create new information. For example:

- **Fact** – Jolene is 5’2” tall.
- **Fact** – Joseph is taller than Jolene.
- **Conclusion** – Joseph is more than 5’2” tall.

Jolene’s height can be proven by measurement (a form of experiment). The conclusion can be made by looking at them standing side-by-side (an eyewitness account). If this is written in text, your conclusion can also be considered an inference.

**Inference:** An inference is a logical conclusion based on facts you see written, or hear. If you were given the two facts above, but not the conclusion you could infer that Joseph is taller than 5’2”. The author would be implying that fact.

**Denotation:** The denotation is the literal meaning, or definition of the word. It can be found in the dictionary. For example:

- **Denotation** – Summer; The season between June 21\textsuperscript{st} and September 21\textsuperscript{st}.

**Connotation:** This is the emotional feel of the word. It is a way some people use the word that would probably not be found in the dictionary. For example:

- **Connotation** – Summer; the fun time of the year.

**Sarcasm / Irony:** Sarcasm is found in a statement that means the opposite of what is said. It may be said in fun, or it may be intended to be hurtful. Irony is usually considered to be the active form of the concept. For example:

- **Sarcasm** – “Oh yeah, that couldn’t be very fast”, said about a sports car that is shaped like a bullet.

**Idiom:** This is an expression whose meaning can’t be determined by using a dictionary.

- **Idiom** – It’s raining cats and dogs.

This saying has been used so long that most of us have no idea how it got started. It simply means that it is raining hard.

**Simile & Metaphor:** These are both comparisons. The simile uses the word like, or as. The metaphor appears stronger because it does not use them. For example:

- **Simile** – The car was as hot as an oven.
- **Metaphor** – The car was an oven.
HOW TO SKIM

Skimming is a valuable technique that allows you to get the general idea of a text without having to read every word. It is not always the most efficient method to use, but it is very valuable when trying to quickly discover the general idea of the passage. You can skim reading material to see how it is organized and find the general idea of the passage. This can help you decide if it is what you need, or want to read. It is also a good way to review material for a test.

Although skimming is effective for gaining the general idea of the text, it is easy to miss important points while using this method. The underlying meanings may also be missed. To be sure you are gaining all you need from the passage it is sometimes necessary to slow down and read more carefully.

When you are skimming you:

- do not read every word,
- look for key words or phrases,
- look for general information,
- and look for basic ideas.

How you skim may depend on what you are skimming. When you are skimming:

- a text with typographical cues makes it easy to move from point to point, (See “How to Read Typographical Cues”),
- a text with lists of names, numbers, or dates can be skimmed by running your finger down the list until you get a general idea of what it contains,
- a text in paragraphs may be skimmed easily by reading only the first and last sentences of each paragraph.

When skimming an entire book:

- examine the table of contents to discover the main divisions of thought,
- read the main headings of each chapter,
- read the beginning and ending sentence of each paragraph,
- watch for typographical cues,
- and read the chapter summaries.
HOW TO SCAN

Scanning is the process of moving your eyes quickly over text to find a specific fact, or piece of information. It is usually used to answer specific questions. When scanning you need to:

- read each question carefully so you know exactly what to look for,
- look for only one piece of information at a time,
- look for key words or short phrases instead of sentences,
- let your eyes float quickly down the page until you see the key words,
- then read nearby material as well to be sure you found the right piece of information.

While you may think it quicker to look for more than one thing at a time, it actually takes more time because you break your concentration and miss things.

SKIM AND SCAN – TWIN STUDY BUDDIES

I use skim and scan as my twin study buddies. From a distance they look very much alike, but once you know them they are easy to tell apart. They both save you valuable study time, However, they have different jobs.

Skim finds general information, such as main ideas and supporting details. Scan takes over where skim leaves off by finding specific information to answer your questions. The time you save with these methods can be better spent by studying the information you found.

You should skim first. Just like cream is skimmed off fresh milk, the basic ideas of your reading material can skimmed off the text. Skimming helps you discover which information needs to be scanned for specific information.

Scanning is what we do when we are looking for a phone number in the phone book. We quickly scan for by flipping pages until we find the first letter of the last name, then we slow down to scan more closely for the following letters. Once we get to the right last name we slow down even more to find the first name.

WHEN TAKING AN OPEN BOOK TEST you would scan the Index, or Table of Contents for a key word to find the right area to skim. Skim to get an idea of where in the section your specific information is, then scan again for the key word or phrase.
HOW TO READ TYPOGRAPHICAL CUES

Typography is the arrangement of print on a page. It is normally done to make the page easier and more interesting to read. Typography is also used to make important information stand out. Methods of arrangement that serve this purpose are called typographical cues.

