

Especially for Nursing Students

Nursing involves a lot of careful reading of difficult, detail-laden texts. Some of these tips may help.

Survey the book: Be sure you know the major divisions (table of contents, glossary, index, appendices, charts, answers, etc.) and the general layout of each chapter (study questions, vocabulary, case studies, etc.), as well as how to use each section. Remember that a science textbook is not a narrative. It isn't a story (although case studies are stories within the text). It often helps to read the summary and/or study questions at the end of a section before reading the section itself.

Find out what the professor wants from the readings. Should you be skimming the assigned reading before lecture? What are you required to memorize? What concepts do you need to learn? It doesn't make sense to read through a dense section slowly, memorizing everything, if the instructor doesn't expect you to know all that detail.

Mark useful sections: Put sticky notes or other permanent markers so you can easily find the sections you use frequently (glossary, source documents, answers, etc.).

Make connections to content and ideas from your other courses, and, where applicable, to your own experiences. People learn better when they can put concepts into a larger context or make personal connections.

Use multi-sensory techniques: Listen, touch, say, whenever possible. These aids help make connections and emphasize using all areas of brain processing used in learning: visual, oral, aural, kinesthetic. You already know that the bio labs have a lot of models that may help you learn better than two-dimensional charts or pictures.

Learn the most common prefixes and roots for vocabulary. These should be memorized. Some books have a list of common Greek and Latin roots. If you know the root *sang* means *blood*, and if you read in context, you can usually remember what *sanguinary*, *sanguineous*, *sanguinolent*, *sanguino*, and *sanguinol* mean without having to memorize a separate definition for each word.

Consolidate notes:

Before lecture: Skim reading and outline the chapter in a notebook.

During lecture: Take notes directly on the outline, either in spaces or on the facing page (or parallel column).

After lecture: Reread text and add any additional details right into the outline and notes *with the page numbers so you can find the information quickly.*