

ACE Quick Guide to Academic Reading Strategies

The Importance of Academic Reading

Reading should take up the **largest proportion** of your **study time**. It acts as a catalyst for **new ideas, knowledge and understanding**. Reading also supports the development of **critical thinking skills** which can lead to **improved grades**.



Quick Tips for Academic Reading



Start with **set texts** and **recommended reading**, e.g. reading lists, VLE resources and lecture materials.



Read **simpler texts** to **help build understanding** before moving on to more advanced texts.



Keep a **glossary of key subject-specific terms and abbreviations**.



Learn how to use the **library services**.



Use **techniques to help find relevant information** and key words, e.g. contents and index pages, and 'ctrl+F' search.

Academic Reading Strategies

Skimming

A quick look or read to determine an overall idea of the text.

Scanning

Looking for a specific number, key word or section.

Reading for Detail

Reading in-depth for knowledge and understanding.

Skimming and Scanning

Before you read an academic text in detail, you can use skimming and scanning to:

Skimming	Scanning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check if a text is relevant• Get a general idea of the content, main ideas and arguments• Understand background and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find specific information (key words and phrases etc.)• Locate relevant information in contents and index pages

Reading for Detail

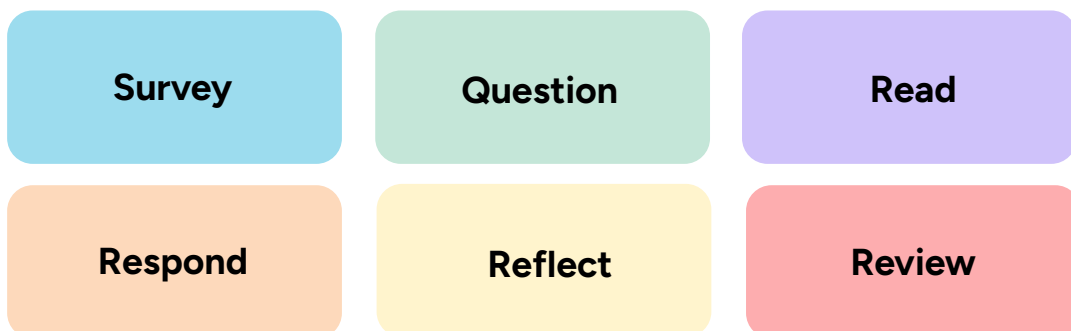
Once you have located relevant information, you must read for detail and **take notes**. This will help you:



- Gain an in-depth understanding of the ideas / concepts / theories being discussed
- Build knowledge and link new learning to previous learning
- Develop your own arguments and academic perspectives based on what you have read

SQ4R Reading and Notetaking Strategy

SQ4R is a reading and notetaking strategy that combines skimming, scanning, reading for detail and effective notetaking. It involves the following steps:



Survey

Skim and scan the text, including headings, sub-headings, visuals, introductions and conclusions. Look for key words and identify if the content is relevant and what sections you need to read.

Question

Create some questions you would like answering from the text. You can turn headings/sub-headings into questions or create your own. Record these questions in your notes - these will be your headings.

Read

Once you have created and recorded some questions, **read the text in detail for understanding**. Read one section at a time and look for the answers to your questions. New questions might arise as you

Respond

Record the answers to your questions in your notes. Make sure you use your own words - do not directly copy the text. Ensure you have understood what you have read and re-read if necessary.

Reflect

Once you have read the text and recorded your answers, **reflect on what you have read**. Make links to previous learning and reading. To what extent do you agree with the author? Make further notes in a different colour.

Review

After you have reflected, **review the notes you have made**. Have your questions been answered? What have you learnt? Do you need to do further reading and research? Consider re-writing or condensing your notes.

(Adapted from Utah State University, no date)

Benefits of Using SQ4R

- Helps you read for purpose and gives direction to your reading
- Enables you to take effective, well-structured and organised notes
- Encourages you to link new learning to previous learning
- Develops critical thinking skills



Reference List

Utah State University (no date) *SQ4R Reading System*. Available at:

https://www.usu.edu/academic-support/files/SQ4R_Reading_System.pdf (Accessed: 20 December 2024)



[QA.com](https://qa.com)