

How to actively read and digest information – Research skills

['I'm a professor and you'll retain information easily with this simple trick'](#)

Dr Jeffrey Kaplan, a philosophy teacher with a [YouTube](#) channel dedicated to the subject, has over 570,000 subscribers and his videos have been viewed more than 28 million times.

On his channel, Dr Kaplan discusses various philosophical theories and paradoxes, as well as methods to improve your memory and study skills, reports [the Express](#).

"In order to retain what you read, in order to understand it and absorb the material into your brain so that you can recall it later...you need a procedure by which you force yourself to interact with the semantic content of what you're reading," the associate professor explains.

Semantic content refers to the meaning and relationships within text, beyond just the literal words, and involves understanding the underlying context and intent.

"You have to have a procedure that forces you to think through the ideas contained in the text," he clarifies, adding, "The procedure I'm going to recommend is a version of marginalia."

This essentially involves jotting down notes in the margins of whatever material you're studying, and has been praised for boosting memory retention through active engagement with the content.

By condensing crucial points whilst reading, internally questioning the information and drawing links where feasible, you're far more likely to grasp the subject matter.

Dr Kaplan added: **"It's important that you summarise. If this paragraph is six sentences long, you can't just write six sentences in the margin. Copying over text, you can do that without really thinking about what it means.**

"You can only take six sentences' worth of ideas and condense them down into one sentence...if you understand what they mean and figure out the central core idea."

The academic suggests continuing this approach for every paragraph, scribbling down your synopsis of the content and then, when looking back at earlier sections, **you can recap by scanning just one or two lines.**

This overview can then be positioned in the margin to encompass the preceding collection of paragraphs.

"That forces you to connect these ideas," Dr Kaplan argues, explaining that from the fourth paragraph onwards, each margin should feature an overall evaluation of the concepts you're absorbing alongside a compressed version of that paragraph. "Whatever you want to do [with your free time], if you want time to actually do that stuff, then you've got to do this. This is efficient, it will take a little longer, but it will mean the time you spend reading is better used."

(Source: ['I'm a professor and you'll retain information easily with this simple trick'](#))

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