

STRATEGIC READING

UCLA Graduate Writing Center
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<https://gwc.gsrc.ucla.edu/>

Overview of Topics

- Reading in Graduate School
- Tips for Reading Productively
- Skimming versus Reading Carefully
- Taking Effective Notes

Graduate versus Undergraduate

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 - Know *what* things are; often tested on info
- Graduate students read for big picture
 - Understand *relationships, connections*
 - More assigned than you can read
 - Know where to look for things

Internal and External Pressures

- Internal pressures
 - Feeling like it's "wrong" not to read everything
 - Anxiety when not reading every word
 - Challenge of extrapolating the big picture, synthesis of material, and state of the field
- External pressures
 - Time
 - Finances
 - Partners, family, etc.

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- With what? (Hard copies, laptop, snacks, etc.)

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- With what? (Hard copies, laptop, snacks, etc.)
- How long can I read? In what time increments, with what kind of breaks?



mytomatoes.com

simple pomodoro tracking

25 min

[squash tomato](#)

⚙ preferences

today 2 finished tomatoes

11:40 - 12:11 strategic reading stuff

10:56 - 11:22 strategic reading stuff

thursday 25. sep 3 finished tomatoes

12:28 - 12:57 redraft chap 4

11:49 - 12:16 redraft chap 4

11:18 - 11:43 redraft chap 4

monday 22. sep 2 finished tomatoes

14:33 - 14:58 backwards outlined helping, being helped

13:57 - 14:22 "scrivener" hist pers

wednesday 20. aug 3 finished tomatoes

12:03 - 12:28 bcg essays app

11:26 - 11:58 bcg essays 2 and 3

10:54 - 11:19 bcg essays 1 and 2

How to Approach Reading Tasks

- Why are you reading this?
- What do you need to understand or say about this text?
- What are your guiding questions or themes?
- What are you specifically looking for?
- Where in the text can you find it efficiently?

Why are you reading this?

- **Class Discussion** – Why was this assigned? How does it relate to the class? To other readings? What would I like to say about it?
- **Seminar/Research Paper** – How does this relate to your topic (in terms of content, methodology, theory)? How might you respond to the work the author is doing?
- **Exams Prep** – Why is this work important in the field? How could this text be used in your own research? How could this text be used in teaching?
- **Prospectus/Proposal** – How does this work relate to your project?

Skimming versus Reading Carefully

- You don't need to read every word (often impossible to do so)
- Think through what you need to know from a text. This will help you focus on what is important and not spend too much time on unnecessary details.
- Skimming is reading quickly for a general sense of content; scanning is quickly looking through the text to find specific points.

Skimming Effectively, Slowing Down Selectively

1. Review the key issues/questions to focus on
2. Read the abstract
3. Look at headings and organization
4. Read the introduction and conclusion
5. Skim the body to understand the general layout and where other key information is
6. Read the places that contain important information that you want to know

Approaching a Scholarly Article

- Title
- Abstract
- Introduction / Background
- Literature Review
- Methods (depending on field)
- Results / Body Text
- Discussion
- Conclusion

Approaching a Book

- Title
 - Introduction
 - Section Headings / Section Introductions
 - Body Chapters
 - Conclusion
 - Index
-
- When would reading a book review first help?

Annotating

1. What is the main thesis/argument or finding of this publication?
2. How does this publication fit in the broader field?
3. What are the most interesting ideas in this publication? (as they relate to your course, exam, or research paper/project)
4. Where do you agree or disagree with the author? Where is there room for further study?
5. A potential use of this publication for your work is:
6. Additional sources suggested by this piece are:

Practice (5 minutes)

- What is the main thesis/argument or finding of this publication?
- How does this publication fit in the broader field? (i.e., what contribution does it make?)
- What are the most interesting ideas in this publication? (as they relate to your course, exam, or research paper/project)

Careful Reading & Note Taking

- Write a summary statement encapsulating the main ideas of the publication
- Respond verbally in margins to the ideas you consider important for your course, exam, or research project
- Write reflections/responses where you evaluate and indicate your response to the writer (agree, disagree)
- Write about how this publication might inform your research or professional practice (if relevant)
- Writing by hand can help with memory; at least type reflections (note: highlighting is very passive)

Keeping Track of Notes and Sources

- Paper (organization is key)
- Word Documents (file names are key)
- Zotero (it's free; assign labels)
- Endnote
- Mendeley
- Scrivener

Give yourself rewards



Take breaks.

Don't work all the time.



Other Resources

- How to Read an Academic Article:
<http://faculty.washington.edu/davidgs/ReadArticle.html>
- STANFORD STUDY TIPS: <https://undergrad.stanford.edu/tutoring-support/academic-skills-coaching/study-tips-resources>
- Reading and Writing for Understanding:
<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/05/07/reading-and-writing-understanding>
- Reading Criticism: From Purdue's OWL site. Good for humanities.
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/713/05/>
- Reading Scientific Writing:
<http://cbc.arizona.edu/classes/bioc568/papers.htm>

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