

How-To: Take Textbook Notes

Pre-Reading

Overview Notes

Systematically skim and create overview notes, before sitting down to read what is assigned.

Review the introductory text on the first page of the chapter for the assigned section. Decide where this new content will fit in your mental library of Computer Science knowledge.

- Read the table of contents for the assigned section. This is your mental map for how this reading is structured and what you will likely know by the end of the section.
- Turn to the section you will be reading:
 - List the headings (section title) and subheadings you find, making special note of any that aren't in the table of contents.
 - List any new terms that are defined.
 - On your list of subheadings in the section, make a note of which subheadings have significant code samples.
- Review the chapter summary found at the end of the chapter for the assigned section. Based off the table of contents and the section skimming, predict which summaries are of the section you're about to read.
- On your list of subheadings in the section, make a note of which one contains the "meat" of the reading. This decision will be made based on what you noticed in the chapter introductory text, the table of contents, the section skimming, and the relevant chapter summaries.
- Read the first sentence of each paragraph within that subheading. This prepares you for the transition to sitting down and reading the chapter.
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Reading

Post-It Notes!

With the context provided by pre-reading the text, pause as you come upon paragraphs that appear to communicate key concepts or ideas. Take a moment to digest the information. If needed, re-read a couple preceding sentences and a few sentences of the following paragraph. Once you gain an understanding, rewrite that paragraph in a small number of words on a post-it. Place that post-it straight up in the textbook over that paragraph.

Since you can't use a highlighter in high school textbooks, make use of post-it flags (or cut/tear up your larger post-its) to "highlight":

- Code samples that helped you understand a concept
- Sentences that made an idea click for you
- Information that you want to easily find in the future

Post-Reading Notes

Reflection Notes

In your own words, reflect on what the section taught you. Take a moment to review the chapter summary. Reword the relevant chapter summaries in a small number of words, just as you did with paragraphs while reading. Summarize any other new ideas that you would like to remember.

From Ashley Meyer of Roosevelt HS CS, Sources and more details:

Allam, Court. "[Five Close Reading Strategies to Support the Common Core](#)." ITeach. ICoach. IBlog. 11 June 2012.

Howell Custer, Harriet. "[The Cornell Note-Taking System](#)." Review. 103-06. AVID. AVID for Higher Education.

Schmeiser, Lisa. "[In Which Ralph Fiennes and I Tell You How to Read a Book](#)." Penny Wiseacre. 29 Sept. 2014.