

Building Prior Knowledge



Directions: Follow these steps to familiarize yourself with the topic of a text and build some prior knowledge to prepare yourself for reading and understanding the text.

- Read the title. Ask yourself, “What do I know about this topic?” If you know little to nothing, make sure you tell yourself to read slowly and thoughtfully. Be prepared to reread parts and close read to make sense of words, sentences, and paragraphs. If you know something about the topic, take the time to compare what you read to what you know and note and adjust any differences.
- Read the first paragraph if it is long. If it is short, read the first two paragraphs.
- Skip to the end and read the last paragraph. **Note:** *If it is a short story, do not read the end!*
- Read any questions or discussion prompts that follow the text.
- Tell a partner everything you learned from reading the opening and closing paragraphs. When you work alone, think to yourself about everything you learned.
- In your notebook, jot down in your own words what you learned. This is your prior knowledge of the text. You may reread your notes to remember what you’ve learned.
- Set a purpose for reading. Think about questions you have, based on your prior-knowledge list. You may use the text’s title or the unit’s concept as well. Then create one question or statement to describe your purpose. As you read, keep in mind your purpose for reading.