Higher Education Language & Presentation Support

Reading & Note-Taking
HELPS
(Higher Education Language & Presentation Support)

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AIMS:

• Helpful reading & note-taking strategies
• How to become a more critical reader
• How to take better notes
• How to use what you’ve read
Reading – smarter & wiser

• You are going to spend a lot of your time reading. Possibly more than you’ve ever done in your life before.

• You need to be a smart, savvy and efficient reader!
Ask your partner

1. Do you read every sentence, every paragraph and everything on the page when you read?

2. Are you afraid to question what you read-or do you just ‘believe it’ by default?

3. Do you have any time-saving tips for reading at university?
• Academic texts are NOT meant to be read like a novel. They are to be skimmed, scanned, searched and plundered for their ideas, concepts and lines of thought.

• You **do not** have enough time for read everything word for word, so engaging in time saving efficient reading practices is an absolute must.

**Effective Reading**
Selective reading / Top Tips

- **Skim readings first** – do not read word for word, sentence by sentence, p1, p2, p3, p4 etc at first.

- Keep notes on usefulness of article, highlight useful refs & quotes as you go along, underline useful data.

- Read accessible articles first – build knowledge & confidence, try the more challenging articles at a later time.

- Be a ‘critical reader’ – question what you’re reading – find other arguments which agree/disagree – look for bias, currency of info, relevance etc. Don’t just accept on face value.

- Read in 50 min blocks- then take a rest for 10-15 minutes. Then repeat.

- Make the readings work hard for you.
Q: How do I know when to stop reading?

A1. When you have adequate to good knowledge of your topic and you can happily answer the assignment question.

A2. When you feel that you are repeating key information & that your knowledge is overlapping = you’ve read enough.

Tip: If you can’t understand a reading or theory - try to find an easier version of it somewhere else.

How much reading is enough?
How to read more effectively & critically
What is meant by critical thinking?
Exercise
• Q: When reading a text, it is critically important to ask yourself questions about the value of the text.

   **True or False?**

• What sort of questions must you ask yourself?
• **Task. Evaluate a text**

*Read the following text and ask yourself,…*

- are these expressed facts true?
- do you agree with the expressed opinions?
- is the information trustworthy do you think?
- does it show any bias?
- is the information current?
- is this information reliable?

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Evaluating Texts
Text A:

Sydney is an ideal city for young university students in which to study. Australia’s largest city with a population of over several million is the perfect place in which to live and study. Cheap, comfortable accommodation is always available, and transport is provided by clean and reliable state transport authorities offering excellent train, bus and ferry routes linking the whole city. A further advantage is the friendly local population who are well-known for their amenable manner and friendly, relaxed attitude to life; as well as their friendliness to strangers. Overall, it can be said that Sydney is an unrivalled city in the world, in which to study at university.

Evaluating Texts
Exercise
Discuss with your partner:
• Q: Who wrote the text in your opinion?
• Q: Do they have any particular agenda do you think?
• Q: How reliable is this text?
• Q: When was the text written?
• Is this information current?
Academic material is not meant to be simply read. It is meant to be **searched** and **scanned** for essential content.

- Be selective with what you read
- Set a realistic time frame for any reading task.
- Never read without specific questions you want to answer.
- Never start reading at page 1 of the text, but look for the summary, conclusion, subheadings, etc.
- Read only as much as you need to get the information you are after.
- Always keep in mind what you need, what is relevant to the question you are asking the text.
- **Effective Reading**

  **Focus on the Question:** Search text for answers
  Preview text
  Skim & Scan text
  Use table of contents/ index
  Take notes as you go along
  Summarise what you’ve read

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**Reading Strategies**
Skim / Scan / Select

The dynamic business environment

Learning outcomes
To be reading this chapter will be able to:
1. Identify key stakeholders of a business and their perspectives.
2. Describe the elements that make up a business environment.
3. Explain how external factors can affect the business environment.
4. Analyze the causes of a specific shift.
5. Assess the effects of environmental changes on a business.
6. Identify the role of information in altering strategies to address changes in the business environment.

- Skim/scan/select + slow down when you have to!
MANAGING OPERATIONAL RISK

In the risk management hierarchy, managing operational risk is at a lower level than strategic and financial risk. Managing financial risk is usually at an operational level as well, with the main goal being to manage and control financial risks through the implementation of various strategies and procedures. The primary goal of managing operational risk is to identify and mitigate potential risks that could impact the business's ability to operate effectively and efficiently.

Managing operational risk involves a systematic approach that includes identifying potential risks, assessing the likelihood and impact of those risks, and developing strategies to mitigate them. This process is crucial for maintaining the business's overall health and achieving its objectives.

Managing operational risk is a critical aspect of risk management, as it helps organizations identify and address potential threats that could jeopardize their ability to operate effectively. By focusing on operational risk, organizations can improve their overall risk management framework and enhance their ability to respond to unexpected events.

Managing operational risk is a multifaceted process that requires a combination of expertise and resources. It is essential for organizations to have a dedicated team responsible for identifying and managing operational risks. This team should collaborate with other departments to ensure that all aspects of the business are adequately covered.

