



All About Reading Anticipation Guides

What is a Reading Anticipation Guide?

A reading anticipation (RA) guide is an assignment that engages students more actively with their assigned reading. Using an RA guide, students are asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements *before* they read the text. These statements are designed to:

- (1) Activate prior knowledge or beliefs about the topic
- (2) Provide focus and make it easier to key in on essential concepts when students are encountering new concepts for the first time

During or after reading, students are then asked to reflect on the extent to which the information they read supports or contradicts their initial guesses and intuitions. The reflection exercise requires students to engage in critical thinking about the information presented in the text and prepares them to discuss the content in the next class period.

Benefits of Using Anticipation Guides	
For Instructors	For Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to adapt to any text• Provides formative feedback on student understanding• Students come to class prepared to discuss materials• Provides outline for class time• Increases student motivation for learning• Meets the needs of a diverse range of student ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activates prior knowledge regarding course content.• Encourages evaluation of text rather than skimming or memorization• May be used as study guides• Provides a guide for the text reading• Requires integration of new material with existing knowledge• Provides repetition of information



How To Construct Anticipation Guides:

1. Identify major concepts or ideas that you think will be thought-provoking for the student.
2. Create 5-10 statements (depending on the length of the reading) related to the content to which the students will respond. These statements should:
 - a. Be both accurate and inaccurate statements that all sound plausible;
 - b. Highlight either (1) concepts that are typically misconceived by students or (2) the most essential information in a given reading.
 - c. Be written differently from the original text AND encourage synthesis of information across several paragraphs so that students cannot simply pick out the correct answer from one line of text or simple key-word searching; and
 - d. Be interpretational – without a black/white answer, students are encouraged to provide evidence to support their responses. Clearly not all statements need to be of this variety, but including them regularly provides a valuable thought exercise for students.

Some Examples:

1. Students in introductory psychology often associate multiple personalities with the disorder Schizophrenia. A related statement on an anticipation guide might read ***“People who suffer from schizophrenia have multiple personalities.”***
This statement:
 - Activates a student’s prior knowledge or beliefs about the topic
 - Highlights a common misunderstanding of this topic
 - Cannot be answered from a single sentence in the reading
 - Students may argue that people suffering from Schizophrenia hear voices that are not their own but that these may/may not be considered “multiple personalities” – such insight opens the door in class to meaningful discussion of how to describe symptoms and diagnose disorders.
2. Introductory psychology students may be encountering learning theories for the first time in their textbook reading. They might be presented with a statement like the following, ***“Feeling excited when seeing the logo of your favorite video game is an example of classical conditioning”***. Although they have no basis yet with which to actually agree or disagree they should commit to one choice or the other before they read. This statement:
 - Helps students establish a mental marker to focus attention in areas of the text related to this concept.
 - Uses an example not found in the text that requires students to apply what they’ve read to a new context.
 - Uses a relatable “everyday” context that is a springboard to a larger discussion of how the concept applies to their own lives.



3. Students are presented with a statement that is true in some contexts but not in others or is an over-simplification of an important concept. The RA guide might present the following, “***Older adults do not perform as well as younger adults on tests of cognitive abilities***”. This statement:
 - May make intuitive sense to many students
 - Requires students to take note of the variations in cognitive differences between older and younger adults, some of which support the statement and some of which refute it.
 - Cannot be answered with a single sentence in the reading.

Additional Considerations for Anticipation Guides:

- Responses to anticipation guides should be hand-written. This ensures the students’ work is their own.
- Require responses to anticipation guides to be paraphrased from the text rather than quoted. This encourages students to interpret, rather than simply copy, information from the text.
- Attach the anticipation guides to a grade for your students. While this will vary by instructor, typically between 10-20% of your students’ overall grades should come from these assignments.
- For ease of grading, anticipation guides can be “all or none” – either all of the work is completed for all statements or no credit is earned on the assignment. You can of course be lenient with this in the beginning of the term and then tighten up as you go.
- Consider having the anticipation guides due at the start of the class period in which you will discuss the content. By requiring students to bring their work to class, they are encouraged to arrive to class on-time, prepared to discuss the information contained in the guide.
- Be flexible with how the anticipation guides can be submitted. For example, if a student is unable to attend on the day an anticipation guide is due (or they know they will arrive late), allow them to drop it off early, have a classmate turn it in, or attach a photo of their completed work to an e-mail. Students interpret this flexibility as an investment in their learning and an understanding of their lives outside of the classroom.
- Be sure to refer to the anticipation guides in-class as often as possible. This reminds students that class time is closely related to the work they are preparing at home and emphasizes the utility of completing the work. This serves as motivation for students who might otherwise view the assignment as “busy work”.

Suggestions for Preparing Students to Use RA Guides Successfully



As with any assignment, students will do a better job if the design, purpose, and expectations of the assignment are clearly outlined for them. It is highly recommended that you set aside time before assigning an RA guide for the first time to model the exercise and discuss key points about the purpose and how students should engage with it. This may work most naturally on the first day of class during review of the syllabus. Here is one approach to present the guides to students including a short sample that can be worked together in class.

“I’m going to be including something called a Reading Anticipation Guide with some or all of your textbook reading assignments this semester. These reading guides will help you be a more focused reader and will highlight some of the most important concepts in each chapter/module. Also by completing the reading guides before you come to class you’ll be ready to participate in the discussions we’ll have during class time about these topics.” (Insert your own grading/incentive plan for the RA guides + discussion here).

