Reading and Notetaking Strategies

ANU Academic Skills
Read with a purpose
Have a strategy
Engage!
Types of reading at ANU

• Weekly course reading
• Background reading
• Focused research reading
• Reading for pleasure
PURPOSE

Why am I reading this?
What information do I need?
How much time and energy is it worth?
Always have a question!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High achieving students</th>
<th>Low achieving students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>take notes as they read</td>
<td>don’t take notes as they read</td>
</tr>
<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>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>
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Research presented at the AALL 2019 by Dr Rowena Harper.
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

ANU Academic Skills
Reading for two main purposes

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
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 might place be considered neutral, natural, and/or political?
- What theories are relevant?
- What could be my answer?
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?
Activity 1: 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?

Can place ever be considered neutral or natural, or, are all places, instead, political? Use relevant theory to support your answer.
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
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?
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Cue column – your ideas</th>
<th>Notes column – authors’ key points</th>
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<tr>
<td>• What do I already know?</td>
<td>• What are the author/s arguing?</td>
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Summarise how the argument and ideas apply to your critical analysis.
Activity 2: 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?

Can place ever be considered neutral or natural, or, are all places, instead, political? Use relevant theory to support your answer.
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<td>• How does the text answer my questions?</td>
<td>• What is the research question?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What do I need to find out next?</td>
<td>• What is/are the author/s arguing?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is their answer to the question?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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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?
Activity 3: 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?
  • What could be my answer?

Can place ever be considered neutral or natural, or, are all places, instead, political? Use relevant theory to support your answer.
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
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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
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
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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?
### 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?  
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| Argument             | • What are the author/s arguing?  
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|                      | • What are their main reasons? |
| Evidence             | • What evidence have they used to support their argument? |
**Cue column – your ideas**

- Strengths and weaknesses?
- How valid are the research methods?
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**Notes column – authors’ key points**

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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)
1. Physiological needs - survival, food, shelter
2. Safety needs - stability and protection
3. Social needs - friendship and companions
4. Esteem needs - status and recognition
5. Self-actualization - self-fulfillment
* 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. Motivational theories are Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and Theory X and Y.
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?
Activity 4: Study the text

• Pick one section from the previous activity
• Read it closely and take notes
• When you have finished, share your ideas with your neighbour
• Do you 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.”

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

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

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

Can place ever be considered neutral or natural, or, are all places, instead, political? Use relevant theory to support your answer.
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
LET’S SPEAK ENGLISH!

Join fun conversation groups, make new friends and meet local students!
All ANU students welcome!

Weeks 1-12
Mon, Wed & Fri 1-2pm on Zoom
Tues & Thurs 1-2pm on campus
Marie Reay Room 5.02

TO JOIN ZOOM SESSIONS:
- In Wattle, enrol in the ‘Academic Skills appointments’ site
- Go to the Let’s Speak English section
- At the time, use the Zoom link

"Let’s Speak English has reinforced my communication ability and developed my fluency in English speaking."

anu.edu.au/english