Managing operational risk is an ongoing process that requires regular review and updates. Organizations should establish a system for monitoring and reporting operational risks to ensure that they remain aware of potential threats and can respond quickly to any new developments.

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Becoming A Critical Reader
Exercise
• Q: Do you believe everything you read?

• Do you believe every academic paper you read?

• Is it OK to disagree with the academic literature?
What is Critical Reading?

- The purpose of critical reading is to gain a deeper understanding of the material. It involves reading in depth and between the lines.

Some further questions you should ask yourself while reading are:

- Has the writer backed up statements and ideas with credible evidence?
- Are logical arguments used?
- Does the writer present the two sides of a case evenhandedly?
- Is there any evident bias from the writer’s viewpoint?
An example of critical thinking

Is Climate Change caused by human activity? –Critically analyse and discuss.

Manson, 2006 has stated that climate Change is a naturally occurring phenomenon and is not influenced by human population of the Earth.

Blake, Wilson & Nicks, 2008 claim that climate Change is a naturally occurring phenomenon which is not directly linked to human activity.

Research by Greer, 2009 shows that human activity and increases in Co2 have caused climate change.

Tests carried out by Brown and Longman, 2007 have shown that human activity, increased deforestation and pollution have influenced climate change.

Based on what I’ve been reading, what I have experienced, what common sense tells me and what the research/literature tells me….I now THINK........

The Stern Report, 2010 advocates that climate change is directly linked to increases of Co2 in the atmosphere as a result of human activity.
• **Efficient academic reading strategies are based on the structure of academic writing.** For instance, you should begin by:

• Reading the introduction to search for the thesis point or main argument presented, and to verify the overview provided by the contents page; also....

• **Scanning by topic sentences**, i.e. the sentence which makes the point of the paragraph and which is usually the first sentence of the paragraph.
The thesis statement. What is it?

• The role of the introduction is to give background to the topic and to put forward the writer's thesis statement (or main argument).

• This thesis statement can often be found towards the end of the introduction.

• The thesis point is usually reiterated in the conclusion as well.

• To gain a good idea of the argument being put forward and the main evidence being presented you should read both the introduction and the conclusion first.
Exercise
Human beings have existed on earth for about half a million years. Agriculture, the necessary basis of fixed settlements, is only about twelve thousand years old. Civilisations date back no more than some six thousand years or so. If we were to think of the entire span of human existence as a day, agriculture would have come into being at 11.57. The development of modern societies would get under way at 11.59.30. Yet as much change has gone on in the last thirty seconds of the 'human day' as in the whole of the time leading up to it.
Reflecting upon past experience is an important capability for all professionals in order to develop better communications skills, conflict resolution and enhance future performance. To look back on the simulation that was conducted as group work this semester has allowed participating students to gain many practical skills in our industry. This paper will reflect upon the role that I personally played in this simulation activity, as well as critically analyse our performance. It could be argued that our team performed well overall; yet more effective delegation and organisation skills could have been improved. This paper will comment upon the team dynamics, communication style, as well as suggest possible improvements in any future simulation activity.
A further strategy is to **read topic sentences** of each paragraph.

This can be particularly effective for difficult articles or heavy academic texts.
Exercise
• Task: Identify the topic sentences in this short passage:

The stress or accent pattern within a word is intimately related to the sounds in it, especially to the vowel sounds. In English, vowels are longer, louder, and often higher in pitch when they are in stressed (accented) syllables than when they are in unstressed syllables. In addition, if adding an ending to a word causes the stress to shift from one syllable to another, some of the vowels in the word may change more drastically and actually become different phonemes. These changes are often not reflected in spelling. For example, when the word declare is used to make the word declaration, the stress changes: the first syllable gains a little stress, the second syllable loses its stress while the strongest stress goes to the third syllable.

In constructing sentences and sentence meanings, stress has many uses: the most familiar is probably contrastive or emphatic stress, as when one says "I want the black book, not the green book" with the strongest stresses on black and green. Compare this sentence with "I want the black book, not the black notebook"; in the latter the strongest stresses are on the first book and on note.
“It’s called ‘reading’. It’s how people install new software into their brains.”

Source: http://insertmedia.office.microsoft.com
• General Reading Strategies: tips for reading better at Uni

• Quickly skim and scan and read for general meaning.

• Look at the title of the paper - what is it about/ useful?

• Read the introduction and conclusion first.

• Read the topic sentences and concluding sentences of each paragraph in the main body of the article.

How to become a more efficient reader
How to become a more critical reader

- Is there clear credible evidence for arguments do you think?
- Is there any bias evident in the article?
- Who else agrees and disagrees with these arguments?
- Are there any included tables that give additional useful information to enhance the article or its meaning?
- How would you summarise what the reading is about?
NOTE-TAKING STRATEGIES
Taking Effective Notes

• Buy a dedicated notebook for each subject
• Don’t write word for word - be selective!
• Use bullet points / short phrases
• Make lists
• Abbreviate words - especially common words
• Develop individual ‘short-hand’ system
• Software is OK
Note-taking cont.

