Eastern Mennonite University
Academic Success Center

Improving Concentration
(Focusing Your Attention)

Techniques to direct your attention to what you are reading or studying

1. Give yourself a goal – set a time limit and work toward it.
2. Choose goals that are easy to accomplish.
3. Reward yourself – when you have accomplished a goal. Be certain that the goal justifies the reward. For example, learning five new words in Spanish does not justify a two-hour TV break.
4. Get interested in the subject – read critically, try to predict what the author will say next, and try to relate new material to information you have already learned.
5. Pre-read to get a mental outline of the material.
6. Establish a purpose for reading makes reading an active, searching, question and answer process rather than an exercise in word recognition.
7. Combine physical and mental activities.
8. Vary your activities – physical activities, such as taking notes and underlining, combined with mental activities, such as reading and memorization will help you to focus your attention.

-excerpted from McWhorter, Kathleen College Reading and Study Skills