KEYS TO COLLEGE SUCCESS - Reading, Writing, Exams

READING SKILLS: SKIMMING & SCANNING
Skimming & scanning enable you to select material(s) which should be read and/or discarded. It can be useful to quickly determine main idea, locate facts, answer test items and chapter questions. Use skimming & scanning to:
- Fix intent for reading (or facts sought) clearly in your mind.
- Scan table of contents, chapter headings and subheadings.
- Quickly move eyes over reading material-focusing upon page headings and subheadings, discarding information that is obviously not related to reading intent. Skimming reading rates should be twice as fast as average reading speed.
- Selectively omit portions of reading material.
- Locate as quickly as possible the key or topic sentence of each paragraph (usually, but not always, the first sentence).
- Locate information—repeated practice will increase speed. Read carefully the last paragraph for summary information.

THEMES AND REPORTS: REDUCING WRITING ANXIETY
GET A CALENDAR OR ACADEMIC PLANNER: First write down the due date for the paper. Next, count backwards. How many days will you need to edit, re-write, revise, write, take notes, research, read, select, and narrow the topic? Now you know what day you will need to begin the paper. Review and revise this process after each paper.

Reading, Writing, Exams

SELECTIVELY OMIT PORTIONS OF READING MATERIAL.

THEME AND REPORT: REDUCING WRITING ANXIETY
• GET A CALENDAR OR ACADEMIC PLANNER: First write down the due date for the paper. Next, count backwards. How many days will you need to edit, re-write, revise, write, take notes, research, read, select, and narrow the topic? Now you know what day you will need to begin the paper. Review and revise this process after each paper.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO EXPRESS A UNIQUE OPINION. The key is to document and support your ideas in an organized and cogent manner.

WRITING THE PAPER
Make/use index cards (put the topic at the top of each card), notes, bibliographies, summaries, reports and reviews as part of your preparation process to organize your materials.

Planning your time in answering essay questions is more important than in objective type tests!
- Read through the entire examination first. Get a feel for the questions you are expected to answer. If the exam allows you to choose from a number of questions, be sure to number your answers exactly to match the questions.
- Follow directions carefully. Pay attention to the key words in the question. Words such as “list,” “describe,” “compare and contrast,” and “outline” require different types of answers. Don’t “write around” questions but answer directly and concisely.
- Outlining: After scanning the list of questions to be answered, choose the ones you know most about. On scrap paper quickly prepare an outline of important ideas and facts to be included in your response. Your opening statement summarizes what you are going to say. What follows should support your opening statement. Your conclusion should show how your body text supported your opening statement.

Adapted from: Keys to College Success; www.quickstudycharts.com

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