Some typographical cues are:

- **Bold** type is dark and heavy. It is usually used for titles and headings. It may be used for words the author wants you to pay special attention to, such as vocabulary words.

- **Underlining** is done for book titles and some other things authors want to stand out.

- **Italic** type is slanted to make important words stand out. Some authors use this for vocabulary words, or foreign words and phrases.

- Headlines, or headings, are used at the beginning of sections to give you an idea of what is covered there. Many authors also use subheadings. These are normally smaller print than headings, but still larger than the print used for the body of the text. Sometimes color is used to make headings and subheadings stand out.

- **CAPITAL** letters are sometimes used to make words stand out.

- White space around print may also be used to make it stand out; like this.

- Changing font to something like *Lucida Console*, or *Monotype Corsiva* is also used.

- Dingbats are special marks used to draw attention to items on a list, or to set them apart for special attention. The most commonly used are Bullets such as the ones used for this list, or the more common small circle or square. A wide variety of dingbats can be found by going to Wingdings in the font menu of a Word document.

Some dingbats found in Wingdings are:

- ♦ is u  ☯ is [  ⬜ is ]  □ is x  ◆ is v  ☐ is ,
Quotation "marks" show that the word, or words, inside are quoted from someone else. They may also enclose lines of dialogue from a book, or play. In a report that cites information from other material the quotation marks enclose the exact citation. If this is the case, the source of the information must be put in parentheses following the citation. However, sometimes the citation is a quote that has been used so long that the source has been forgotten. These phrases are sometimes called clichés.

Examples of uses of quotation marks:

1. Dialogue – George said, "I would like to buy this book."
2. Citation – "What makes someone a hero?" (Billings, 1999, p. 1). At the end of the book, or chapter will be a page of works cited that shows how the source may be found.
3. Cliché – "It is raining cats and dogs!"

Parentheses enclose additional information, as in example #2 above and the following; John F. Kennedy (1917-1963) was our 35th president.

Brackets show where a writer has added a personal comment, or additional word for clarification. If they enclose "sic" it means that an error has been intentionally reproduced.

Examples:

1. Louis Armstrong [many people called him “Satchmo”] was a great musician.
2. Intentional error from a speech – “The police are not here to create disorder; they are here to maintain disorder.” [sic]
HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TEXTBOOKS
Adapted by Peggy Setzer from an LRC tip sheet

Textbooks, though often criticized and seldom praised, are essential to your educational journey. Most teachers examine them very carefully before choosing what they feel is the best texts for their course. They look for books that will amplify, expand, complement and enrich their classroom activities. To ensure success in your classes, it is estimated that at least two hours of independent study is necessary for each hour spent in class. Most of this work will involve the use of your textbooks. Because of that it is important that you know the best way to use them at home.

When you first get your text survey the entire book. Look at the title page. It can give you important information on the author. Does he work in the field of knowledge that the book covers? It would probably not be helpful to study a book on mechanics that was written by a medical doctor. Even if the doctor had worked his way through medical school as a mechanic, he would be out of touch with that field of expertise while working as a doctor. The copyright page will tell you when the book was written. Chances are that if the book is more than ten year old it is outdated material. Of course, that varies. A book on philosophy may be valid many years later. However, I am told that a book on computers is outdated by the time it hits the book stores. The table of contents is very important. It not only tells you what topics are covered, it can give you an idea of how important they feel the topic is. One topic may be covered in five pages while another is given thirty pages of attention. Either the second topic is considered more important, or it is much more complex. The preface may give you an idea of why the author wrote the book, for whom it was written, and what you should already know before reading it. If there is a section called “How to use this book” you should read this section very carefully. It will give you information that may be vital to your success with the material. At the back of the book is a wealth of information. An appendix is used for additional materials that may be very useful to you, but are not considered essential to the text. A glossary can be very useful. It is similar to a dictionary, but will tell you the definition of the word as it is used in the text. Some books have glossaries in each chapter. If you want to find other books that relate to the text, look at the bibliography. It lists the materials the author has quoted from, or that he feels will complement his text. The index will make a great study buddy. Whenever you need to find out where a topic is mentioned look in the index. Most indexes will list every page that has important information on that topic. The chapters have been saved for last because they need the greatest attention.

