

STEP 6: REFLECT ON WHAT YOU'VE READ

Review your notes and then ask yourself the following questions, relating to the text:

- What have you learned?
- How does it relate to what you already know?
- Did you find the argument convincing on its own terms?
- Is there anything in the article which doesn't convince you of the writer's argument, even if the article argued it well?
- How does the article relate to your broader knowledge of the topic?

STEP 7: TEST YOURSELF

Make a summary sheet of the article, **FROM MEMORY**, to see how much of the article you have understood

THE SQ3R METHOD OF READING

When reading any academic text, it is always useful to use the **SQ3R Method of Reading** to approach the text.

What is the SQ3R Method?

The name of this method stands for: **SURVEY, QUESTION, READ, RECALL, REVIEW.**

SURVEY	Survey the book or chapter. Look at the headings and diagrams. Read the first and last sentences to capture the main idea. Get a feel for the material.
QUESTION	Question what it is that you want to get out of the text. You are at this stage trying to question yourself about what your purpose of reading the particular piece is, as well as the content. Jot questions around headings that will help you focus and get a sense of achievement from the reading.
READ	Read to answer the questions that you have set. Sample the text to find what you don't want to read.
RECALL	Recall in your own words what you think you understand. Does what you say make sense to you? If not, try and say it again, - you may need to do some re-reading.
REVIEW	Review whether you have answered the original questions. Are you happy with the answers? If not, go back and re-read, looking for the answers.

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HOW TO READ ACADEMIC TEXTS

This brochure provides some guidelines on how to approach the large quantity of reading required from you at university to get as much out of the time invested in reading as possible.



HELPING YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TIME AT UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

If there is one word which summarises what you will do at university it must be **READ!** Vast amounts of reading must be covered in a very short time period.

This brochure will give you some practical steps to follow when read academic articles (chapters in books, journal articles, electronic articles, etc) so that you can get optimum benefit of the time you invest in your reading.

THE PROCESS OF READING

The process of reading can be divided into seven steps. Follow these steps with every article you read.

STEP 1: ANALYSE THE TITLE

Read the title of the chapter/article carefully and ask yourself the following questions about the title:

- What does it tell you about the content of the article?
- What do you already know about the subject? (Before starting the reading, brainstorm what you already know about the subject)
- What do you expect to get from the article? (Initial information? Contextualisation of other information you already know about the topic? Filling in the gaps in your knowledge about the topic? etc.)

STEP 2: EXAMINE THE ARTICLE'S AUTHORITY

Here you should ask two important questions:

- **Who wrote it?**
 - What are the author's credentials, or affiliations? (Beware of the reliability of information downloaded from the WWW – especially if there is no author!)
 - Are you familiar with any other work written by the author on the subject?
 - Does the author have any prejudices? (Does s/he dismiss counter-arguments on the topic?)
- **When was the article written?**
 - Do you know anything about the state of the historical literature on the subject at that time? If so, what do you expect the article to say?
 - Be careful of articles written a long time ago (eg. in the 1980s) as knowledge on the topic could have changed radically in the intervening years. Has any major new research come to light since the article was written?

STEP 3: READ THE ARTICLE

- As you read, mark any information that you think is important (bearing in mind your PURPOSE for reading the article – see STEP 1, above)
- Critically read the article:
 - What exactly is it about?
 - How does it correspond to the title?
 - What are the main points of the article (the theses)?
 - What is the evidence that the author gives to sustain the theses?

STEP 4: MARK THE TEXT

Is there a good description of something you knew, or did not know, and you want to remember its location? If so, mark it. If it is your own copy of the text, use a highlighter pen. If it is an original copy, use coloured Post-Its or make a photocopy to work with.

STEP 5: MAKE NOTES

Return to the marked sections and make notes of the main points of the article, using one of the different note-taking strategies available to you.

For more information on making notes, refer to the brochure: "MAKING NOTES FROM TEXTS", available from the Student Learning Centre.