

3 Steps to Selecting Main Ideas

~Do you ever finish reading and wonder what the main idea was?

~Does all information seem equal or inseparable to you when you study?

If you answered “yes” to either of these, here is some helpful information:



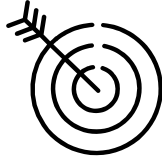
#1

Notice the **Bold**, **CAPITALIZED**, or *Italicized* words. Many modern textbooks will make the important information obvious to you by setting the main ideas apart.



#2

Try Summarizing or Restating. Read a Paragraph, then look away and say out loud to yourself (in one sentence) what you just learned. Do this with each paragraph until you become more confident. When you feel more confident try this idea with the whole chapter. This exercise will teach you to more quickly separate out the important words and ideas from the “filler.” “Filler” is often composed of extra examples or verbiage used by the author to help clarify a point.



#3

Determine why you are Reading. The best way to stay on target while studying is to first figure out exactly what your purpose is. What sort of information are you looking for? Use the chart below to help you stay on target.

SURVEY:	Only read the chapter headings and section title; read and understand bold words and photos/ diagrams.
QUESTION:	Form questions while you survey. What does the title mean? What is the <i>author's goal</i> ?
READ:	Read from beginning to end. Answer your own questions.
RECITE:	After reading, close the book. <i>Say in your own words</i> what the book is about. Pretend you are teaching a class on the subject and give a short lecture of the main ideas.
REVIEW:	<i>Quiz yourself</i> often to see if you remember what you have learned.

*Source: University College Learning Skills Program: LASSI Test Results