

# Keeping Up With Your Readings

Keeping up with your readings involves time management and planning skills so that you don't fall behind. It is also useful to consider *how you approach* your reading i.e. what strategies you use.

Below is a chart that identifies different types of reading and why you might want to approach the reading in a specific way.

## Approach

## Process

### Skimming

To have an overview of a text or an article

- Read first paragraph (intro) and last paragraph (summary).
- Reading first and last sentence of every other paragraph in between.
- Look for words as “cues” for main points.
- Highlight where you want to back for a re-read in detail.

### Search and Discover

Skimming for specific details in texts or articles

- **Skim** read as before, **locate** specifics.
- **Mark**
- **Return** to read in detail the specifics.

### In-Depth Reading

Foundational skill for university to foster deeper comprehension of ideas and concepts

- Read first and last paragraphs to get a handle on the author's intent and conclusion.
- Re-read from beginning.
- **Mark** key words, concepts, data deemed important.
- **Mark** flow of the argument.
- What is the author's main argument or intent?
- What are the conclusions?

## Critical Reading

Not accepting what you are reading at “face-value” – applying productive judgment and your thought processes of:

- interpretation
- analysis
- synthesis
- evaluation

When reading, you are at the same time asking questions; some actually write the questions in the margins along with other “thought notes”.

### Think like an investigator:

#### Interpretation

Reading to discover meanings – what conclusions can be drawn from what we read?

#### Analysis

- What are the underlying assumptions of the author?
- Structure of the argument, development of ideas
- How the evidence relates to the argument or topic. How does it refute or support the author’s conclusion?

#### Synthesis

- How you bring together points of the analysis to support what you interpret the results to mean

#### Evaluation

- Reading for merit or worth of the text or article. It’s a higher order of reading in which we use all the above processes. We use our knowledge of the field and competing arguments or data to judge the value of the information.

## Remember context

Why are you asked to read the text, book, article, webpage? Your reading should be purposeful, such as:

- Reading to prepare for a class or a meeting concerning a specific aspect of your field
- Reading in conjunction with writing an essay or starting a project
- Reading as part of a research initiative
- Reading as part of a competitive initiative in your company

It is the “situation” that guides your intent as a reader, and therefore your approach to reading.

From University of Otago website (<http://slc.otago.ac.nz/studyskills/ch3sect5.asp>)

Think through your semester's courses and the situations you were in. What types of reading did you do, and what tasks / demands were necessary for this type of reading. Why?

## Improving Reading Strategies

With a partner, think about general questions you would ask yourself to guide and develop an approach to reading for each stage of reading.

**Pick a context first**, and then create the planning grid.

Planning to Read: to give a focus to your approach

- Example: Why am I being asked to read this?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Read: the way in which you will read the material based on your defined purpose

- Example: What's the author's main purpose and conclusion?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Reflect: thinking about what you've just read

- Example: What did this term mean? Is there a definition here? If not . . .

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### **Read the Case Questions asked**

- Note key factors to look out for.

### **First Case Study Reading**

- Read to be able to describe the situation.
- Read to list key features of the case.

### **Second Case Study Reading**

- Read to find events, people and their issues.
- Read to identify and outline the main parts or components of the case.

### **Revisit Questions**

- Read to locate data from the case for each question.
- Write a draft response with your reasoning.
- Bring in your response theory and knowledge to support your findings.

## **References**

University of Otago, New Zealand: <http://slc.otago.ac.nz>

Dan Kirkland: <http://www.criticalreading.com>