

SUCCESSFUL DIGITAL READING

With ever-evolving technology, reading in print books is becoming less and less the norm. Instead, ebooks and online resources increasingly attract students due to their convenient nature and often more affordable price. Reading digitally, however, can inflict unforeseen consequences, such as eye-strain, distraction, and exhaustion. When you find yourself suffering from this fatigue, do not just push through it. Instead, offset the drawbacks of online reading and enhance your studying by following the strategies below.

Whenever possible, choose print texts over digital ones. However, when you must use an online text, lean in to the task of reading even more purposefully.

ONLINE READING STRATEGIES

1. **Budget extra time for digital reading** – Reading online will take longer than reading a traditional text. Anticipate the difference and allow yourself extra time as you plan.
2. **Eliminate distractions** – Reading online comes with a host of distractions, such as advertisements, pop-ups, and social media notifications. To set yourself up for success, silence notifications and close any other windows besides the one you are using to read your text. Additionally, download the PDF version (instead of the browser version) of any online articles to limit pop-ups. Commit to your task and shut out any distractions.
3. **Control blue-light intake** – Your device’s screen emits blue-light, which causes eye-strain and even has the potential to harm your eyesight over time. Control this drawback by researching blue-light glasses or changing your computer settings to filter blue light. Go to your settings and look for a “night light” or “night shift” option.
4. **Take Notes** – Purposefully engage with the material by taking notes directly onto the text. Apps like Kindle have annotation tools, and you can also mark-up PDF documents.
5. **Take Breaks** – While taking breaks is beneficial for any kind of study, it is imperative for digital reading. Try taking a 10 minute break every hour, or a 5 minute break every half hour.
6. **Use a digital reading speed tracker** – Select and copy text from any digital textbook and paste it into the free electronic reader at www.spreader.com. Go to the link and hover your mouse over “Tools” in the upper right hand corner. Then, click on the “Bookmarklet” option in the dropdown menu. Take a look at the directions on that page to see what will work best for your textbook. Click the green “Spread!” button, and then you can paste your text into the box. Use the settings to adjust reading speed and text size, helping you read faster with more focus in the digital setting.