

# Using Your Textbook

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When you purchase a new book, there are several things you should do automatically.

## Look in the front:

- A. Read and think about the **table of contents**.
  - 1. This will show you the overall organization of the course and help identify what's important.
  - 2. It will get you interested in the material.
- B. **Glance over any preface** or foreword to see what the book is trying to do.
- C. **Consider the title**. This is often a significant statement about the book's "slant." Do you know the author?

## Look in the back:

- A. Glance at the index. This is a listing of subject and pages upon which they can be found.
  - 1. You can tell from the percentage of known and unknown words how difficult the text will be for you.
  - 2. You can see with great precision what the course is concerned with.
  - 3. You can look up specific items of interest.
  - 4. As a review for tests, you can easily look up unknown items since the page number is given.
- B. Is there a glossary listing unknown words and their definitions?
  - 1. The main concern of many courses is to teach the vocabulary of the subject. This is a vital section, not something to be ignored.
  - 2. Make a page tab out of scotch tape, and undertake to study and learn these words during the term. Use the tab for easy reference during time between classes-time which might otherwise be wasted.
- C. Determine what other possibly useful materials are in the back-**before** you need them. You don't have to read them now; just know that they exist .

## Determine how a typical chapter is constructed.

All of the other chapters will be put together the same way. If one chapter has a summary, they all will; if one chapter has questions, they all will. Use this knowledge when you have a reading assignment. Structure your approach accordingly.

Don't be afraid to **write in your book**-vocabulary words, condensations of ideas, personal reactions, etc. Interact with the book the way you'd interact with a person. Your texts provide a valuable resource during and after your academic career.