



Reading at University

Why should I read at university?

- To develop your disciplinary, professional and technical knowledge
- For independent study and preparation for class discussions
- To research existing knowledge and help generate new knowledge
- To inform your assessment tasks

Three steps to help you become an efficient and effective reader

1

Preliminary Reading

Familiarise yourself with text to understand the overall content and its relevance to you.

- Identify the author, the type of publication and the date of publication. Consider how reliable and current the information is.
- Read the abstract, executive summary or any other overview to identify the:
 - Topic
 - Overall argument
 - Approach
 - Structure
 - Conclusions
- Skim the whole text noting signposts such as:
 - Headings
 - Tables and graphics
 - Keywords (use word search)
 - Topic (and concluding) sentences
- Read the introduction and conclusion

2

In-depth Reading

Critically engage with and understand the text, the relationships between ideas and how evidence is used to support positions.

Read the text in some detail but do not get stuck at any one point. Mark bits you don't understand and move on.

As you read, you can annotate the following:

- Key points, particularly the overall message
- Points where you agree or disagree
- Anything you don't understand (to follow up)
- Any ideas the text gives you
- Cited texts that you would like to read

You can also take notes separately, in which you:

- Note main ideas and stages of the text (ie from the introduction to the conclusion)
- Include page numbers
- Note any questions or disagreements
- Use graphics - tables, arrows, diagrams etc.
- Relate new ideas to what you already know
- Write in your own words (paraphrase) preferably in full sentences

3

Pulling it all together

Confirm understanding, formulate your position and understand how the content relates to other texts.

Based on the work you did in steps 1 and 2 and referring back to your annotations and notes articulate the following:

Bibliographic information:

- The type of text
- Who wrote it
- The purpose
- The audience

Content:

- The overall message
- The evidence for the overall message
- Any issues with overall message and the evidence as it is presented

Your view:

- Whether you agree or disagree and why
- The relevance of the text to your study
- Connections to other information or ideas on the same topic