The first chapter usually gives an introduction that will help you better understand the rest of the book. The last chapter usually gives you a summary of the information and/or ways of using the knowledge you have gained. It may be helpful if you survey them before reading the other chapters. Each chapter
should be surveyed before it is read. The *chapter's title* normally gives you the main idea of the chapter. If not, read the *first paragraph* carefully to discover it. *Chapter objectives* are sometimes listed. Read these to discover what you are expected to learn from the chapter. If there are no objectives look at the end of the chapter for a *summary*. Reading this before studying the chapter may help. *The headings and subheadings* give important information on what to look for. They also give you a form for note taking. If you make an outline using them, you can fill in the main ideas and supporting details. This makes wonderful study material for any tests you may have. Pay special attention to visual aids such as illustrations (pictures, diagrams, tables, graphs, etc.), *italics*, *bold print*, words that are *underlined*, etc. Also pay special attention to information that is placed in a box, or separated by more than the usual spacing. Text books are carefully edited for mistakes. If there is anything that stands out on the page it is normally because the author considered it important. Reread the summary when you have finished surveying the chapter to see if you missed any of the points mentioned. Pay special attention to these as you read the chapter.

As you read, there are many things you can do to increase your ability to learn and remember the important information. *Outlining* and filling in the main ideas and supporting details was mentioned above. *Question the author* as you read. Socrates said, "It is as important to question answers as it is to answer questions". He was referring to the ideas that not everything people believe is true, and that there are usually exceptions to the rule even if it is true. Ask the author how he knows this is true. Ask him what the exceptions to the rule are. Write these questions down and try to find the answers as you read on. *Make notes in the margin* as to how this information helps you, or even why you may disagree with it. *Underline* important information as you read. Many students hesitate to follow these two suggestions because they want to sell their books back. If at all possible, textbooks should be kept as reference material if the topic is one that will be used in your chosen occupation, or useful for later classes. If it is not possible, or logical, to keep your books these notes could be taken on the outlines mentioned above. At the end of each outline it may be helpful to write a summary. The summary should be a brief explanation in your own words of what the material covers. It can be very helpful if you coordinate the outlines, or marginal notes, with your class notes. This can be done by using marginal notes on your class notes and outlines (or textbook), referring you back to the reference on the topic in the other material. This is done more easily if you put page numbers, or dates on your class notes.

Hopefully these tips will help you get the most from all your textbooks, and enable you to have a more successful educational journey.

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WHEN THE WRITER IMPLIES, THE READER INFERS

The word "infer" is often misused. In my opinion, a little book published by McGraw-Hill in 1974 clears up the confusion very well. The Concise Index to English by Ehrich and Murphy tells us, "the writer and the speaker will imply, the reader and listener infer". On page 86 of Keys to Better College Reading it states, "Learning an author's purpose and tone requires inference skills". That is the ability to infer. Sometimes the author will state the purpose of the material at the very beginning. However, in most cases that does not occur. He or she will simply imply the purpose with a well written title or introduction. A person's tone of voice can let you know how they are feeling. When they are writing, that tone can be implied in their word choice and punctuation. Pages 86 - 90 of Keys... gives some wonderful examples of how word choice implies the purpose and tone of written material. Let's look at some examples of how punctuation can express different tones.

1. "I won." This is a simple statement of fact.
2. "I WON!" This shows great excitement.
3. "I won?" Doubt and surprise are shown here.

Now let's put our inference skills to work.

1. Oh, just look at that sunset. The crimson and gold are brilliantly blended.
2. The first step is to choose a topic.
3. The cat said, "Cats rule, and dogs drool!"
4. He is tall, dark and handsome. And sooo dreamy.
5. Look out!
6. Are they really here?
7. This woman is the best person for the job.
8. That silly dog was just sitting there with the hat on his head.
9. He will not get away with what he is doing. I'll see to that!
10. Medicinal herbs have been used for centuries by many peoples.
11. The man watched the eagle soar over the grassy meadow.
12. The little girl asked, "Mommy, what color is a draft?"

Many words or phrases that require inference skills are considered connotative. Connotation is the meanings that come to our mind, but are not found in the dictionary. For example, in the U.S. the word summer brings to mind swimming, picnics and outdoor sports. However, you will not find that in the dictionary. The definitions found in the dictionary are denotative, or literal.

Summer, the warmest season of the year.

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FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING

Some words and phrases have figurative meanings, as well as their literal meanings. Literal meanings can be found in the dictionary. Unfortunately, some figurative meanings are only understood by a select few. Figurative meanings usually begin when someone says, or writes, something that other people think is clever. It could be an advertisement jingle such as, "... like sleeping on a cloud".

Sometimes a figurative phrase can start with a language mistake made by a child. When my daughter was little she called small dogwood trees puppywoods. She decided that since young dogs are called puppies, young dogwood trees must be puppywoods. This word soon became part of our family's vocabulary.

