

When approaching academic reading, whether in textbooks or articles, people tend to have misconceptions on how to proceed. The following are a few of these common misconceptions and ideas for how to dispel them.

1) **You must read every word and every paragraph on every page.**

Instead, you must learn to **be selective** about where you put your focused attention. How much time and focus you use will depend on your purpose for the reading – is it to answer a few homework questions about a concept from a chapter, is it to extend your existing knowledge, or is it to learn something entirely new?

2) **You should read everything at the same pace and in the same way.**

Instead, you must learn to **adjust your speed** depending on what you are reading. You might, for example, skim through the introduction, conclusion, chapter summary, review questions, and chapter objectives to get an idea of what is coming up in a chapter. Then, when you find an important section (which answers a question), you would slow down and read more critically with more focus.

3) **You should understand everything after reading it once.**

Instead, you must learn to **monitor your recall** of the information as you read it. For example, after reading a paragraph, stop for a moment and ask yourself whether you understood the paragraph or not. If not, you may need to review or re-read it before moving on. Generally, subsequent paragraphs build on previous information, so continuing to read may end up confusing you more.

4) **Your comprehension will drop when you read faster.**

You can gradually **improve your skills** and teach yourself to read at a faster speed without losing your comprehension of the material. One way to do this is to use a pen to point at the words as you read. Our normal tendency is to have the pen follow our eyes, but instead, try pushing the pen a little faster than your normal speed. With some practice, this new speed will become your normal reading speed without forgetting any information as you read.