

Why Do I Have to Read Things I Don't Care About?



"... 'cause if I don't,
I'll be grounded for the next
thirty-seven years!"

"Why do I have to read this?" is a common question. Many kids don't see the connection between what they are being asked to read and their everyday lives. If you ever asked that question to a parent or teacher, you may recall that their answer was something like one of the following:

- Reading this will help you acquire new ideas.
- Reading this will help you obtain necessary information.
- Reading this will help broaden your interests.
- Reading this will add to your personal pleasure.

It may be hard for you to believe, but every one of these answers is true. You see, when you see little use in what you're reading, and simply can't get into it, you will have trouble understanding and remembering it. This makes it even harder for you to like it—even a little.

Then what do you do? The problem gets worse if you want to graduate from high school and move on to the career or college of your choice. After all, you can't get into the college you want to get into if you don't acquire good reading habits.

**If you see little use in what you're reading, you'll
have trouble understanding what you're reading.**

Solution to the Dreaded Textbook Syndrome

So, how do you get through what we call the dreaded textbook syndrome?

- The answer is easy. You become the teacher and begin to TEACH yourself.
- How? Just follow this simple lesson plan and you'll have the best teacher in the world: YOU!
- If you can see why reading is beneficial to you, you will learn and grow from it. But you have to do it yourself.

T-E-A-C-H Method: Overview

T-E-A-C-H is a five-step method by which you teach yourself how to improve your reading comprehension. Each letter in the word **TEACH** stands for a step in the process.

T = Think E = Explain A = Ask C = Clues H = Handwrite

Think

Think about whether or not you will like the assigned reading. Think about whether or not you feel like reading it, if not, then think about where you want to be, what job you want to have, and what kind of person you want to be in the future. Do you need to read this assignment to do well in this course, so that you can have the kind of future you want? If the answer is yes, then you need to face the facts and read the assignment.

Explain

Explain to yourself what you are about to read and, if possible, how it fits or doesn't fit into your life. It makes it easier if you can relate it to something you already know about, something in your memory.

Ask

Ask yourself the **5 W's**, 1. **Who** do you think are the important characters? 2. **When** do you think the event takes place? 3. **Where** do you think it occurs? 4. **What** do you think it is about? 5. **Why** do you think it takes place?

Clues

You can find clues about what you are about to read, what to focus on when you read, and what's important to remember in your reading, in all sections of books: summary, review, end-of-chapter questions, key words, headings, diagrams & captions, graphs, maps, back cover, and pictures.

Handwrite

Now read. As you read, **handwrite** the highlights. That is, **handwrite** everything you read that you think is important. Organize the reading material into an outline, picture-story, or any other graphic organizer. By writing and drawing while you read, you will understand and remember much more.



"Now you're messin' with my head!
Am I reading or am I writing?"