



Online Reading Strategies for Remote Learning Success

Introduction

In a remote learning class, you're probably going to do more reading than listening, much of it online. Reading online isn't the same as reading in print, so you should practice some strategies that will improve your online reading comprehension and speed.

Print vs. Online

So what do we mean when we say that reading print is different from reading online?

- First, you can assume the material provided by your faculty is credible. But when you read something online, it might have been written or posted by anybody. This means that you have to seriously evaluate the authority of the information you're reading. Can you identify the author? What are his or her credentials, and are they legitimate?
- Second, printed texts may include images to supplement the author's writing. But in the digital realm, supplementary material might also include hyperlinks, audio, and video, which will fundamentally change your reading experience. An online environment allows you to interact with content rather than passively absorbing it.
- Finally, when you read in print, you generally read sequentially. Maybe you'll flip to an index or refer to a footnote, but otherwise, the way you read is fairly straightforward. With online reading, however, clicking on links or related content can lead you quickly into an entirely new area. Have you ever been studying for class and fell down a Wikipedia rabbit hole while looking for unfamiliar terms? You might have started by investigating the French Revolution, but half an hour later you find yourself reading about the experimental jazz scene in 1970s New York. That is why staying focused is critical.

Why, What, How?

Now that you know how reading online differs from reading print, here are some practical ways to improve your online reading comprehension, which will save you time and frustration when you work on your assignments. You'll be able to understand your course subject matter better, and your performance on your quizzes and exams will improve.

Consider the "why, what, and how" of reading comprehension:

- **Why?** *Why am I being asked to read this passage?* In other words, what are the instructions my professor has given me?
- **What?** *What am I supposed to get out of this passage?* That is, what are the main concerns, questions, and points of the text? What do you need to remember for class?
- **How?** *How will I remember what I just read?* In most cases, this means taking notes and defining key terms.

When you keep the "why, what and how" of reading comprehension in the forefront of your mind while reading, your understanding of the material will improve drastically. It will help you remember what you've read and to structure any notes that you might want to take.

The Need for Speed

With more text to cover in an online class, you'll want to read more quickly and efficiently. Avoid distractions like ads, pop-ups, or hyperlinks that will lead you away from your assignment. Another tactic is to scan the page before actually reading it, focusing on keywords and phrases rather than every single word. It will not only help you to read faster, but it will also give you a sense of the text's main ideas.

Student Questions and Answers

Let's wrap up with some questions about online reading, courtesy of students just like you.

Student Question 1:

I'm so used to reading printed texts. How can I keep myself from getting distracted when reading online?

Answer 1: When you read online, the embedded hyperlinks, images, audio, and videos can be really tempting distractions. Try reading a passage straight through at least once without clicking on any of the hyperlinks or participating in any of the interactive opportunities. Get a basic feel for the passage, then read it with the interactive components to augment your reading.

Student Question 2:

Why did our teacher tell us not to use our smartphones to read our assigned texts?

Answer 2: Smartphone screens are relatively small and can be challenging to read, so it's too easy to miss words or misunderstand something important.

Student Question 3:

Comprehension, but I'd really like to know how I can improve my online reading speed. Got any tips?

Answer 3: So glad you asked! Reading quickly and efficiently will leave you more time to study, and improve your performance in your course.

Conclusion

Bravo! You've now learned about some online reading strategies! Remember, most of what you do in a remote learning or online class will be structured around reading—don't you feel ahead of the game now?

Adapted from <https://apps.3cm mediasolutions.org/oei>

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