

# STUDY GUIDE: At Home, At School, Strong Minds Rule!

## Read Right

Sure, you know how to read, but do you know how to read? Nope, that's not a misprint. The question is not just whether you know how to read – but whether you know how to read what you are reading.

When you read a book for fun, say, a comic book, do you read it the same way that you read a more serious book, say, a textbook? Reading a textbook, such as your social studies book or your science book, takes a special strategy. If you know how to read texts, you will learn a lot more from them.

## SMART

You can use the SMART method to help you deal with textbooks. Let's say you have to read a whole chapter in a textbook. Here's a great way to handle it.

**Survey the Chapter.** Look over the material by reading the title, introduction, and any summary at the end just to find out what the chapter is about. This will help you with the next step and bring to your ...

**Mind what you already know about the topic.** Once you have identified what you already know, you'll be able to form questions about what else you want to know about the topic. Then you can ...

**Ask a few questions on the topic and write those questions down.** Those questions will help you focus as you read because you will read to find the answers to the questions you wrote. After the questions are written, you can ...

**Read the text carefully.** As you find the answers to your questions, jot down notes so that when you are finished you can ...

**Tell the answers in your own words.** Write the answers in complete sentences.

## Time to Read

If you think that more time would be a good thing, how about this: If you read faster, you'd have more time – and you could use that extra time to make the most of your study time. Here are some tips to help you improve your reading skills and to read faster.

1. Try to read by looking at a group of words, not just one word at a time. For example, the preceding sentence could be broken up this way: Try to read/ by looking at/ a group of words/ not just one/ at a time.
2. Try to figure out new words or to look them up the first time you see them. That way they won't slow you down every time you run into them.
3. Don't move your lips when you read silently. Until you get used to it, you can put your finger on your lips as a reminder not to move them.
4. Read more. If you read just a few minutes more each day, you're likely to get better at it.
5. Know the reason you're reading. If you're reading just to get a main idea, you don't have to read every word, you just have to look over it quickly to get an idea.
6. Force yourself to read faster. You'll get used to it and before you know it, you'll have zoomed your reading speed.

## Listening Doesn't Just Happen

Do you know that what you do at home can actually help you listen better in school? If you do your homework or read the textbook using the SMART method, you'll be ready to listen in school.

Listening is not work done by your ears alone, after all. Your brain does a lot of the heavy lifting involved in that job. You listen best when you listen with a purpose. So if you've done the homework or read the book, your brain is ready to take it all in as soon as your teacher starts talking about the topic. You can listen and actually understand what is being said because it will have meaning for you. If you're interested in what's being talked about, and you have questions about the topic, you'll hear better because you'll be listening for the answers to your questions. You'll want to voice your opinion and you'll be listening for the chance.

No one said listening is easy. There are so many distractions in school. You might have a window to look through, you might be sitting next to someone you really like or really dislike, or you might be cold or hot or hungry. With any of those things going on, your ears can't handle the job alone. So don't just let your ears tune in. Invite your brain to the party, and you'll get so much more out of school.

