

Suggestions to get students to read:

1. When the class has a new reading assignment, I have my students (in Introduction to Industrial Engineering) meet in 3-person teams for 10-15 minutes at the start of class. Each team comes up with: Important points from the reading and B. Questions about the reading. Each team reports to the class and I compile the two lists, which become our basis for discussing the reading. I tell the class that I may sometimes add items that I think they missed, but I rarely need to do that.

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2. Students hand in an abstract or other short summary of the day's required reading. Each of these summaries becomes a "survival card," a sort of cheat sheet that they are allowed to use for an upcoming test or exam. One nice thing about this is that you don't have to mark them, and the students are motivated to make the quality good because the cards will be of practical use later on.

From Barbara Gross Davis's Tools for Teaching book.

3. We use an "Admission Ticket" concept that works fairly well. Basically an assignment or task that has to be completed before the student can enter the class---thus an "Admission Ticket" works for both a face-to-face or online class. Examples include: an online test or quiz to be completed before coming to class over the reading assignment; a paper assignment to be handed in as you enter class; questions completed as a pre-lab for a lab class; completed math problems; posting in an online Discussion Board, etc.

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4. I give a T/F quiz on main ideas the day after a reading assignment, before any discussion. Students take the quiz quickly, and the, while I grade them, they get into groups of two or three and take it again, this time having to justify their answers to each other and agree on their joint response. After these are turned in, we go through the answers.

The items are all main-idea, basic definition items with little analysis needed. The quiz, the student interaction and finally my discussion of the answers helps to implant the main ideas from the reading a little more firmly than simply reading does, to get them ready for the deeper discussion that follows.

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From Lynn Sorenson, Editor
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5. Cues First, it is axiomatic that a teacher accompany any reading assignment with a clear statement of the purpose or direction of the reading. It is ineffective simply to say to students, "Read these pages or that chapter for Friday."

Give students a set of study questions. Explain what they should look for in the assigned readings. Give them cues on what is most important or what in the reading they will be responsible for.

6. Quizzes. A common tactic (and often student detested) is the pop quiz. Such a quiz can be effective if students know what will be tested, if the quizzes' purposes are clear, if the questions perhaps promote discussion and learning, or if the quizzes are given regularly. Or, to encourage students to read before class, give them a set of short essay questions, one of which will be used for a five-minute quiz at the beginning of the next class. These quizzes assure preparation and are easy to grade.
7. Study questions (from teachers). Accompany each reading assignment with key study questions. Alert students they may be called on randomly to answer those questions in class.
8. Discussion questions (from students). At the beginning of class, invite each student to submit at least two questions for discussion. Then call on students at random to respond to the student-generated questions.
9. Summaries. Assign students at the beginning of class to submit a concise summary of the main points of the assigned material or a personal response to some part of the reading assignment.
10. Syllabus. At the beginning of the semester include in the syllabus a precise calendar of assignments along with explicit counsel on "how to succeed" in the class: general reading objectives, reading and test preparation strategies, perhaps even sample test questions.
11. Less is more? Discuss with students the reasonableness of the reading load you assign. If the load is heavy, then perhaps the students need help with how to handle it. Perhaps the load is simply too heavy.
12. The ideal. Create in the classroom such fervor and interest in upcoming assignments that students cannot restrain themselves from coming to class prepared.
13. Jigsaw -- Each student is responsible for some "piece" that is then shared with a group for an activity. What I've done is have students divide a large reading activity among the group, each person taking responsibility for reading, learning, summarizing, and then sharing and teaching the information to the rest of the group. When students "miss" the assignment, the peer pressure is far more persuasive than anything I could do.

Syndicate -- Students are responsible for learning the material for a presentation. Like the Jigsaw, this works because the group cannot operate without the missing piece, and the added presentation focus makes this a bigger issue. Students also see the value of group

work when the group works. I explain that in the real world, group projects span the regular assignments and must be "shared" as we do in my class.

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14. Several individual suggested teaching students how to read as tool for getting students to read.
15. "Getting Students to Read" Eric Hobson, www.idea.ksu.edu/papers/Idea_Paper_40.pdf
16. For me, it starts with picking the 'correct' book. In one of my classes (Leadership) I picked a book full of real case studies (The Leadership Moment) and created assignments both in class (student leading seminars) and out of class assessments (exams, etc.). The classes were filled with discussion and content delivery on leadership and students were expected to use the story characters in conjunction with the content. When I first started this I was worried students wouldn't get 'everything' because I was not using a typical text. However, I found the class discussions extremely rich and every student read the chapters, many read more than expected, understood the content, could describe the important points in leadership. Hope this gives you a clear picture, I know this is not an option for many courses, but worked great in mine!

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