Verbal, or written, miscues are only one source of figurative language. Another source is the imaginative writings of a good author trying to paint a picture with his words. Some of these words, or phrases, may be found in many different countries. One example of this might be "to sleep-perchance to dream" from Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Idioms and comparisons are forms of figurative language. If someone said it was "raining cats and dogs", few people would look for an animal falling from the sky. This is simply an idiom that means it is raining very hard. Comparisons are often used in literature, especially in poetry. A simile is a comparison that uses "like", or "as" to show the comparison. "Getting into the car was like climbing into an oven", or "He was as strong as an ox" are two examples of a simile. A metaphor makes a stronger comparison by omitting "like", or "as". "The car was an oven", and "He is an ox" are metaphors.

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SQ3R STUDY STRATEGY
Adapted by Peggy Setzer from
Literacy for the 21st Century, 3rd ed. By Gail E. Tompkins

In the SQ3R study strategy (Anderson & Armbruster, 1984), students use five steps - survey, question, read, recite, and review - to read and remember information in content area reading assignments. This strategy is very effective when students know how to apply it correctly. The five steps are:

1. **Survey**: Students preview the reading assignment, noting headings and skimming (rapidly reading) the introduction and summary. They note the main ideas that are presented. This step helps students activate prior knowledge and organize what they will read.

2. **Question**: Students turn each heading into a question before reading the section. Reading to find the answer to the question gives students a purpose for reading. [To create study material write questions on index cards.]

3. **Read**: Students read the section to find the answer to the question they have formulated. They read each section separately. [Put answers on opposite side of cards.]

4. **Recite**: Immediately after reading each section, students recite from memory the answer to the question they formulated and other important information they have read. Students can answer the questions orally or in writing. [Turn card over AFTER answering.]

5. **Review**: After finishing the entire reading assignment, students take a few minutes to review what they have read. They ask themselves the questions they developed from each heading and try to recall the answers they learned by reading. If students took notes or wrote answers to the questions in the fourth step, they should try to review without referring to the written notes. [Check for accuracy after answering.]

[Study material made through this process may improve performance on tests.]
METACOGNITION

"Metacognition is the process of thinking about thinking...Metacognition has to do with the active monitoring and regulation of cognitive processes". For more information on this see the online definition I found on 6/18/05 at; http://tip.psychology.org/meta.html

In reading, metacognition is the process of thinking about the cognitive processes you use to make meaning from what you read. With unknown words, like ‘metacognition’ this may involve decoding thoughts such as, [I know m, e, t, spells ‘met’. The ‘a’ could have a short sound, or a long sound.] It also involves thoughts of how to discover meaning. [I know that ‘cognition’ is something about the thought process, I need to look up the prefix ‘meta’.] Some dictionaries have common prefixes listed. In my dictionary the definition of meta is; “A prefix meaning: after, along with, or beyond”. If you found this definition you might then think, [So metacognition may be the thinking you do after, along with, and beyond learning about something. That means you are thinking about what you are learning, and how you are learning it.] When you think, or talk, this through you are using metacognition.

There are things you can do to actively engage your metacognition. Reading classes teach the use of many techniques to improve your comprehension. Keep a list of these techniques and practice using them. Examples are;

➢ Reread the section
➢ Slow down to give yourself time for comprehension
➢ Write questions down about what you don’t understand. If it is not answered later in the text, ask about it in class or research it.
➢ Think about what you know on the topic.
➢ Use the illustrations to help you understand.

There are also more advanced active reading strategies used to increase comprehension. Examples of them are;

➢ Predicting
➢ Questioning
➢ Imaging
➢ Clarifying
➢ Summarizing

As you gain techniques and strategies that work for you, add them to your lists. When you have trouble understanding what you are reading, think about these processes and decide which is best for the task. Actively use these tools, with purpose and intent. And remember; you are using metacognition.

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THE ART OF QUESTIONING
QAR – QGS

The best way to assess and/or improve comprehension is to learn to ask the right question. Socrates said, “It is as important to question answers as it is to answer questions”. The Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) describes the different types of questions that are used to evaluate your comprehension of what you read. There are “right there” questions which have the answers plainly written in one part of the text. These are found in tests on text teachers assign to be read and remembered. With those you simply find the answer and copy it from the text. There are also “on my own” questions that are usually used before reading to assess your background knowledge on the topic, or for opinion papers. These answers must come out of your head. Another type of question is the “think and search” question. These are also common in tests. With this question you must think about what it asks, and read the text carefully to determine the best answer. The last type of question is the “author and you”. This type of question basically combines the first two types of question. You must read what the author tells you and blend that with what you already know about the topic to find the answer.

The Question-Generation Strategy (QGS) shows how to generate questions that aid comprehension. It explains that a good question:

- has an answer.
- begins with who, what, when, where, why, or how.
- can be answered from the text, and/or your background knowledge on the text.
- asks about important information in the text.

To aid your comprehension, you need to generate “good” questions (as defined in QGS). Be sure to use the type of question (as defined in QAR) that will best give you the information needed.

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