

3. Generate questions and be aware of your understanding:

Reading is an active task. Before and during your reading, ask yourself these questions:

- Who are these authors? What journal is this? Might I question the credibility of the work?
- Have I taken the time to understand all the terminology?
- Have I gone back to read an article or review that would help me understand this work better?
- Am I spending too much time reading the less important parts of this article?

After reading, ask yourself these questions:

- What specific problem does this research address? Why is it important?
- What are the specific findings? Am I able to summarize them in one or two sentences?
- Are the findings supported by persuasive evidence?
- Is there an alternative interpretation of the data that the author did not address?
- How are the findings unique/new/unusual or supportive of other work in the field?
- How do these results relate to the work I'm interested in? To other work I've read about?
- What are some of the specific applications of the ideas presented here? What are some further experiments that would answer remaining questions?

4. Draw inferences:

Not everything that you learn from an article is stated explicitly. As you read, rely on your prior knowledge and world experience, as well as the background provided in the article, to draw inferences from the material. Research has shown that readers who actively draw inferences are better able to understand and recall information.

5. Take notes as you read:

Effective readers take notes—it improves recall and comprehension. You may think you'll remember everything you read in researching class assignments, professional papers, proposals, or your thesis, but details will slip away. Develop a template for recording notes on articles you read, or adapt the template below for use. As you accumulate a large collection of articles, this template will help you distinguish articles and quickly locate the correct reference for your own writing. The time spent filling out the form will save you hours of rereading when you write a Background, Related Work, or a Literature Review section.