



ACTIVE READING PLAN

Academic reading is more active, thoughtful & strategic than reading for pleasure. It is a skill that requires practice to develop.

Crucially, it involves critical thinking, note-taking and reading strategically - all elements which need to be considered before, during and after we have read a text. We also need to know what to read, where to find it and how to reference it

Academic reading is essential for good academic writing -

"Reading is like breathing in, writing is like breathing out." Pam Allyn, literacy expert

Before we read a text it is a good idea to have a focus as to why we are reading it and how we will approach it. This will depend on whether we are quickly scanning for information or looking to have a deep understanding of the whole text. The following plan will help to highlight the different elements required when reading a text.

Using the 5-stage plan below, make a plan for how you will approach a text, go through each point in the plan in step making sure you are clear why you are reading. Always make notes and write down your thoughts. It is a good idea to keep your ideas in a reading log - a spreadsheet where you can add notes on your thoughts (you can also do this in citation software such as Zotero or Mendeley). As well as making notes, can you also write a paragraph on this text (linking it to your research question and other texts)? The more you write as you go the less daunting it is when your deadline is looming!

Before you read any text, get into the habit of running through this plan so you know you are reading strategically and actively.

WHY?

Be clear before you start: Why am I reading this? What do I need to know? What does this relate to? What questions am I seeking to answer? What part of the jigsaw am I looking for?

HOW?

How will I read this? Which model of reading could I use - Skim/Scan (use the ctrl-F function to find key words if you are reading a digital copy), Top & Tail? etc. What section should I focus on? What's my time frame - how quickly do I need to read this?

READ

Read it! Highlight important words and passages. Check meanings. Check the questions I am seeking to answer.

WRITE

Write notes - What have I learnt? What questions do I now have?

What does this link to? How does this inform the questions I am seeking to answer? Look at the 'Why?' questions you had at the start - are you answering them? Write down the text's Harvard Reference and where you found it (with the search terms used)

PLAN

Make a plan - What should I do now? Do I need to reread/check other texts. Do I need to find more texts? Use the reference list to deepen the search.

See Musostudy's website for more help and tips on academic reading: <https://www.musostudy.com/top-tips/>