

EFFECTIVE READING

Reading Strategies

Active reading:

Focus on the Question

- Read with a purpose and have an idea of the information you are looking for before you begin reading.
- Keep reminding yourself of the question to be answered so you don't waste time reading irrelevant material.
- Try to identify any evidence to support your ideas.

Use the Table of Contents and Index

- This can enable you to directly locate relevant information.

Previewing/Scanning

- Take time to preview a chapter or article.
- Don't take any notes, don't underline, just scan the material.
- Read abstracts, listed objectives, headings, subheadings, introductions and conclusions.
- Note any pictures, graphs or charts.

Skimming

Skimming is the process of quickly locating specific information from a large quantity of written material.
To skim text:

- Allow your eyes to move quickly over a page until you find a relevant section.
- Look for key words or names. Phrases such "on the other hand" and "finally" often signify a summary of the author's main arguments or conclusions.
- When you locate information requiring attention, slow down to read the relevant section more thoroughly.
- Skimming is no substitute for thorough reading and should only be used to locate material quickly.

Take Notes

- Taking notes from the reading helps you to focus.
- Be selective and don't write down everything.
- Identify major and minor arguments and the supporting evidence.
- React to what you read; agree, disagree, question.
- Try not to use copious note taking as a way of avoiding understanding complex material.
- Highlighter pens and Post-it stickers can help you read more actively.

Reviewing Notes

You need to review your notes to remember them and put them into the perspective of the essay or assignment. Reviewing tells you if you have answered the question and identifies any weak areas and poorly understood concepts.

Critical reading:

The purpose of **critical reading** is to gain a deeper understanding of the material. It involves reading in depth. Some 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?

Looking at how material is organized can help you to understand its contents. To help reinforce your understanding, take notes or underline information.

Reading to remember:

The **SQ3R Method** of StudyReading is one of the core activities of study. You need to be able to understand what you read and to be able to recall the main ideas when you need them. You can use the SQ3R method to help you remember a reading for tutorials, seminars or to revise for exams.

S=Survey

Before you start to read, survey the material to gain an overview of the contents. Approach a reading by scanning the title(s), subheading and any summaries or abstracts. Doing this will help you gain an idea of the main idea or topic of the piece. You may also find that you get some idea of the author's position.

Q=Question

Your reading will be more memorable if you question the material.

1. Ask yourself what the lecturer/tutor say about the chapter or subject?
2. Devise questions that will guide your reading:
 - Think about specific questions that you need to, or would like to find answers for.
 - Read any focus questions at the end of the reading.
 - If there are headings in the material, turn the headings into questions.
 - For example, if the heading is Qualitative and Quantitative Research, your question might be: 'What is the difference between these two types of research?'
3. Make a list of your questions. You will use them during revision to help you remember what you have read.

R1=Read

Be prepared to READ material twice. First, read without making notes:

- Look for the author's plan. Read any headings, abstracts or summaries. This will give you an idea of the main thesis.
- Look for answers to the questions you first raised.
- Compare diagrams and illustrations with the written text. Often you will understand more from them.
- Make sure you understand what you are reading. Reduce your reading speed for difficult passages. Stop and reread parts, which are not clear.
- If you have difficulty understanding a text, look up difficult words in the dictionary or glossary of terms and reread. If the meaning of a word or passage evades you, leave it and read on. Perhaps after more reading you will find it more accessible and the meaning will become clear. Speak to your tutor if your difficulty continues.
- Question the author's reasoning. Is each point justified? Is there enough evidence? What is it?
- Use personal experience as a memory aid. When the author makes a claim, reflect on your own experience to support or disprove it. This will help you remember and understand. But keep in mind that you are using personal experience only as a memory aid – it is not sufficient to prove or refute a research finding!

On your second reading, begin to take notes:

- Note down the main idea(s) of each paragraph. This is often the first or last sentence.
- Look for important details (supporting evidence, written illustrations of points, provisions or alternatives). Examples can be good cues for your memory.
- Take notes from the text, but write information in your own words.
- In your notes, underline or highlight the important points. This will be useful for later revision.

R2=Recall

You should now try to recall what you have read.

- Close the book.
- Make notes of what you remember.
- Check their accuracy against the notes you made during your reading.
- Return to the reading. Read one section at a time and try to recall what you have read. It can also be helpful to RECITE ideas aloud to help you remember.

R2=Review

Now review what you have read. At the end of the study period, check the accuracy of your notes against the original material (if you have underlined the main points, this should be simple). This is an important part of the process because it can really help you remember what you have studied.

The next day:

- Read through your notes to acquaint yourself with the main points.
- Now read through the questions you noted down and try to answer them from memory.
- Try doing the same thing after a few days.

***For your Bibliography**

Record details of author, title, place of publication, publisher and date as you read so that you don't have the frustration of trying to find the book again when preparing your bibliography. Record page numbers with any notes you take.

References :

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