

## Features of a Textbook

Most textbooks have standard features, even if they are written for different subjects. Knowing what each feature is for can help you understand how to use it, what to look for, and how to understand the material being presented.

Most textbooks begin with a preface or introduction, and often include a foreword or author profile. These items are important, and the author profile will help you understand who wrote the textbook and what their perspective on the issues might be, but they are not usually crucial to your understanding of the course material.

Textbook Section	What it's for	How to use it
Table of Contents	Gives an outline of every chapter and will often include major sections within each chapter.	You can use this section to make links between the information covered in your class and the information covered in the book itself.
Chapter Preview/Learning Objectives	Found at the beginning of each chapter, this section outlines what is covered in the chapter itself and will also discuss learning goals for the material.	You can use this section to figure out what you already know and what you still need to learn. It might also help you make connections among chapters and subjects.
Chapter Introduction	This paragraph will state the objectives and key themes of the chapter.	These will help you figure out what information the chapter will present and will highlight what the most important information in each chapter is.
Practice Elements	This section may not be part of every textbook or might be available online. These elements will help you apply what you've read about to real-world scenarios.	Practice questions will help you make sure you understand what you are reading and show you what ideas you might need to focus on during a second reading of the chapter.

Chapter Summary	This section will review the most important elements presented in the chapter.	Try reading this summary before you read the chapter to help you understand where you need to direct your studying, and what parts you already know.
Review Questions/Materials	This section usually includes practice questions, applied exercises, review questions, and suggestions for more reading. You might also find a glossary (this could also be at the end of the book) that will explain key terms.	These will help you confirm that you know the subject material.
References/Endnotes	Should list all the sources the authors consulted when they put together the textbook.	These will help you if you want to do further research on any subject covered in the textbook.

It might help you to go through the textbook closest to you and identify each of these sections. Then, you can make weekly study plan that guides you through what you need to read and where you need to find it.

For more help, check out our “Reading Textbooks” handout [here](#).