Academic Skills and Development

Quick guide to

Reading and Note Making

# Feeling Overwhelmed?

Before looking at any resources consider: Why you are reading it?

What information you are trying to find out?

Once you know why and what you are reading for:

* Be selective
* Survey texts before you read
* Skim read – for gist
* Is it really relevant?
* If yes, read more carefully

# Do you find you run out of time before getting through all the reading?

* Are you trying to read too much?
* Are you reading information which is not relevant?
* Slow reading is often required for detailed reading so plan your reading time
* Reading is a skill so practice – read for pleasure!

# Do you sometimes find difficult words/phrases in the text so don’t understand every word?

You do not usually need to know every word however, careful reading requires a thorough understanding.

* Expand your vocabulary by reading widely
* Look up any words you don’t understand
* Look for linguistic cues i.e. finding out the meaning of the word from the context of the sentence

# Do you get bored/tired when you are reading a lot of information?

* Read in short bursts e.g. 20 minutes at a time
* Remember to take breaks
* Alternate reading with other tasks
* Have a clear purpose about why you are reading the information and what you are looking for
* Set goals of small achievable tasks
* Move to another location
* Be an active reader:

**Active reading** involves really getting to grips with what you are reading and engaging with the text.

**Ask questions,** make notes and compare with other sources. **Critical reading,** ask questions and thinking about the information will help you to engage fully with the text.

# How can I be sure whether what I’m reading is actually going to be useful in my assignment?

* Make sure you have fully understood the assignment criteria
* Make a list of questions that you need to answer for your assignment
* Start reading the resources recommended by your tutor on your module reading list
* Use your questions to select relevant information when researching

# How can I remember what I have read?

READ, RECALL, REVIEW, RETAIN

* **Read** actively – highlight or mark the text
* **Recall** information by making notes of key information
* **Review** notes and make into an oral summary
* **Retain** the information by reading your own notes

# How can I make effective notes?

If you are writing far more than you need to make sure you do not miss something important, decide what you need to note down:

* Remember the purpose of your reading
* Don’t write what you already know
* Don’t write in full sentences but make a note of the key points
* Use abbreviations / symbols
* Look for language signposts in the text i.e. the introduction might provide two or three issues the author is addressing

# Help! Some articles are way too difficult for me!

* Start with articles/chapters on reading lists as these have been selected specifically for your level of study
* Try starting with introductory texts to become familiar with the language/ subject terms
* Persevere – there is no quick fix but wider reading will help your understanding
* Reading is an art which takes practice

Further advice and larger text guides can be found online: [**www.surrey.ac.uk/splash**](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/splash)

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