

“Reading a PSY 101 chapter once is seldom enough.”

Some students mistakenly assume that psychology is common sense. They may not realize how much material is covered in just one textbook chapter. Here are useful tips to help you make the most from your PSY 101 textbook

- Ask your professor how to best read your PSY 101 textbook. What is her philosophy about the textbook? How much of her exams come from the textbook? Class lectures?
- Attend class regularly. Listen actively and thoughtfully. Reading the textbook is seldom enough.
- Read assigned chapters before the lecture. Start at least two days early, to avoid having to read the entire chapter at once. PSY 101 chapters contain too much information to absorb in one sitting.
- Break each chapter into small segments. Avoid reading more than about eight pages at a time.
- Before you start reading a chapter, pre-read. Look over the chapter outline and consider how the sections are related. Think about how this chapter connects with the previous chapter.
- Before reading each section, take a moment to turn the heading into a question. Write the question in the wide margin space. As you read, look for the answer and write the answer below your question. Then try to recite the answer without looking at what you wrote. Or write each question and answer on folded paper to make study sheets.
- If you highlight, do so selectively. Avoid highlighting entire sentences. Just highlight key phrases, and then circle the one or two most important words inside the highlighted phrase.
- Highlighting only definitions isn't enough. PSY 101 tests expect you to do more than just define new terminology. You will need to be able to apply definitions and concepts.
- Most textbooks provide wide margins to encourage you to write summary notes as you read. Writing marginal notes can be much more effective than highlighting.
- Add details to your class notes as you read. If you wrote one example of a concept in your class notes, add a few more examples as you read.
- After you finish each section, write a summary of it on a large index card. Carry these cards with you and review them periodically.
- Read actively. Formulate questions as you read:
 - Why is this so?
 - How did researchers prove this?
 - How was this experiment done?
 - What else do we need to know?
 - Why is this important?
 - How does it help us better understand human behavior?
 - Is this information current?
 - What else might the author have included?

- Try to picture what you're reading.
- Have a mental conversation with the text. Imagine you're talking to the author(s). What would you like to ask? What is your response to what you're reading? What else would you like to know?
- If the textbook includes an example of a concept, try to think of another example. Write it in the margins. If you're not sure if it is an accurate example, ask your professor.
- Pause to analyze graphs, charts, tables, and other visuals. Visual representations can increase your understanding of concepts.
- Mark unfamiliar words and references and take the time to look them up.
- Take notes as you read, separate from your class notes.
- Read in a place free from distractions. Turn off your computer and phone, and store your phone away from your study area.
- Keep a distractions list nearby. Jot down things that distract you but will need attention later (e.g., run an errand; make an appointment). Keep a tally (/// //) every time your mind wanders.
- After each lecture, re-read the chapter, adding details to your class notes. Remember: reading a PSY 101 chapter once is seldom enough.

If you need assistance with reading or studying your PSY 101 textbook, make an appointment with Sharon Green, Coordinator of Instructional Services in the Office of Academic Support (Seton Hall, 1st floor). She can be reached at 716-286-8071 or sgreen@niagara.edu.