

# PLAN: An Active Reading Strategy<sup>1</sup>



PLAN allows students who may be visually inclined to record their readings in a map format. If you have tried SQ4R or another textbook reading strategy, but it didn't quite click, then try adopting PLAN, a simple four-step program that allows you to place main concepts, definitions, people, places, and times into a physical representation and catalogue.

PLAN also forces you to imagine the information in your textbook before you approach the text, place information in the context of what you already know, and then search out any holes in your knowledge.

## Step 1: Predict

Step one entails scanning your text and looking for the following information to make a “predictive map” of the text’s contents:

- Bolded, italicized, or defined terms
- Key people, places, or time periods
- Charts, graphs, or any other visual representation of data
- Headings, subheadings, or organizational titles
- Examples
- Summaries or study questions

Using this information, you will draw a map of what you expect the chapter, article, or essay to discuss. Connect the ideas using lines or arrows, and remember to designate main ideas and smaller ideas.

## Step 2: Locate

After drawing your map, determine which information you already know, and which information you will have to find when you read the textbook more thoroughly.

- Note missing information with a question mark, and note completed information with a checkmark.
- You can fill in information you already know during this step, or wait to compare with the textbook.

You will find an example of a predictive map with the “Locate” step on the following page!

## READ THE TEXT!!

## Step 3: Add

After reading the text, close your book and try answer the questions remaining in your prediction map.

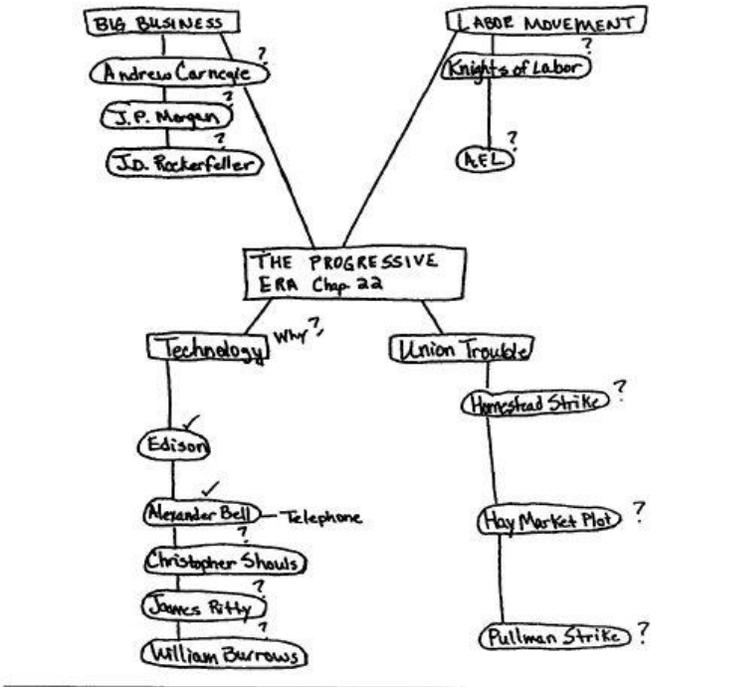
- Try to include as much information as possible for each topic, but also try to determine which ideas were the most prominent or important in your reading.

You will find an example of a map with additions on the following page!

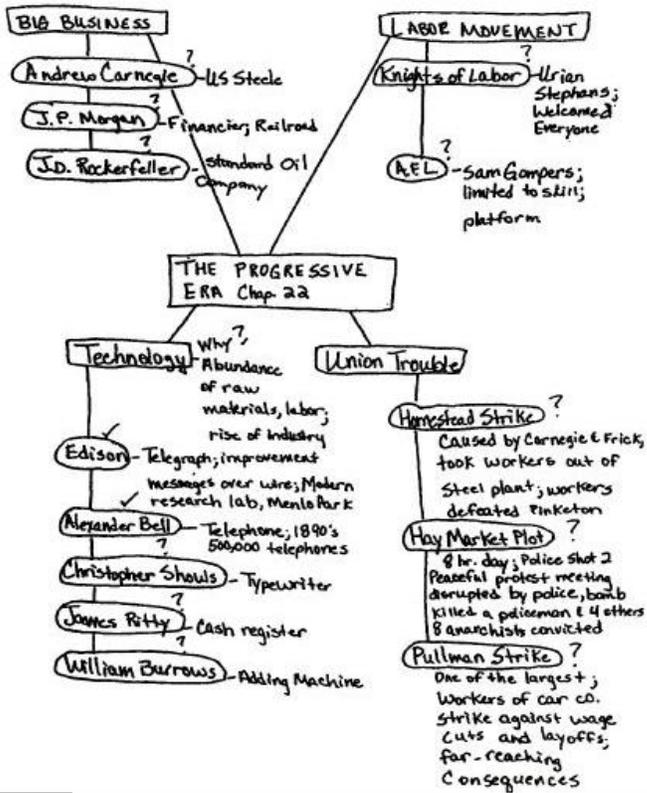
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<sup>1</sup> The above strategies have been adopted and adapted from the following article, Caverly, D.C, Mandeville, T. F., & Nicholson, S. (1995). “PLAN: A study-reading strategy for informational text.” *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 39 (3): 190-199.

Predictive Map after Step 2: Locate<sup>2</sup>



Map after Step 3: Add



<sup>2</sup> The images above have been reproduced from the following article:  
 Caverly, D.C, Mandeville, T. F., & Nicholson, S. (1995). "PLAN: A study-reading strategy for informational text." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 39 (3): 190-199.

#### **Step 4: Note**

After filling in your missing information, continue to develop and prepare the information. In other words, determine *how* you will use the information: will you have a multiple choice or essay exam, an assigned chapter summary, or a group presentation?

- Different assignments will require you to use the information differently, and Step 4 allows you to organize your notes into a summary paragraph, or to practice recreating your map from memory to prepare for a multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank exam.
- You may also decide that your predictive map was inaccurate; during step four you can reorganize the relationships between ideas and definitions to more accurately reflect what you read in the textbook.

PLAN is a useful strategy for those students who need to *see* the connections between ideas, and rewriting and reorganizing your notes has been proven to improve recall.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Additional Ways to Apply PLAN**

##### **1. Visit an Academic Coach today**

- Your coach can help you organize your note taking, and you can do practice sessions to model effective notetaking with a coach!
- Visit <http://www.uc.edu/aess/lac.html> today to book an appointment!

##### **2. Quiz yourself using PLAN**

- Try to read one chapter without PLAN and one chapter *with* PLAN. Have a friend—or coach—quiz you on both chapters. You'll be learning the material *and* seeing whether PLAN works for you!

##### **3. Modify the steps**

- Do Step 2 in your book margins: Underline where everything is!
- Try reciting the material with a mnemonic or “memory house” strategy. Learn more about memorization strategies with your coach!

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, in one study, those students who enrolled in a developmental reading class using PLAN saw an overall increase in GPA *and* concluded the study with a GPA more than 1.67 points higher than those students who did not enroll in the class.