

NO SALES PITCH, JUST SCIENCE!

[About Us](#)

[Bios](#)

[Blog](#)

[Archive](#)

[Resources](#)

[Contact](#)

Be Your Own Teacher: How To Study A Textbook

February 12, 2016

By: Rachel Adragna



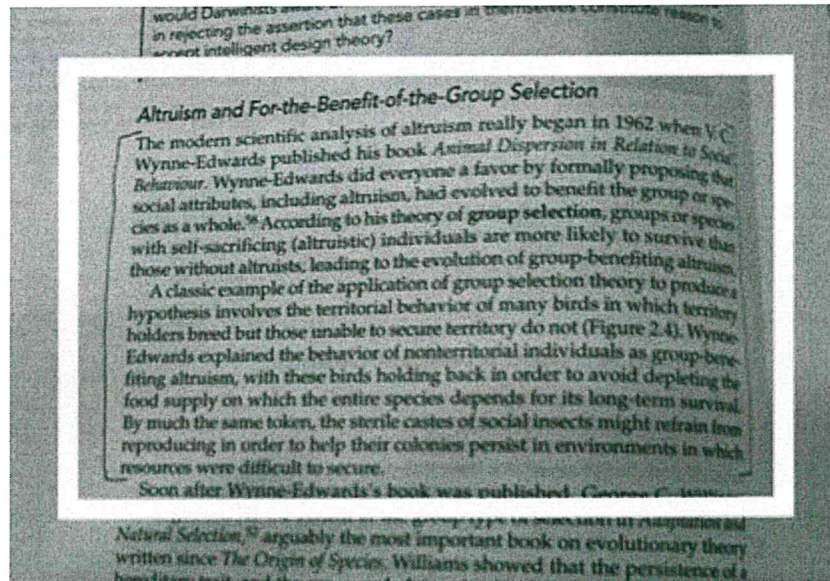
Textbooks can be scary. By the time you have finished a chapter, much of the content you have read is blended into a broad, murky mess in your mind. This can be problematic when trying to study, or when trying to recall information while taking a test. One way to help yourself understand and remember the reading is to self-test yourself on the information as you go. But what does that really mean?

Here I give you a step-by-step guide that will lead you through reading, note-taking, formulating questions, and practicing retrieval. These steps can deepen your understanding of any text and help you study more effectively.

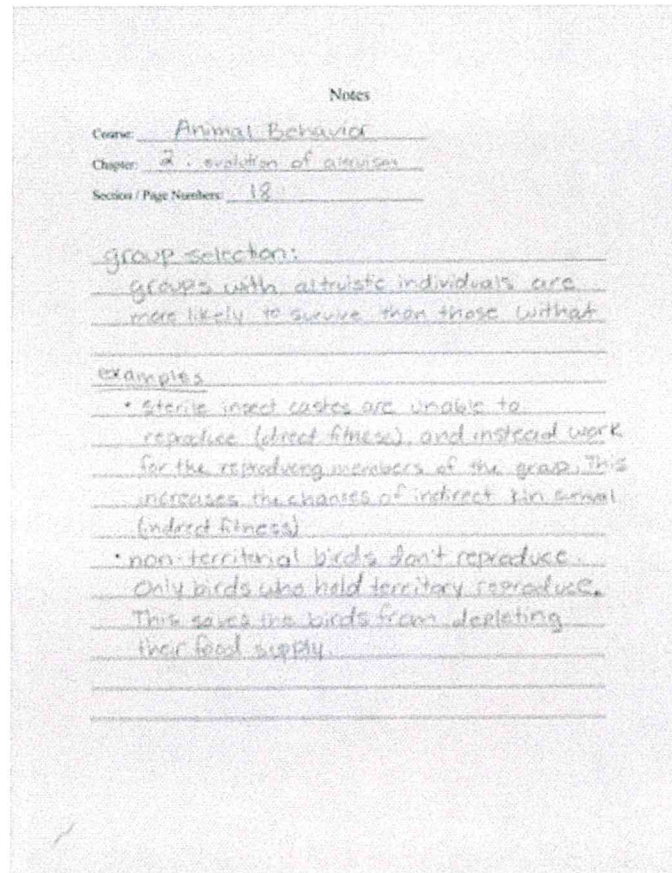
To follow along with these instructions, first read through this post, then download and print our template:

DOWNLOAD
THE
TEMPLATE

1. Select a **small** chunk (a few paragraphs at most) of your textbook. It's important to determine a firm stopping point so that you focus on just that one chunk of information.



