

# Reading for study

There is a great deal, potentially, to read at university, and generally not much guidance about what and how much you read. It is important to develop active reading skills to help you be selective and critical about your reading.

## Key points

**Reading lists are a guide** - practice finding and using texts for different purposes

**You can't read everything in detail** – develop skimming and scanning skills to get a quick overview of a text

**Check out your subject section in the library** – familiarise yourself with range of texts, types, where information is stored – and explore library database.

**Be selective** – why should I read this? How would I use it?

## Useful questions to help your reading decisions

**Why am I reading this?** On reading list? Looks useful?

**What would I use it for?** Background? Key information? Latest essay?

**Is it straightforward or difficult?** Should I read it later?

**What's the best way to read it?** Skim? In detail? Scan index?

**Should I take notes?** What kind? What do I need?

**Shall I come back to it?** Take details and read/use later in course?

## SQ3R: Five steps to effective reading when you want to read in-depth

### Skim and scan

Scan text quickly to get an overall impression. Look at it quickly: notice headings, key words, images, pictures. Get an overall impression. Flick backwards and forwards; glance at first sentence of each paragraph.

### Question

Make up questions to help engage: Who? What? Why? When? How?

### Read

If you want to, read the text more carefully. Try to read in a relaxed way – don't worry about difficult words or ideas. Have breaks- read in short bursts.

### Recall

Look up, check you have an 'overview'. What's it about? Key issues?

### Review

Read carefully again, taking brief notes, paragraph by paragraph.  
N. B. Make a note of key details for your reference list/bibliography.