Academic reading

Efficient reading: predict, question and integrate

1. Before reading – predict:
   - Know the purpose of reading.
   - Check publication details.
   - Read the abstract or executive summary.
   - Skim:
     - Introduction and conclusion
     - Whole text, noting sections, tables, graphics, references
     - Heading and topic sentences.

2. While reading – question:
   - Highlight and take notes
   - The purpose of taking notes:
     - to record important points
     - to make sense of the text
     - to remember.
   - When taking notes:
     - include page reference to notes
     - note main ideas and stages
     - use graphics to make links – tables, arrows, mind maps, etc.
     - relate new ideas to what you already know
     - engage, question and dispute.
3. After reading – integrate:

Check through your notes:

- check meaning
- highlight important points
- add new ideas and connections that occur to you in the process.

**Critical reading**

In reading an academic text, you need to develop a personal, yet academic and rational response to the text through:

- developing an understanding of the content, and
- evaluating and critiquing the text.

1. Before reading, be clear why you are reading the text:

- How is it relevant?
- Who is the writer? What do you know about him/her?
- What is the topic? What do you know about it?
- Who is it written for?
- Why do you think the text was written?

2. While reading, take an active stance – ask questions and relate the text to your own experience and other readings:

- How is the material presented?
  - Whose point of view is presented?
  - Who are the main actors in the text?
  - How are they presented?
- Is a particular bias or framework present?
- Is evidence/argument presented convincingly?
- Is the language emotive or logical?
- Do you agree or disagree with the author? Why?
3. After reading, go through your notes – highlight the main ideas and add new ideas as they occur:

• What is the main idea of the text?
• What are the secondary or supporting ideas in the text?
• How does the text relate to your subject/assignment?
• What are the wider implications for you? For the discipline?
• What other ways are there of writing about this topic?
• What other perspectives could you take on this topic?

Adapted from the following source: