

Stage 1 – Previewing & Pre-Reading

Slide 1: Let's now discuss Stage 1: Previewing and Pre-reading. Stage 1 of the study cycle - Previewing and pre-reading - is the stage most likely to be skipped once students begin to feel the time pressure of a full schedule. Some courses do emphasize the stage more than others by assigning reading and follow up questions, or by setting some other specific requirement for work to be done before class. That tends to be the exception however. And once things start to get busy, absent specific requirements, many students stop previewing. However, it is an important stage – and can really make a difference in improving one's ability to make the most of class, listening to lecture and note-taking. So, it is important to do it – but it can often be done in a brief amount of time the night before class or same day.

Slide 2: The key is to appropriately set one's goals and expectations, to effectively choose what resources to use, and to take a *strategic* approach to surveying the material. Whether one will use primarily lecture slides, text, syllabus, readings or other resources it is important to be thoughtful about which will be most helpful as a first pass through the new material. Look for the most useful features of the resource – such as an outline, learning objectives, summary, key vocabulary, section headings, images, questions, or case histories.

Slide 3: Strategically survey the chosen resource to develop an awareness of what the lecture or class will cover, how material is organized, what seems to be important, and what questions you might have. You might even be able to sketch a skeleton outline to use for in-class note-taking. But keep this initial survey brief and remember that the goal is to prepare for effective listening and note-taking – it is not to more comprehensively understand or remember the material at this early stage.

Slide 4: This first stage can often be done in as little as 10-15 minutes per hour of lecture. Keep your goals in mind and set expectations appropriately (and part of the way to do this is to be realistic about how much time you can devote to the practice). Remember this is a first pass and the goal will be to incrementally build understanding and mastery over time, and through multiple passes working with the material. Next we will move on to a discussion of strategies for class - for effective listening, for thoughtful engagement with the material, and for note-taking.