Reading and Notetaking Strategies

ANU Academic Skills
What are your concerns about managing the reading at ANU?
Read with a purpose

Have a strategy

Engage!
What are the types of reading you’ll be doing at ANU?

- Weekly course reading
- Background reading
- Focused research reading
- ?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High achieving students</th>
<th>Low achieving students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>use readings to learn and understand, active engagement</td>
<td>use readings only to make an output product: forage for resources without understanding their purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take notes as they read</td>
<td>don’t take notes as they read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have a strategy for organising and using their resources</td>
<td>don’t know what to do with the readings—frantically search for something that might fit without active engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spend a lot of time planning their writing</td>
<td>spend more time composing than the high achievers, but don’t plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research presented at the AALL conference, 2019, by Dr Rowena Harper.
PURPOSE

Why am I reading this?
What information do I need?
How much time and energy is it worth?
Always have a question!
Many possible purposes

- Background info
- What are the arguments and key points?
- Why do they argue this?
- Finding specific information
- Which theories / frameworks are used?
- Why is this relevant to my work?
Seek questions to guide your reading

- Tutorial questions
- Quiz questions
- Lecture questions
- Questions about the course themes
- Your own questions
- Reading to learn broadly about a topic
Reading for two main goals

Understanding the author’s argument

Answering your questions
PURPOSE – Why am I reading this? What information do I need? How much time and energy is it worth?

1. Search
2. Skim
3. Select
4. Study
PURPOSE – Why am I reading this? What information do I need? How much time and energy is it worth?

1. Search
   - How is the article laid out? What are the sections?

2. Skim
   - What are the key ideas in the abstract, key words, intro, headings, topic sentences?

3. Select
   - Which sections or paragraphs are relevant to me?

4. Study
   - Closely read the relevant parts and take notes
Reading for an essay

Can place ever be considered neutral or natural, or, are all places, instead, political? Use relevant theory to support your answer.

• How would you go about finding research to answer this question?
Can place ever be considered neutral or natural, or, are all places, instead, political? Use relevant theory to support your answer.

- How is ‘place’ defined?
- How and why might place be considered neutral, natural, and/or political?
- What theories are relevant?
- What could be my answer?
Tips for breaking down the question into sub questions:

- Focus on key words / terms
- Stick to the discipline you are studying in (in this case, sociology or anthropology instead of psychology or geography)
- Focus on gaining background understanding
- Try to discover the debate, and the arguments for the various points of view

- Don’t put the whole question into the SuperSearch
- Don’t expect one or several articles will directly answer the question you’ve been given
- Don’t read too widely so that you are overwhelmed and off topic. Remember to read with a purpose.
‘We don’t leave our identities at the city limits’: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in urban localities

Bronwyn Fredericks
Office of Indigenous Engagement, Central Queensland University Australia

Abstract: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in cities and towns are often thought of as ‘less Indigenous’ than those who live ‘in the bush’, as though they are ‘fake’ Aboriginal people — while ‘real’ Aboriginal people live ‘on communities’ and ‘real’ Torres Strait Islander people live ‘on islands’. Yet more than 70 percent of Australia’s Indigenous peoples live in urban locations (ABS 2007), and urban living is just as much part of a reality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as living in remote discrete communities. This paper examines the contradictions and struggles that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience when living in urban environments. It looks at the symbols of place and space on display in the Australian cities of Melbourne and Brisbane to demonstrate how prevailing social, political and economic values are displayed. Symbols of place and space are never neutral, and this paper argues that they can either marginalise and oppress urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, or demonstrate that they are included and engaged.
PURPOSE – Why am I reading this? What information do I need? How much time and energy is it worth?

1. Search

How is the article laid out? What are the sections?
Search out the structure

• Quickly look at the way the article is structured.
• Does this give you an idea of what the article is about?

How is ‘place’ defined?
How and why might place be considered neutral, natural, and/or political?
What theories are relevant?
Stop and reflect

• Beware the temptation to read on!
• Summarise your understanding so far
• You might be able to start answering some of your questions
### Cue column – your ideas

- What do I already know?

### Notes column – authors’ key points

#### Argument

- What are the author/s arguing?

**Summarise how the argument and ideas and apply to your critical analysis**
PURPOSE – Why am I reading this? What information do I need? How much time and energy is it worth?

2. Skim

What are the key ideas in the abstract, key words, intro, headings, topic sentences?
Skim the text

- Skim the key sections (read the abstract, introduction, topic sentences, and conclusion)

- Can you identify the author’s argument?

- Will it help you to answer the essay question?

How is ‘place’ defined?
How and why might place be considered neutral, natural, and/or political?
What theories are relevant?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cue column – your ideas</th>
<th>Notes column – authors’ key points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What do I already know?</td>
<td>• What are the author/s aims?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How does the text answer my questions?</td>
<td>• What is the research question?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do I need to find out next?</td>
<td>• What is/are the author/s arguing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is their answer to the question?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What points support their argument?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are their main reasons?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What evidence have they used to support their argument?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summarise how the argument and ideas apply to your critical analysis
PURPOSE – Why am I reading this? What information do I need? How much time and energy is it worth?

3. Select

Which sections or paragraphs are relevant to me?
Select the text

• Which sections are relevant to the essay question?

• Questions to consider:
  • How is ‘place’ defined?
  • Is place neutral, natural, and/or political?
  • What theories are relevant?

**How is ‘place’ defined?**

**How and why might place be considered neutral, natural, and/or political?**

**What theories are relevant?**
PURPOSE – Why am I reading this? What information do I need? How much time and energy is it worth?

