Before You Read...

Preview

1. Preview the book’s front and back covers. Make sure you know the author, the title, and date published.

2. Preview the Table of Contents
   • How is the book divided? By chapters? Subdivisions?
   • What do the chapter titles tell you about the subject matter of the book? Does anything look familiar to you?
   • What’s the organizational scheme for the book? Does it progress chronologically, or from general to particular information?

3. Preview the Preface or Introduction
   • To whom is the book directed?
   • What are the author’s purpose and objectives? How does he or she propose to accomplish them?
   • Has the author indicated the scope and limitations of the book?
   • Has the author indicated his point of view or stated his thesis?

4. Preview the Conclusion or Epilogue
   • What does the author reveal about the book? Does she reformulate her thesis or restate the purpose?
   • Look for important themes, then look for these same themes elsewhere in the book.
   • Once you’ve read the Introduction and Conclusion, think about your task in terms of connecting the two. How does the author get from the beginning to the end of the book? What do you need to know to understand this progress?

5. Preview each chapter before reading
   • First, read the first and last page (or summary, if included) of each chapter.
   • Then page through the chapter, reading all headings and subheadings.
   • Make note of charts, graphs, or other figures.
   • If the author provides questions at the end of the chapter, read them before you read the rest of the chapter.