

Exercising Your READING Powers

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Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.

Richard Steele, *Tatler*, 1710

Warming Up to the READING Power Workout

A good warm-up gets your muscles prepared for the activity to come. In the same way, each chapter of this book will begin with a warm-up to get your mind ready for the READING Power workout. Because keeping a Workout Journal is crucial to building fitness, each chapter will begin with Workout Journal questions that will help guide your note-taking and comprehension. For this chapter, your warm-up includes an example of a workout journal. Here are the questions for this first workout.

A Sample Workout Journal

Key Words/Questions	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the READING acronym stand for? • How can I exercise my strategic reading and test-taking skills? • Why is it important to write notes in the margin? • How do I set a purpose for reading? • What are some of the verbs the test-makers use when writing these SOL tests? • What are some of the key words I need to study? • What is the main idea of this chapter? • What are some key concepts I still do not understand? 	<p>Use this column for answering the questions and for jotting down additional notes and thoughts.</p>

An Exercise Prescription

Exercising your brain is as important as exercising your body. Studies show that strategically working your brain and body leads to higher levels of achievement in and out of school. As Steele states: “Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.” How true! If you know how to exercise what you read, you have gained a critical skill in achieving academic success. Like any strenuous exercise, however, you, the reader, must practice continually in order to maintain high achievement.

Virginia’s educational standards state that you must demonstrate that you comprehend all types of text. The state measures how well you comprehend by administering the *End-of-Course Reading* assessment in high school. Every high school student must earn a verified credit in *EOC Reading* and another verified credit in *EOC Writing* in order to graduate. Tough stand, right? However, we really believe that everyone is capable of meeting this standard.

Your teachers are your personal trainers. Together, you can develop a strategic plan that guides your reading and answering of questions. This will enable you to demonstrate how well you comprehend. Your scores will reflect all of your hard work. However, once you develop a plan, you must remember what the plan is. You need a mnemonic—a memory aid.

Our memory aid—which our whole workout is based around—is the acronym **READING**, and it has helped many students become active readers and learners. These are the strategies that each letter represents:

- R** = **Read questions first.**
- E** = **Evaluate and rephrase each question.**
- A** = **Assess type of question: easy/hard.**
- D** = **Discard obviously wrong choices (slash the trash).**
- I** = **Identify and highlight key words and phrases.**
- N** = **Note what questions ask in margin of passage.**
- G** = **Grasp answers by reading passage carefully.**