4. Study

Closely read the relevant parts and take notes
Read actively: engage!

• Question the text
  • Where is the argument going?
  • Why does the author say this?
  • Do I agree? Why/why not?
  • What do I need to find out next?

• Take notes
Note-taking ideas
What’s your note-taking strategy?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cue column – your ideas</th>
<th>Notes column – authors’ key points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Summary section
## Notes column – authors’ key points

### Aim
- What are the author/s aims?
- What is the research question?

### Argument
- What are the author/s arguing?
- What is their answer to the question?

### Main points
- What points support their argument?
- What are their main reasons?

### Evidence
- What evidence have they used to support their argument?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cue column – your ideas</th>
<th>Notes column – authors’ key points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Strengths and weaknesses?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How valid are the research methods?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How strong/compelling is the evidence?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How logical is the argument and subsequent conclusion?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How does this fit in to other research in the field?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What are the author/s aims?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the research question?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What are the author/s arguing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is their answer to the question?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What points support their argument?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are their main reasons?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What evidence have they used to support their argument?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cue column – your ideas

• Strengths and weaknesses?
• How valid are the research methods?
• How strong/compelling is the evidence?
• How logical is the argument and subsequent conclusion?
• How does this fit in to other research in the field?

Notes column – authors’ key points

Aim
• What are the author/s aims?
• What is the research question?

Argument
• What are the author/s arguing?
• What is their answer to the question?

Main points
• What points support their argument?
• What are their main reasons?

Evidence
• What evidence have they used to support their argument?

Summarise how the argument and ideas and apply to your critical analysis
Adapted Cornell Method

Types of Leadership Theory

Motivational Theories - Explain how human relations affect motivation.
Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (Motivational Theory)
* Developed by Abraham Maslow
* Must meet lower needs first.

Theory X - holds that people are naturally irresponsible.
Theory Y - holds that people are naturally self-motivated and responsible.
* Developed by Douglas McGregor
* What type of leader you are is determined by which theory you believe in.

Motivational theories explain how and why people are motivated. A motivational theory is Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and Theory X and Y

Note-taking Area

Summary Area

Cue Column

ANU Academic Skills

Page 34
Notes: Mark key points/ideas/themes/theories/theorists

Highlight, underline, circle, whatever!

Cue column: for comments/definitions/connections/items to follow up.

Use bottom and top margins for summary section and longer notes.
These note-taking strategies can work in other academic contexts as well:

• Note taking helps you to develop your understanding of course concepts
• To gather ideas for discussions in tutorials
• To prepare summaries for exam revision
Methods - format

- Write by hand?
- Electronic?
- Notetaking software?
- Which one?

- How will you organise and categorise your notes?
Weekly notes

- Lecture notes
- Tutorial exercises
- Readings
- Assessments

Topic summary sheet

- Terms
- Themes
- Theories
- Theorists

Course summary sheet

- Systematic, schematic overview
- Retrieval system to work backwards
Study the text

- Pick one section from the previous activity
- Read it closely and take notes
- As you begin your studies, notice similarities / differences in your note-taking approach
My summary of the author’s argument

“Fredericks (2013) presents the idea that because our relationships to places and spaces are varied and multiple, they can never be neutral. Fredericks explains that for Aboriginal people, experiences of place mostly focus on inclusion and exclusion, making their relationship to space particularly political.”

How and why might place be considered neutral, natural, and/or political?
My summary of relevant theory

“Fredericks (2013, pp. 7-8) uses De Certeau’s theory of everyday practices to argue that people’s use and ideas about space and place are deeply political. De Certeau (1984) focuses on ...

I need to look up more about De Certeau, and examples from outside Australia.”

How and why might place be considered neutral, natural, and/or political?
My summary of the author’s argument about the case studies

“Fredericks (2013, pp. 8-13) uses examples from Brisbane and Melbourne to argue that place is always political. For example, Fredericks draws attention to a variety of symbols, artwork and signage that display contesting notions of ownership over space.

How and why might place be considered neutral, natural, and/or political?
My summary of how I might use the author’s argument

“This is a very relevant source for my essay. I agree with Fredericks’ (2013) idea that because our relationships to places and spaces are varied and multiple, they can never be neutral. Fredericks explains that for Aboriginal people, experiences of place mostly focus on inclusion and exclusion, making their relationship to space particularly political. Fredericks uses examples from Brisbane and Melbourne, and I think similar ideas might be worth examining for Canberra.”

How and why might place be considered neutral, natural, and/or political?
Summing up: Reading and note-taking strategies

• Refine your reading and note-taking skills throughout your degree.
• Experiment, see what works best for you
• Related workshops:
  • Time Management
  • Using Sources
ANU Academic Skills
Helping you to achieve academic success!

Peer Writers
- Ask us a quick question
- 10-15 min drop-ins
- Face-to-face or via Zoom
- During semester, Mon-Fri
  11am to 1pm

Writing Coaches
- Check you're on the right track
- 30 min booked appointments
- Face-to-face or via Zoom
- Written feedback also offered
- During semester, Mon - Fri
  10am to 4pm

Learning Advisers
- Excel in your research writing
- 45 min booked appointments
- Face-to-face or via Zoom
- Written feedback also offered
- Throughout the year, Mon - Fri
  10am to 5pm
ANU Academic Skills

Let’s Speak English!

Join fun conversation groups, make new friends, and practice your English

Monday to Friday 1-2pm via Zoom (Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri) or in-person in MRTC5.02 (Tues)

To find out more, visit anu.edu.au/LetsSpeakEnglish