



ACADEMIC READING ASSESSMENT

Reading for learning is a different skill to reading for pleasure; it has a specific purpose and is more active, thoughtful and strategic. It is crucial for both your knowledge learning and to be successful in your assignments. Identifying the areas that need development (from finding suitable texts to knowing how to use the information) will help you to work out what help you need.

Consider these statements carefully and then rate your response on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not confident at all and 5 is very confident:

1. How confident do you feel in your reading skills (e.g. speed and comprehension)	
2. How confident do you feel in knowing what are suitable texts for this module?	
3. How confident do you feel in finding these texts?	
4. How confident do you feel in making a judgement on the relevance of a text?	
5. How confident do you feel in finding the useful information in a text?	
6. How confident do you feel in using the information in a text?	

Looking at your answers, work out which of the 5 areas below you most need support with:

READING SKILLS (Q1)

These will gradually improve with practice. Many people face anxieties over reading skills. You can build up your confidence by starting with short, easy to read and easy to use articles (ask your teacher for guidance). Try techniques such as skimming a text to get an idea of overall meaning, scanning for keywords or reading strategically (start with the abstract/introduction, the conclusion, then read the first sentence of each paragraph - these are topic sentences and should explain what the paragraph is about). Create a list of technical or troubling words that you come across and then search for their meaning - as your vocabulary improves so should the amount you understand.

SUITABLE TEXTS (Q2&3)

Find all the best places in your institution for accessing texts (the library, an online library and specific module resources). Also familiarise yourself with Google Scholar (this video has a good introduction to Google Scholar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dc-vKk205c8>). Always check the reference list of a text - are there any useful texts to look up?

JUDGING TEXTS (Q4)

It can be hard to make sense of academic texts, so using a model for questioning a text is really useful. SQ3R etc. Create a class list and make it a team effort to tackle texts. Look at reading models to aid how we assess a text. Reading models are frameworks for the process of understanding a text (see the Seven Pillars, Hermeneutic Circle and SQ3R TLAs). As a group, you can create a reading model specific to the module.

USING THE INFORMATION (Q1, Q5 & Q6)

Research reading models such as CRAAP, the Hermeneutic Circle, Seven Pillars Of Information Literacy, READ Backwards and SQ3R (all of which you can find on musostudy.com), which will help you think critically about the texts you read. Make sure you read a relevant Harvard Referencing guide (such as the 'Cite Them Right' book: Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2019) Cite Them Right. 11th edn. London: Palgrave Macmillan).

What to do now

You aren't alone in feeling that academic reading is difficult and a necessary chore! Seek out help - there is lots of support available, both online and within your institution, to support you with your academic study skills.