READING A COLLEGE TEXTBOOK: HOW TO PUZZLE IT OUT

BEFORE YOU READ: PREVIEWING

1. **Overview the text** which is equivalent to looking at the puzzle picture on the box. Besides the obvious visual details there should be concrete information such as the puzzle title or subject, its dimensions, how many pieces it has, and its publisher and copyright – all analogous to things you should know about each textbook.

2. **Preview each chapter** just as you would dump, turn over, and roughly sort the puzzle pieces. You want a bird’s-eye view of the chapter’s length and contents.

3. **Examine the chapter “cornerstones,”** just like the rectangular puzzle’s 4 corners. Depending on the textbook, they might be the chapter title, its objectives, its summary, its end-of-chapter test questions, or an important chart or diagram.

4. **Focus on the chapter’s headings and subheadings,** which is equivalent to putting together the puzzle’s frame out of its straight-edged pieces. These “frame pieces” are also often listed in the table of contents. *By now, the “corner piece” has been paid attention to 4 times….*

DURING YOUR READING

5. **Sort the main ideas from the details,** just as you sort and construct “main ideas” like balloons in the puzzle and then fill in the sky “background.”

6. **Mark up the chapter** with a pen or highlighter to actually finish it, just as you fill in the puzzle with all its pieces. Marking in some way keeps you active with the page and sets up a study guide for later.

AFTER YOU READ: REVIEWING

7. **Review from time to time,** concentrating on the big picture, the “corners” and the “frame.” *By this time, you have noticed, sorted, paused on, highlighted, repeated, perhaps put into a study guide those essential “corners” as many as 7 times – these are the parts of the chapter you can be expected to be tested on.*