

Academic Reading

Developing effective reading skills is an important step in learning and making a meaningful contribution to your chosen field. The best reading strategies for you will depend on the text you are reading, your comfort with the material and style, and your reading objective or purpose. Get started with these tips!

Prepare to Read

-  Prepare **yourself and your environment** to **focus**. Remove distractions and, if possible, select a mode of reading (visual/auditory) that aligns with your strengths.
-  **Set time limits** and stick to them. Evaluate and assess your pace afterwards.
-  **Clarify expectations**. Successful reading looks different for different texts. What are you meant to get out of this text or reading session?
-  **Preview** the text to get an idea of structure and content, preparing your mind to learn, and assessing what to focus on.
-  **Ask questions** about the context, what you already know or are unfamiliar with based on your previewing, and what you expect to learn.

What is the context?

The context of a text, within your course and within the field, can help guide your reading. Ask of your text:

- Who wrote it, when, and where?
- Was it created in response to another, translated, or updated?
- How does it relate to the course themes and objectives?
- What lens could you apply when interpreting it?

Read Actively

Active reading means engaging with the information. We remember information when we take the time to process, consider, and integrate it into our existing knowledge.



Ask questions related to your reading **objective** to guide your focus and efforts.



Prioritize to address your knowledge gaps and reading objective.



Mark up your text: highlight, underline, and comment in the margins.



Relate information to what you already know.



Take notes of main ideas, key terms, structure, and questions. **Note what you do and do not understand.**



Pause and summarize sections in your own words. Write and/or **recite** these summaries.

Review, Reflect, and Re-read



Ideally within 24 hours of reading, review your reading notes and assess your understanding. You may need to re-read dense and difficult readings.

Incorporate review as a part of your regular routine to develop your long-term memory of course content and make studying easier later on!



To learn more, book a one-on-one coaching appointment or attend a Learning Skills Workshop! Visit www.smu.ca/studentssuccess StudentSuccess@smu.ca

