

Pre-Writing, Part 5: Parsing Dense, Unfamiliar Texts

Purpose: Using these two techniques, the Two-Pass Approach and the Dudley-Evans “Moves” Analysis of the genre of the text, you will be able to quickly scan through multiple research articles in order to catalogue them for your research paper. One of the biggest time-sinks that graduate students encounter is the overwhelming amount of reading they feel that they must do, especially when not all sources will end up being useful to the writer.

Two-Pass Approach (Clark 116 and 117). Some sources can be skimmed, but others need to be read more than once. When you encounter a new source, try this approach to determine its use.

First-Pass: Obtain a quick overview of the text. Consider: context, controversy addressed, author’s purpose. Skim the intro and conclusion. Determine if you can use it. If you can’t use it, we recommend saving it and moving on. This will save you time so you don’t entirely read everything you come across. Not all sources will be useful to you.

Second-Pass: Once you have determined that you want to use a source, think about its contents and relevance to you. Evaluate the credibility of the author. What theories or methods do they use? Based on context, can you examine the author’s biases? What conclusions do they draw? Do you agree or disagree? How can you link this source with others you have collected already?

If you can use the source, move on to mapping it out or go to [Activity B, Part 2 and Part 3](#) to begin organizing.

Using the Dudley-Evans “Moves” Analysis to Outline a Source (Clark 67). After reading a text, examine the core “moves” of establishing a research area. Generally the six moves appear in the beginning sections of texts. In other words, you are considering what the text says *and* the order and method in which it says it. Your research paper will, eventually, resemble something like this in the end, as well. Make a note to yourself in your notes on the source where each move is, roughly.

1. Introduce the field
2. Introduce the general topic within the field
3. Introduce the particular topic
4. Define the scope of the particular topic
 - Introducing research parameters or theoretical frameworks
 - Summarizing Previous Research or theories
5. Research model or Theoretical framework – What has previous research and historical context yielded?
 - Indicating a gap in previous research or approaches
 - Indicating possible extension of previous research or approaches
6. Present research – What is this study’s research based on?
 - Stating the goal of the contained research or analysis
 - Describing briefly the work carried out by justifying the research

In later sections of research-heavy writing, the texts usually examine follow a design of **Scientific Method** (Experiment, Data, Results, Discussion, Conclusion) or **Content Analysis** (Examination of the

“text”, Argument synthesis, Analysis, Application, Data, Results, Discussion, Conclusion). Try to identify all the moves that your text makes as you get a sense of how to make these moves in your own writing.