

The background of the cover is a photograph of a narrow, rocky path winding through a dense forest. The path is covered with fallen leaves and small stones. The trees are tall and thin, with some bare branches visible. The lighting is soft, suggesting a dappled sunlight effect. The title and subtitle are printed in a white, serif font in the upper right quadrant. The author's name is printed in a smaller, white, serif font in the middle right.

# PATHWAYS

## A Guide to Reading and Study Skills

Helen W. Gilbert

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**Helen W. Gilbert**

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**To my husband, my former teachers, and my students:  
Your shared insights continue to guide me.**

# Preface

## Purpose

*Pathways: A Guide to Reading and Study Skills* shows students how to build their reading and study skills to the level essential for success in college courses. The text material and personalized assignments help students learn how to think, learn, and remember. The overall goal of the text is to provide the basis necessary to help students achieve their potential: to become better educated and more productive individuals.

The text may be used successfully both in traditional lecture-discussion classes and in classes involving individualized lab instruction.

## Rationale

Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives as they apply to reading comprehension forms a structure for the skills that are taught. These objectives consist of six major divisions:

1. Basic knowledge
2. Comprehension
3. Application
4. Analysis
5. Synthesis
6. Evaluation<sup>1</sup>

Many texts written for developmental and college freshman classes do not go beyond the comprehension level in the taxonomy. *Pathways*, written for college students whose reading skills differ widely, incorporates the entire range of skills necessary for completion of college work. All of Bloom's educational objectives are incorporated in the in-chapter exercises, called "Assignments." Through the use of exercises that ask students to analyze textbook excerpts from various disciplines, including their own texts from other courses, this text shows how the

<sup>1</sup>Edward Fry, *Reading Instruction for Classroom and Clinic*, McGraw Hill Book Company, New York, 1972, pp. 148-149.



mastery of effective reading and study skills can help students in all their courses. Once students have learned to apply the skills from this text to their other courses and they begin to experience success in learning, with higher grades to prove it, they will become believers in education and, more importantly, in themselves.

## Organization of the Text

The text is divided into five parts. Part I, “The College Environment,” provides a basic framework to help students adjust to college life. Setting short-term and long-range goals, following through on achieving those goals, and making use of the total college environment make up the contents of the first chapter. Another chapter is devoted to how to organize time at college so that one is able to successfully complete course work without sacrificing the time needed for a part-time job, a rewarding social life, and being alone.

Part II, “The Supportive Skills,” includes chapters on concentrating in class and while studying, improving the memory, and taking notes in class. These chapters provide basic skills that are necessary to succeed in college.

Part III, “College Reading and Study Skills,” contains chapters on studying and marking textbooks, with an emphasis on using the SQ3R system for study; understanding the organization of textbooks; comprehending main ideas, supporting details, and graphic materials; and developing vocabulary. A chapter on improving reading rate is also included.

Part IV, “Specialized Reading and Study Skills in the Content Areas,” contains chapters on the humanities, behavioral and social sciences, natural sciences, and technical fields. The first half of each chapter presents the special reading skills needed for successful comprehension in a particular discipline. The second half of each chapter contains several excerpts from college textbooks in the content area, providing students with an opportunity to apply those special reading skills.

Part V, “Dealing with Tests,” contains chapters on studying for and taking tests. The chapter on studying for tests discusses how to be psychologically, physically, and academically prepared for tests. The chapter on taking tests includes discussions of standardized, objective, and essay tests, and the different strategies that are required for each type of test.

Each chapter in the text begins with a list of objectives—skills to be learned in that chapter—and ends with a summary and a quiz.

Answers to the quiz are found at the back of the book. Each chapter also contains assignments for students to work out either in their texts or in their class notebooks. Assignments are preceded by instruction and examples to show students how to complete their work. Beginning with Chapter 6, chapter objectives contain a list of vocabulary words which are found in the chapter and on which the student is tested in the chapter-end quiz. Throughout the text, students learn how to comprehend college-level reading by analyzing textbook excerpts from various disciplines, using the skills being taught in the chapter in which they are found. Most chapters also have Student Examples—stories of students who have succeeded in improving their reading and study skills.

A glossary containing important terms completes the book.

## Acknowledgments

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- Phyllis C. Mehranian, Los Angeles City College
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- Laurence Welch, Peninsula College

HELEN W. GILBART

# To the Student

**Come voyager!  
Ride the earth in love with words.  
Sail time's pathways mapped in books.  
Chart life's course from old and new,  
And learn to follow your own stars.**

This text is for students. I went to college after several years of work between high school and college; therefore, I know some of the pathways you may travel toward your goals. I know your desire to learn, to develop good reading habits and effective study skills. I am sure that you want to do your best in college so that your future will be rewarding. I know of your struggles because I have been on those paths myself.

This text evolved from my own experiences as a student at a large community college and later at a large state university. It also developed as a result of my teaching at a small rural community college for two years and then at the large community college from which I had graduated—St. Petersburg Junior College. This text approaches learning in an active, positive way because I believe in students' abilities to master the reading and study skills essential to their academic success. I want to share some of the pathways I have taken, guided by my former teachers and shared with my students studying reading skills, English composition, and humanities in my classes.

The material in the text will involve you in the thinking-learning-remembering skills needed to help you achieve an excellent education. The text contains assistance in skill-building in the following areas:

- adjusting to college
- learning how to concentrate and remember
- taking good notes
- learning how to read all types of college texts (There are entire chapters on reading skills needed for the humanities, behavioral and social sciences, natural sciences, and technical texts.)
- getting the most from your texts



- learning a system for study that really works
- studying for and taking tests
- building a strong vocabulary
- improving your reading speed

Each chapter begins with objectives—the skills you will learn, the pathways you will take toward education. Each chapter also contains a practical approach to reading and study skills, telling you how to develop those skills that you need. Many examples from college textbooks in numerous fields of study are presented for practice and analysis. Then you are asked to apply your new skills to your own textbooks from other classes, so you can be certain that you are improving as you succeed in your own classes. Each chapter also contains a summary and a quiz (with answers in the back of the book). You may check your own progress as your knowledge expands. You will also read about some of my former students in the Student Examples. They showed me how well they could learn after receiving instruction and assistance in reading and study skills. If they can succeed on the pathways toward their goals, you can, too!

Whether you are using this text in a reading lab or in a classroom, I believe that you will find its information useful. The text is meant for college students today—students who might not have had the opportunity to go to college if they had been born ten or twenty years earlier, students who are working as well as going to college or who have already worked for several years—all of you who value the college experience and want to do your best.

Becoming educated is a process of becoming the best human being it is possible for you to be—and, of course, that takes a lifetime. Welcome to the pursuit of your goals on pathways toward effective college reading and study.

HELEN W. GILBART

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