

In-depth reading

There are several strategies you can use to ensure that you fully understand a text and the author's point(s) of view, and can follow the links between the different ideas or sets of information.

Active reading will help you stay focused rather than daydreaming or being distracted.

The RAP strategy

This strategy can help with 'dense' passages such as text books or research articles (Gawith, 1991)..

Read (a paragraph or section)

Ask yourself some questions about what you have just read

Put all the answers in your own words (make notes if you need to)

- This strategy is useful for new or difficult reading material with unfamiliar vocabulary or complex sentence structure. RAPping can also help you refocus if you find your attention wandering.
- Try RAPping for 20 minutes, making notes for 10 minutes, then taking a 10 minute break, to keep your concentration focused and fresh.
- Looking away from the page and reflecting on what you have just read can help develop recall ability. Retelling yourself what you have just read can help you focus on key ideas, which can help with understanding how this information fits with other thought on the same topic.
- When reflecting on what you have read, you may find the following language useful: 'Ok, this section is about... and the author has made three main points which are...', 'This was an example of...', 'This is similar to/different from X's theory because...'
- RAPping can really help you relate what you are reading, and to your prior knowledge, which can help with understanding and remembering.

The RIDA strategy

This strategy can help with descriptive and narrative texts.

Read

Imagine the scene you have just read about

Describe it to yourself

Add more detail as you read

- This strategy can help you reflect on details about places, people, actions, and events, and create a picture based on the words and style of language used by an author.
- It can help you focus on the most powerful imagery in a text, and you can add your reactions to the text in the form of margin notes.
- As you continue to read, you can elaborate on your images and reflections, which can enhance your comprehension of the entire passage.

SQ3R

This is useful for both reading and for making summaries at exam times. It involves two stages of reading- once quickly, asking yourself questions to gain understanding of the main ideas, and once again, more carefully, highlighting key ideas while you read to answer your questions from the first stage.

Survey: Skim through the material you are about to read, noting headings, sub-headings, diagrams and graphs. This step is used to give you a general overview of the material you are about to read.

Question: Ask yourself some questions about the material while you are skimming; use the section/chapter headings, questions at the end of a chapter, and reading objectives from study guides. Questions based on headings might include 'How do definitions of X vary?', 'What are the different types of X?', 'What are the key similarities/differences between X and Y?'

Read: Read the material again using a slower, more in-depth reading style. Pause frequently to answer the question/s you have raised, then read on. Make margin notes or underline words or phrases which are important (e.g. definitions). Read all of the material, including charts, tables and diagrams.

Recite: From memory, make notes on the sections you have just read. Try to recall the main headings and concepts.

Review: Check your recalled notes against the section that you read. Add anything important that you omitted. Put an asterisk (*) by the omitted point(s) so that you can focus on this area when you go through these notes the next time. Repeat the review process a number of times.

The Five S strategy

This is a power reading method which can help you choose an appropriate reading style and save time (Gawith, 1991).

Skim: Read the introduction, summary and first and last sentences of each paragraph; note the titles and sub-titles, and any diagrams or pictures.

Scan: Ask yourself questions about the text based on what you have skim read and look for the answers to these questions. E.g. 'Where is the information on?'

Select: Select sections you need to know more about. To do this, ask yourself questions such as 'Do you need to read all of this chapter?', 'Do you already know some of the information?', 'Is some of the text not very relevant to what you need to understand?'

Slurp: Read in depth, and more slowly, the sections you marked. Can you tell yourself about this concept now? Read again if necessary.

Summarise: Use a map, key words, index cards, or questions as a framework to make some notes about what you have just read. Spend no more than 10 minutes.

References

Gawith, G. (1991). *Power learning: A student's guide to success*. Mills Publications.

Academic writing and study skills support

1. Academic Q+A

If you have a quick question about study skills or academic writing, then they can ask it on the [Academic Q+A forum](#), which can be accessed via the [Academic Support Stream site](#).

2. Consultations

One-to-one consultations with learning advisors and writing consultants are [available online and on campus](#). Consultants can answer your questions about academic writing and study skills or give you feedback on your assignment's structure, focus, paragraph structure, flow, presentation, use of sources, and referencing.

3. Online Writing and Learning Link (OWLL)

Develop your academic writing and study skills with the [Online Writing and Learning Link \(OWLL\)](#) website from Massey University. OWLL includes information on assignment writing, assignment types, referencing, study skills, and exam skills.

4. Pre-reading Service

The [Pre-reading Service](#) is a free service, which gives students an opportunity to send their draft assignment to [CLS consultants](#) for review and advice. Students receive individual written feedback on their assignment's structure, focus, paragraph structure, flow, style, presentation, referencing, and use of sources. The service can be accessed via the [Academic Support Stream site](#).

5. Workshops

Free study seminars and workshops are run on campus and online. See [Workshops page on OWLL](#) for [programmes and registration details](#).