## Reading academic texts

**Most academic texts include an argument or line of reasoning. This could include an angle or point of view, a position that is being defended, or a case that is being made. When reading, ask yourself what does the author want me to accept? Do you know why you are reading a particular text book / journal article? Having a clear idea of the purpose of reading a text will make it easier to extract meaning from the reading.**

## What information are you looking for? Are you looking for a specific answer to a question? Is it for a better understanding of a topic, or are you trying to check facts? How will you find out if this piece of text is relevant?

**For journal articles:** Who wrote it? Is the author an expert in the subject area? Read the abstract; it should tell you what you need to know about the content. If it does not sound relevant, do not spend time reading it. If you aren’t sure, read the ‘findings’ and ‘conclusion’ sections to check.

**For textbooks:** Read the back cover. Does it sound like a useful book? Who wrote it? Are the writers known experts in the subject area?

## As you read, pay attention to:

* **Table of contents- which chapters are relevant?**
* **Index**
* **Preface and/or introduction**
* **Conclusion or summary**
* **Pictures, graphs, tables, figures. Images usually contain much more information than straight text.**
* **Section headings help the reader understand the book's structure.**
* **Special typeface or formatting: boldface, italics, numbered items, lists**
* **Questions**
* **Vocabulary lists/ Glossary**

**Read the first paragraph in a chapter. Then, read the chapter summary. Read sub-headings, and any highlighted words or phrases. Review what you have found out / learned about the material so far. Then, read the whole chapter.**

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