

- Psychology of learning

Boost your reading comprehension skills

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If you're reading books and papers and have to re-read them because you're not sure if you've picked up everything you need, here are some tips to help you read more efficiently.



Know your purpose

If you're new to a field and you have no particular object, then read the whole thing, take a break so it all filters through, and read it again so that you squeeze everything you can out of it.

However, if you're reading a book about World War II, but you only need to learn about Japanese tactics for a history assignment, then you can ignore the areas that deal with the war in Europe, Africa and the Middle East and focus purely on the South-East Asian parts.

Be an active reader

By interacting with the work, you'll boost your memory. So, if you have a photocopied or printed academic paper, use a highlighter to mark the good stuff. You can always buy a pristine copy later, if you really want to.

If you're reading online, even easier: use the highlighter to mark the text and then paste it into a new document, summarise it, paraphrase it and you should be good to go.

Take lots of breaks

Reading and learning at the same time is tiring so learn what your limits are. If you pause and can't remember what you've just read, go back to the bit you do remember and take a mini-break.

A short walk while thinking over what you've just read will help fix the material in your mind.

It will also help you identify parts that you haven't quite grasped and need to look over again.