

Steps in Prereading

Prereading involves finding out what you are going to read about and making up questions that you want to answer while you read an assignment.

TEXTBOOK

- Find out what the subject of the assignment is
- leaf through the pages of the assignment and find out what clues the visual aids (maps, graphs, pictures) give you. Read the captions.
- look in the table of contents to put this assignment in context with the entire course. What has gone before? What will come after?
- Study the questions at the end of the chapter or section to see what the author thinks is important in the assignment.
- Look carefully at the bold face type in the assigned pages. From this, make up logical questions that you can answer when you read.

NOVEL or PLAY (full length)

- Read a plot summary (synopsis)
- Master plots
- Masterpieces of World Literature
- Oxford Companions
- Front matter of most study guides
- Barron's Educational Note
- Monarch Notes
- Cliff Notes
- Find a book in the library that contains critical commentaries about the book or the author. Look for something like Twentieth Century Views Series.
- Look through Book Review Digest for the year the book was first published. (Use only as a last resort or if you need critical commentaries by critics — especially good for contemporary plays and novels.)
- Use the study guide notes to preread each chapter or scene in the book.
- Make questions to answer as you read each chapter or scene.

SHORT STORIES or POETRY

Read the entire story or poem through once to determine the plot or characters. Pose questions about the dramatic actions and anything else you may need to know.

NONFICTION MATERIAL

- Look up subject in encyclopedia
- Read the first and last sentences in each paragraph
- Make up questions to answer