

THE LEARNING CYCLE

Reading Notes

Purpose: To help you familiarize yourself with a subject, concept, or vocabulary BEFORE it is taught in class. This is the pre-reading part of the study cycle.

Description: Reading notes are assigned the day before a topic is introduced in class. On the day that Reading Notes are due, you will be given a 2-3 question Reading Quiz. You may use your reading notes on this short quiz. The Reading Notes are worth 5 points and the Reading quiz is worth 5 points. Staple your Reading Notes to your reading quiz before you turn it in.

Procedure: Follow these steps when you work on your reading notes.

1. Read the chapter or section title
2. Read the key concepts and vocabulary out loud. These key concepts and vocabulary will be on your chapter tests.
3. Briefly look over one page at a time. Look at the pictures and illustrations and read the captions to get an idea of what you will be reading about. Read the major headings and key ideas highlighted in bold letters.
4. Read the review questions at the end of the section.
5. You are now ready to start reading. With a blank piece of binder paper and a pencil, begin to read the section. When you come to a vocabulary term or key concept, do your best to understand its meaning and importance. Re-read the paragraph and refer to illustrations and drawings to improve your understanding. You will know that you have succeeded if you can write the definition or describe the concept in your own words. Don't stress if you don't understand the concept completely because we will cover it in class the next day. Remember, this is "pre-reading".
6. When you have finished, answer each of the reviewing concepts questions at the end of the section in complete sentences.

Class Notes

Purpose: Taking class notes reinforces what you learned from the pre-reading and allows you to ask questions to clarify concepts or vocabulary that you had trouble understanding from the book.

Description: Your class notes are never collected. They are for your use when you write your final notes in your science journal.

Procedure: Follow these steps when taking notes from power points or lectures in class.

1. Sit-up, be alert, and focus on what is discussed in class.
2. Write everything down from the power point. Key concepts and definitions are often expressed or written differently and this may give you ideas on how to organize this information in your science journal in a way that makes the most sense to you.
3. Ask questions relevant to what is discussed in class. You are much more likely to have questions to ask if you've done the reading notes.

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Review What You Learned

Purpose: Reviewing material that you learned within 24 hours makes it 80% more likely that you will remember this information later on.

Description: This is not an assignment. You will need to train yourself to make a habit of reviewing what you learned in school every school day.

Procedure: Reviewing notes simply involves reading over your class notes. The best time to do this is when you have 10-20 minutes of spare time like on the bus or before soccer practice.

Science Journal

Purpose: To condense the most important information in your textbook into a small notebook and to create the most awesome study guide for tests and exams.

Description: You may use the science journal on chapter tests, but not on unit exams. Your science journal will be turned in on the day of chapter tests and graded based on completeness, organization, paraphrasing, and the use of illustrations to explain important concepts.

Procedure: There's no one way to create the most awesome study guide, but here are a few suggestions.

- ☺ Look over the chapter section and look at how the book organized the concepts. This should give you some ideas for your Science Journal.
- ☺ Create a vocabulary section at the beginning of the chapter so you have an easy reference for key terms. Write all definitions in your own words and use pictures wherever possible.
- ☺ Use color headings to break up the information into manageable sections.
- ☺ Use tables and organization charts to summarize information wherever possible.
- ☺ Don't fill the entire page. Save some white space.

Test Yourself Before the Test

Purpose: The purpose of a test or an exam is to find out what you understand and don't understand. Don't wait until the test to find out! Test yourself first!

Description: You will be given a self-assessment to check your understanding before chapter tests and unit exams. These self-assessments are not collected or graded, but are for your own use to find out where you should focus your studies. You should take the self-assessments 2-3 days before the test to allow time to study material that you have not yet mastered.

Procedure: To maximize your success on tests follow these steps.

1. Answer all the questions that you can without your notes or the textbook.
2. Now try to use your Science Journal to answer the remaining questions.
3. The questions that remain are what you need to focus on the most before the test or exam. Read these sections of the book over carefully and update your Science Journal to include this information that you missed.