2. Read the section carefully, jotting down what you feel are the key points and important information to remember.

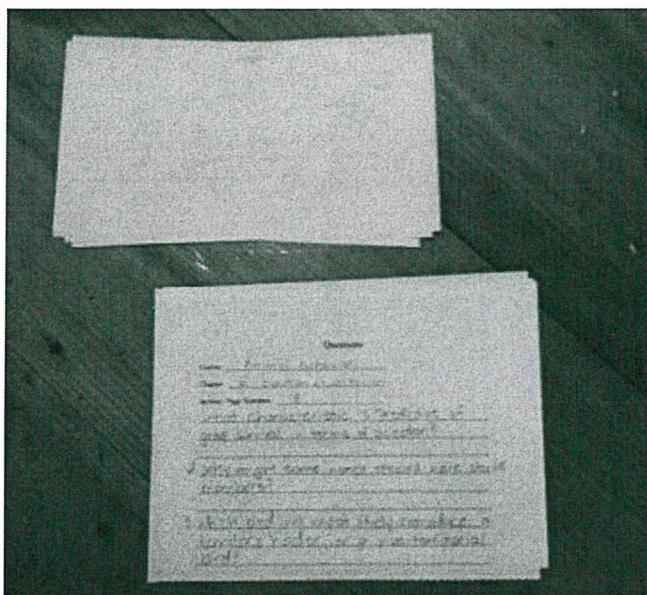


3. Form questions that would elicit these key points as responses.
Write the answers in a separate list from the questions, so that you
can practice answering the questions later without seeing the
answers.

Questions	
Course:	Animal Behavior
Chapter:	3: evolution of altruism
Section / Page Numbers:	18
1.	What characteristic is predictive of group survival in terms of selection?
2.	Why might some insect species have sterile members?
3.	Which bird will most likely reproduce, a territory holder or a non-territorial bird?

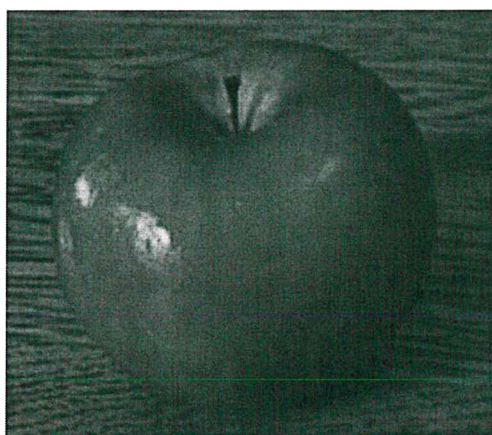
Answers	
Course:	Animal Behavior
Chapter:	3: evolution of altruism
Section / Page Numbers:	18
1.	Altruism
2.	sterile castes help reproducing members, increasing their indirect fitness, b/c they have no chance for direct fitness.
3.	Territory Holder

4. Make sure you've labeled the Question and Answer sections with the textbook and chapter / page numbers. Tear off the bottom of the Question and Answer page. Make two piles: questions, and answers. Put the answers away.



5. Repeat steps 1-4 with the next small chunk of the textbook. Keep repeating these steps on further chunks, and take breaks every 25-30 minutes.

6. At the end of the chapter, OR when you've reached a good stopping point for the day, feel good about all the preparation you've done for the next (most important!) part, and go take a big break! Maybe even get a snack!!



7. Shuffle the stack of Question pages, and pick one at random. Try

to answer each question. When you try to answer the questions, actually say the answer out loud, or write it down.

8. After each set of questions, go back and check your answers with the answer sheet. If you got something wrong, review the notes or textbook if you need clarification.

9. Periodically go back to these questions when you are studying or before an exam. This will help you strengthen the pathways in your mind to this information, making it easier for you to recall during a test.

Helpful tips:

- Be creative. Not all questions need to be difficult, or of the same format. Using a variety of question styles, you'll find which ones work for you!
- Get a buddy! Swapping questions with a classmate increases the number of pathways by which you're practicing to retrieve this information, leading to a stronger effect on learning.

In For Students, For Teachers Tags students, study tips, how-to guide

Share

9 Likes

← "Teaching High School Psychology" ... Is Intuition the Enemy of Instruction? (...)

Comments (0)

Newest First Subscribe via e-mail

Notes

Course: _____

Chapter: _____

Section / Page Numbers: _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Questions

Course: _____

Chapter: _____

Section / Page Numbers: _____



Answers

Course: _____

Chapter: _____

Section / Page Numbers: _____