When taking notes quickly use some shorthand symbols to help you write quicker e.g.

- w = with
- th = that/those/then - any th word
- + = and
- 2 = to / 4 = for
- B = be/being
- U = you

- Altho not acdmc if u can mke notes using abbr sytm will sve u time in class + u will slwly b able 2 mke notes whilst ur lctr is tlking –th systm is bit lke txt mssg on mbile phne –use it 4 ur note mking only thou + nt 4 ur essays/assgnts!
• Q: DO you have a good note-taking system?

• Please share your ideas with the table

Over to you...
1. Start each new lecture’s notes on a fresh page. Add date, name of lecturer & topic.

2. Draw a margin on the side of page – useful for refs/comments.

3. Add numbers & headings, get key words/ideas only as you take notes – not full sentences.

4. Make notes on other resources that you should read/check or cross reference in the margin – easy to check later.

5. Take care with your handwriting – so that you CAN read your notes later.

6. Use your short-hand system to make note-taking quicker.

7. Have a section ruled off at the bottom – for homework/to do / follow ups

8. Make sure you can understand your notes the next day & the week after.
• Split page system

Motivational Theories -
- Explain how human relations affect motivation.

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (motivational theory)
1. Physiological Needs - survival, food, shelter
2. Security Needs - stability and protection
3. Social Needs - friendship and companions
4. Esteem Needs - status and recognition
5. Self-Actualization - self-fulfillment

* Developed by Abraham Maslow
* Must meet lower needs first.

Theory X - holds that people are naturally irresponsible.
Theory Y - holds that people are naturally self-motivated and responsible.

* Developed by Douglas McGregor
* What type of leader you are is determined by which theory you believe in.

Motivational theories explain how and why people are motivated. A motivational theories are Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Theory X and Y.
examples
## Note taking template:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text / Title / Author</th>
<th>Points made</th>
<th>Further reading/ Useful References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Critical thinking rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What else have I read that agrees with this?</th>
<th>What have I read that disagrees with this?</th>
<th>How do I feel about this? Do I agree or disagree? Show evidence.</th>
<th>Useful / not useful?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### To do:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follow up Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 =</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Useful note-taking software

- **Microsoft OneNote** (part of Microsoft Office; also available as iOS/Android app)

- **Evernote** (free and paid versions; also available as iOS/Android app)

Note-taking software

Images: (Evernote 2015)
## Descriptive VS Critical Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive writing</th>
<th>Critical analytical writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>states what happened</td>
<td>identifies the significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>states what something is like</td>
<td>evaluates strengths and weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gives the story so far</td>
<td>weighs one piece of information against another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>states the order things in which happened</td>
<td>makes reasoned judgements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>says how to do something</td>
<td>argues a case according to the evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explains what a theory says</td>
<td>shows why something is relevant or suitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explains how something works</td>
<td>indicates why something will work (best)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notes the method used</td>
<td>identifies whether something is appropriate or suitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>says when something occurred</td>
<td>identifies why the timing is of importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>states the different components</td>
<td>weighs up the importance of component parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>states options</td>
<td>gives reasons for selecting each option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lists details</td>
<td>evaluates the relative significance of details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lists in any order</td>
<td>structures information in order of importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>states links between items</td>
<td>shows the relevance of links between pieces of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gives information</td>
<td>draws conclusions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cottrell, 2008
Once you have the relevant information:

• What have you discovered and learnt?
• How does your new knowledge help your understanding?
• What arguments or evidence have you discovered?
• How have your ideas/opinions been influenced?
• Do you now have a clearer understanding of the topic/task?

Reflect on your Research
What can you do if you don’t understand something?

• Ask in class
• Go see your lecturer personally (take a draft)
• Go see another member of faculty
• Ask peers/classmates
• Email your lecturer for help
• See a HELPS advisor (drop-in consultation)
• **ALWAYS seek help if you need it!!**
What Good Readers do….

1. Don’t leave things to the last minute
2. Don’t read when they are too tired
3. Read in 50 mins blocks
4. Analyse and skim materials before reading in-depth
5. Read abstracts, intros and conclusions first
6. Check the meaning of new words/ yet don’t overuse dictionaries
7. Are critical thinkers in their approach/ evaluate texts
8. Take good notes following a logical system
9. Summarise what they’ve read
10. Look for thesis statements & topic sentences for clues
11. Highlight text selectively & use copious ‘post-it’ notes
12. Keep accurate bibliographic reference details as they go along
13. Ask for help if they need it
Effective Critical Reading + Note-taking

- strategies for better critical reading.

- Inspect text first
- Scan rapidly / ascertain
- Question / Question / Question /
- Locate specifics quickly
- Read at the right speed for the task
- Recall / review / summarise through your notes
- Note-take / note references accurately
- Read SMART
- Save time!
- Achieve task
Useful Further Resources

Published by UTS – free to download pdf.

Published by Routledge Press. Approx $52

Published by Palgrave Macmillan
Approx $40
• Thank you for your time today.

• Good Luck with your studies!