If you can display an example of an RA Guide for parts of the setup it will be helpful. An abbreviated sample RA guide and short reading passage are provided below and can be worked through together as a model for individual work.

“One of the most important things to notice is that you will be evaluating statements rather than answering questions, which is probably what you’re most accustomed to doing with other reading assignments. Some of the statements on the RA guides will involve things you already know something about and others will be about things that are completely new to you. Your first job is to decide how you feel about each statement by choosing whether you agree or disagree. In some cases you may have no idea about the topic, and that’s OK. But you should still choose “agree” or “disagree”. This is not an exercise about being right or wrong on your initial evaluation. That doesn’t matter. In fact, changing your initial choice after you read and giving evidence about why you changed is a great way to learn. Choosing agree or disagree for every statement before you read is important even if you are only guessing.”

“While you complete your reading, you are being asked to do 2 very important things: (1) decide if your initial evaluation (which you did before you started reading) is right, but, maybe more importantly (2) also provide evidence to support your answer. The evidence may show that the statement is correct, incorrect, or partially correct – there is not always a clear black and white answer.”

“Many of the statements will require you to take in information across several paragraphs or even several sections of the text before you can decide if the statement is correct. You will notice also that the statements do not use exactly the same wording as the textbook. You’ll need to interpret the statements and connect them to the information you read when there isn’t an exact match in the vocabulary.”

“When you make notes in the “Why/Why not?” section be sure that they make sense enough that you can use them later to participate in class discussion and that they make sense enough to me so that I can tell if you’re finding the right information and making the right connections between the statements and the concepts in the text.”



<http://nobaproject.com/resources/reading-anticipation-guides>

At this point it is probably best to do the sample RA Guide and reading in the class and pull together examples generated from individual students to model the sorts of answers/evidence that you would like to see from everyone.



Reading Anticipation Guide: Factors Influencing Learning

Instructions:

1. Before reading in your textbook, determine whether you agree or disagree with each of the statements on the back of this page.
2. Read the module **Factors Influencing Learning** in your textbook.
3. After or during your reading, decide whether your original agree/disagree decision for each statement was correct, based on information you've found in the text. Place a Y (yes) or N (no) in the "Were you right?" column.
4. In the "Why/why not" column, write a few sentences about why you were correct or incorrect with your initial guess. Try to think critically about how new information has supported or changed your original belief and display this in your answer.

Statements	Agree?	Right?	Why/Why not?
Individual effort and motivation are the keys to learning.			
Research shows that when students are told exactly what to study they learn more.			
Intense study before a test is an effective way to boost memory.			



Sample Text

What we do when we're learning is very important. We've all had the experience of reading something and suddenly coming to the realization that we don't remember a single thing, even the sentence that we just read. *How* we go about **encoding** information determines a lot about how much we remember.

You might think that the most important thing is to *try* to learn. Interestingly, this is not true, at least not completely. Trying to learn a list of words, as compared to just evaluating each word for its part of speech (i.e., noun, verb, adjective) does help you *recall* the words—that is, it helps you remember and write down more of the words later. But it actually impairs your ability to *recognize* the words—to judge on a later list which words are the ones that you studied (Eagle & Leiter, 1964). So this is a case in which **incidental learning**—that is, learning without the intention to learn—is better than **intentional learning**.

Such examples are not particularly rare and are not limited to recognition. Nairne, Pandeirada, and Thompson (2008) showed, for example, that survival processing—thinking about and rating each word in a list for its relevance in a survival scenario—led to much higher recall than intentional learning (and also higher, in fact, than other encoding activities that are also known to lead to high levels of recall). Clearly, merely intending to learn something is not enough. *How* a learner actively processes the material plays a large role; for example, reading words and evaluating their meaning leads to better learning than reading them and evaluating the way that the words look or sound (Craig & Lockhart, 1972). These results suggest that individual differences in motivation will not have a large effect on learning unless learners also have accurate ideas about how to effectively learn material when they care to do so.

So, do learners know how to effectively encode material? People allowed to freely allocate their time to study a list of words do remember those words better than a group that doesn't have control over their own study time, though the advantage is relatively small and is limited to the subset of learners who choose to spend more time on the more difficult material (Tullis & Benjamin, 2011). In addition, learners who have an opportunity to review materials that they select for restudy often learn more than another group that is asked to restudy the materials that they *didn't* select for restudy (Kornell & Metcalfe, 2006). However, this advantage also appears to be relatively modest (Kimball, Smith, & Muntean, 2012) and wasn't apparent in a group of older learners (Tullis & Benjamin, 2012). Taken together, all of the evidence seems to support the claim that self-control of learning can be effective, but only when learners have good ideas about what an effective learning strategy is.

One factor that appears to have a big effect and that learners do not always appear to understand is the effect of scheduling repetitions of study. If you are studying for a final exam next week and plan to spend a total of five hours, what is the best way to distribute your study? The evidence is clear that *spacing* one's repetitions apart in time is superior than *massing* them all together (Baddeley & Longman, 1978; Bahrick, Bahrick, Bahrick, & Bahrick, 1993; Melton, 1967). Increasing the spacing between consecutive presentations appears to benefit learning yet further (Landauer & Bjork, 1978).