Whether you are reading a textbook or a novel, it can be difficult to maintain focus and understand what you are reading. Follow these tips to improve your reading comprehension for long reading assignments.

1. **Break the reading assignment down into sections:**
   If you are reading a novel, perhaps focus on one chapter at a time. If you are reading a textbook, focus on one section of a chapter at a time. Breaking the assignment down into smaller parts makes it easier to absorb the information, and allows you to take breaks as needed to maintain your focus.

2. **Preview the first section:**
   Flip through the first section to see how it is organized. Make note of all headings and subsections.

3. **Skim the first section in more detail:**
   Look for bold/italicized words, look at figures or illustrations and their captions, and briefly read bits of the passage.

4. **Read the first section:**
   - Start at the beginning, and read in a focused manner
   - Make notes in the margin, underline, or highlight as needed

5. **Repeat steps 2 and 3** for each section of the reading assignment.

6. **Review** as soon as you’re finished reading:
   - If you are taking notes, **summarize** the reading assignment while it’s fresh in your mind.
   - Make notecards for important definitions or formulas.
   - If the reading assignment is part of a class, connect what you read to the class: Which topics does your instructor focus on?

**Remember:** It is important to **take a break** if you are mentally fatigued. If you find yourself zoning out or needed to reread a section due to lack of focus, take a break for several minutes and think about something else. When you come back, your mind will be ready to focus on the reading!