

Reading strategies

You will be required to read a lot during your university studies. Keep the reason you are reading something in mind to assist you to make your reading more effective.

Weekly content: This is the pre-reading you should try to do before watching your recorded lecture. This will include your weekly required readings that have been selected by your course coordinator and any other tasks that have been set to assist with understanding the content.

Targeted reading: This is reading to find specific answers to activities such as quizzes or short responses.

Assignment research: This is critical reading to evaluate sources for use in your assessments.

Exam preparation: This is reading to help build memory and retention for future quizzes or exams – a tip for this is to try to do a little bit of revision each day so your knowledge builds steadily and it is then easier to retain and recall.

Preparation strategies

- Allocate reading time each week, for each subject.
- Have a goal before you start to read, e.g. decide how much you would like to read before taking a break.
- Take regular breaks to help with concentration while reading.
- Try to minimise distractions. Choose a quiet space if possible. Try to find what you need to read before your allocated reading time, so you don't waste time looking for it.

While you are reading: Take an active approach

- Highlight or underline key ideas/concepts.
- Make notes according to what method works for you. Refer to the strategies in the Notetaking PDF resource such as mind maps, sketch-noting, doodling, concept maps. Taking notes helps cement ideas in your brain as you read and provides you with a reference point for later.
- If your reading includes a glossary of terms, you can refer to it if there are unfamiliar words or phrases. An old-school dictionary or thesaurus, if you have access, is helpful.
- Some people keep a “rabbit hole” list – that's where they make a note of interesting things/authors/articles they come across so that they can refer to these things after the

reading is complete – that way you don't go off on a tangent and spend hours reading about something semi-related to the topic you are meant to be studying!

Reading effectively

The way you read text can depend on your purpose. Think about why you need to read something and choose the appropriate strategy.

Skimming	Scanning	Intensive Reading
This is useful for an overview before you read more thoroughly.	This is useful if you are looking for selective information.	This is focussed and accurate reading to understand content thoroughly.
Try looking at each page you want to read for approximately 5-10 seconds focusing on headings, graphics, or any content that stands out for you, maybe any text in bold or italics.	Read carefully but quickly to locate particular facts or concepts.	Do this when you have set aside time where you think you will be uninterrupted. This will allow you to concentrate on the whole reading and absorb the meaning more easily.
It is often useful to skim read before you read again more thoroughly as skimming the content gives you a quick idea of what is in the whole piece and can help prevent you getting stuck on points you may not understand until you have read the whole document.	You might use this method for example if a) you have been asked to answer some questions to prepare you for the lecture content in the following week or b) you are searching for information or evidence to use as a citation in an essay.	You would use this method when trying to understand complex course content and to study for quizzes and exams.

Example



SKIM:

What is the gist or overview of this story?

Do you want to read more?

SCAN: ask...

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

How?

INTENSIVE READING:

Is there more to learn about this story?

How would you find out more?

Is it relevant to your assessment topic or exam revision?

Critical reading requires you to actively engage with the written material and question and evaluate the quality and relevance of the information for your task. This may include analysing the author's strategies, methods and reasoning. You read to grasp concepts, understand applications and form views or positions on an issue or topic.

Critical reading questions to ask yourself

- Are there any contradictions?
- Is there an argument developed? Is it logical?
- Is the text biased?
- What supporting evidence is given and how valid is that evidence?
- Are there any 'hidden' assumptions?
- What alternative perspectives are available in the wider literature?

Further support

Contact your student learning advisors via the Support for Learning team here:

supportforlearning@unisq.edu.au

Ph: +07 4631 2372

