

PREVIEW STRATEGY —

PREVIEWING TEXTBOOK READINGS

When you preview a reading assignment you become familiar with its contents and goals before you start to read. This helps to make the reading an easier, faster, and more effective learning experience.

BASIC PREVIEW

- 1) Read and think about the title.
- 2) Start turning the pages and read and think about each of the bold-face headings.
- 3) When you reach the end of the chapter, write down what these headings told you are purposes and goals for this chapter. Then start actively reading it.

Notice that this quick overview of the chapter provides a framework for understanding the purposes and goals of the chapter. This should help you understand the reading better than if you had just started at the first word.

EXPANDED PREVIEW

- 1) Read the title
- 2) Read the introduction.
- 3) Read each boldface heading and read and underline or highlight the first sentence under each heading (This first sentence often provides the main idea for the section.)
- 4) Look at all of the pictures, including graphs and charts, and read their captions.
- 5) Read the conclusion.
- 6) Read the comprehension questions at the end of the chapter to find out what the authors consider most important in the chapter.
- 7) Now that you have a good idea of your purposes and learning goals for the chapter, you should write down what you learned about the purposes and goals of this chapter before you start actively reading it.

PREVIEW STRATEGY —

PREVIEWING ESSAYS AND ARTICLES

1. First, preview the reading by

- looking at the title of the selection and noting any sub-headings
- reading any lead-ins—these are usually italicized
- skimming the first and last paragraphs
- looking at any accompanying graphics and captions
- reading biographical information about the author
- noticing the location of original publication

2. Then, think about and write down

- what the title and subheadings reveal about the content of the article or essay
- what the lead-ins reveal about the content
- how the first and last paragraphs may set up and wrap up the focus or thesis
- what the graphics may reveal about the content
- what the biography of the author and the original audience may reveal about the author's purposes and possible biases

3. You may then consolidate your previewing focus if you write down answers to the following questions before beginning to read:

- What do you already know about this topic?
- List three things you would be interested in learning about this topic.
- What do you think is the purpose of this reading?
- What learning goal(s) can you set for yourself as you read this?
- Have you already noticed words which you do not recognize? How will you deal with unfamiliar vocabulary? Will you try to understand words first in the context of the sentence? Will you look them up in a dictionary or the glossary?

Your Instructor may ask you to record the answers to these questions for all your readings during the semester in a dedicated notebook or post them on online discussion boards or learning blogs.

PREVIEW STRATEGY — IDENTIFYING KNOWLEDGE, BIASES, AND GOALS

1. Basic preview strategy: Preview the assignment by looking at clues to its content by reading and thinking about the following
 - Title
 - All boldface headings
 - Graphic aids and captions

2. Expanded preview strategy:
In shorter readings, also read:
 - the first paragraph and last paragraph.

In longer text-book assignments, also read

- the introduction,
- the first sentence after every boldface heading,
- the conclusion,
- study questions and topics listed at the end of the chapter.

3. Then, write down the answers to the following questions

K What do I already know about the subject of this reading?

B What are my biases? Can I put them aside and really hear what the author thinks? (Biases are strongly held points-of-view or opinions you may have about a subject. If you don't acknowledge them and put them aside as you read, you may find it hard to understand differing opinions expressed by the authors in your assignments.)

G What are my goals for learning as I read this? In other words, what should I learn by reading this assignment?

BEFORE YOUR READ IT, KBG IT!

Use this chart to help you organize your prereading:

K	(prior knowledge)	WHAT DO I ALREADY KNOW?
B	(interfering biases)	WHAT ARE MY BIASES?
G	(goals for learning)	WHAT DO I WANT TO LEARN?

PREVIEW STRATEGY —

SETTING UP AN OUTLINE FOR READING

This activity creates a framework which provides focus for purposeful, goal-oriented reading.

Look at your textbook. Many authors provide an outline of the chapter—usually the boldface chapter section headings—on the first page of each chapter. Sometimes it is in the form of a bulleted list.

Complete the following:

1. Before beginning to read, make a formal outline of the chapter using the headings in the basic outline at the start of the chapter, or if there is none, to go through the chapter and make an outline using the boldface headings.
 - These boldface headings are topic headings. Some may be larger than others. These would be general headings for the main sections of the text—give them a Roman Numeral. Smaller print headings following it each get a capital letter, starting with an “A.”
 - Note if there is color-coding (or variable sizing) of headings in your textbook. This makes the outlining even easier. Work with your classmates to determine which color or size earns a roman numeral, which a capital letter.
 - Skip several lines under each heading to leave room for main ideas and major supporting details.
 - An outline can look like this one based on a section of a chapter in *The American Promise* by James L. Roark, et al., 4th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.

CHAPTER TITLE: “FROM NEW ERA TO GREAT DEPRESSION 1920-1932”

I. THE ROARING TWENTIES

A. Prohibition

- 1.
- 2.

B. The New Woman

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

C. The New Negro

- 1.
- 2.

D. Mass Culture

E. The Lost Generation

This particular chapter has five major sections, each with from 3-6 subsections under it. The blank numbering and skipped spaces are examples of where you can fill in major ideas and supporting details as you read.

2. As you read, fill in the outline with the important major ideas and supporting details.

3. Follow-up: When you are done with your reading, your instructor may give specific instructions about confirming how well you focus on major ideas as you read. You may be asked to do one or more of the following:

- Turn in your outline to have it checked.
- Take a quiz in which you can use your outline.
- Compare and contrast your outline with a group of fellow students and perhaps design the “best” outline using ideas from each of your outlines.
- Post your outlines to a discussion board online and see how it compares/contrasts to others in your course.

Now try it on a chapter in your textbook before you read! You may be surprised how it helps you focus and get the maximum from your reading.

As an alternative to the traditional form of outlining shown above, you may choose to use a MAPPING STRATEGY such as the following:

