

Higher Education Language & Presentation Support

Reading & Note-Taking

HELPS

(Higher Education Language & Presentation Support)

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Contact us

- Helpful reading & note-taking strategies
- How to become a more critical reader
- How to take better notes
- How to use what you've read

AIMS:

Reading – smarter & wiser

- You are going to spend a lot of your time reading. Possibly more than you've ever done in your life before.
- You need to be a smart, savvy and efficient reader!

Ask your partner

1. Do you read every sentence, every paragraph and everything on the page when you read?
2. Are you afraid to question what you read-or do you just 'believe it' by default?
3. Do you have any time-saving tips for reading at university?

Warm-Up Questions

- Academic texts are NOT meant to be read like a novel. they are to be skimmed, scanned, searched and plundered for their ideas, concepts and lines of thought.
- You **do not** have enough time for read everything word for word, so engaging in time saving efficient reading practices **is an absolute must**.

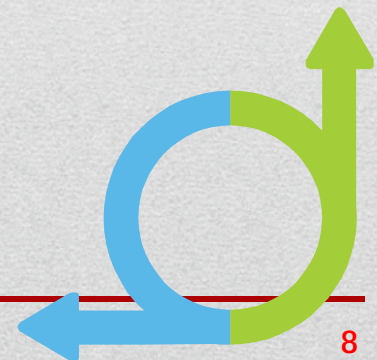
Effective Reading


Selective reading / Top Tips

- **Skim** readings first –**do not read** word for word, sentence by sentence, p1, p2,p3,p4 etc **at first**.
- **Keep notes on usefulness of article**, highlight useful refs & quotes as you go along, underline useful data.
- **Read accessible articles first** –build knowledge & confidence, try the more challenging articles at a later time.
- **Be a 'critical reader'** –question what you're reading –find other arguments which agree/disagree –look for bias, currency of info, relevance etc. Don't just accept on face value.
- Read in 50 min blocks- then take a rest for 10-15 minutes. Then repeat.
- **Make the readings work hard for you**

- Q: How do I know when to stop reading?
- A1. When you have adequate to good knowledge of your topic and you can happily answer the assignment question.
- A2. When you feel that you are repeating key information & that your knowledge is overlapping = you've read enough.
- **Tip:** If you can't understand a reading or theory – try to find an easier version of it somewhere else.

How much reading is enough?





How to read more effectively & critically



What is meant by
critical thinking?



Exercise

- Q: When reading a text, it is critically important to ask **yourself** questions about the value of the text.

True or False?

- What sort of questions must you ask yourself?

Evaluating Texts

- **Task. Evaluate a text.**

Read the following text and ask yourself....

- are these expressed facts true?
- do you agree with the expressed opinions?
- is the information trustworthy do you think?
- does it show any bias?
- is the information current?
- is this information reliable?

Evaluating Texts

- Text A:

Sydney is an ideal city for young university students in which to study. Australia's largest city with a population of over several million is the perfect place in which to live and study. Cheap, comfortable accommodation is always available, and transport is provided by clean and reliable state transport authorities offering excellent train, bus and ferry routes linking the whole city. A further advantage is the friendly local population who are well-known for their amenable manner and friendly, relaxed attitude to life; as well as their friendliness to strangers. Overall, it can be said that Sydney is an unrivalled city in the world, in which to study at university.

Evaluating Texts



Exercise

Discuss with your partner:

- Q: Who wrote the text in your opinion?
- Q: Do they have any particular agenda do you think?
- Q: How reliable is this text?
- Q: When was the text written?
- Is this information current?

Evaluating Texts

Academic material is not meant to be simply read.
It is meant to be **searched** and **scanned** for essential content.

- Be selective with what you read
- Set a realistic time frame for any reading task.
- Never read without specific questions you want to answer.
- Never start reading at page 1 of the text, but look for the summary, conclusion, subheadings, etc.
- Read only as much as you need to get the information you are after.
- Always keep in mind what you need, what is relevant to the question you are asking the text

Managing your reading at Uni

- Effective Reading 

Focus on the Question: Search text for answers

Preview text

Skim & Scan text

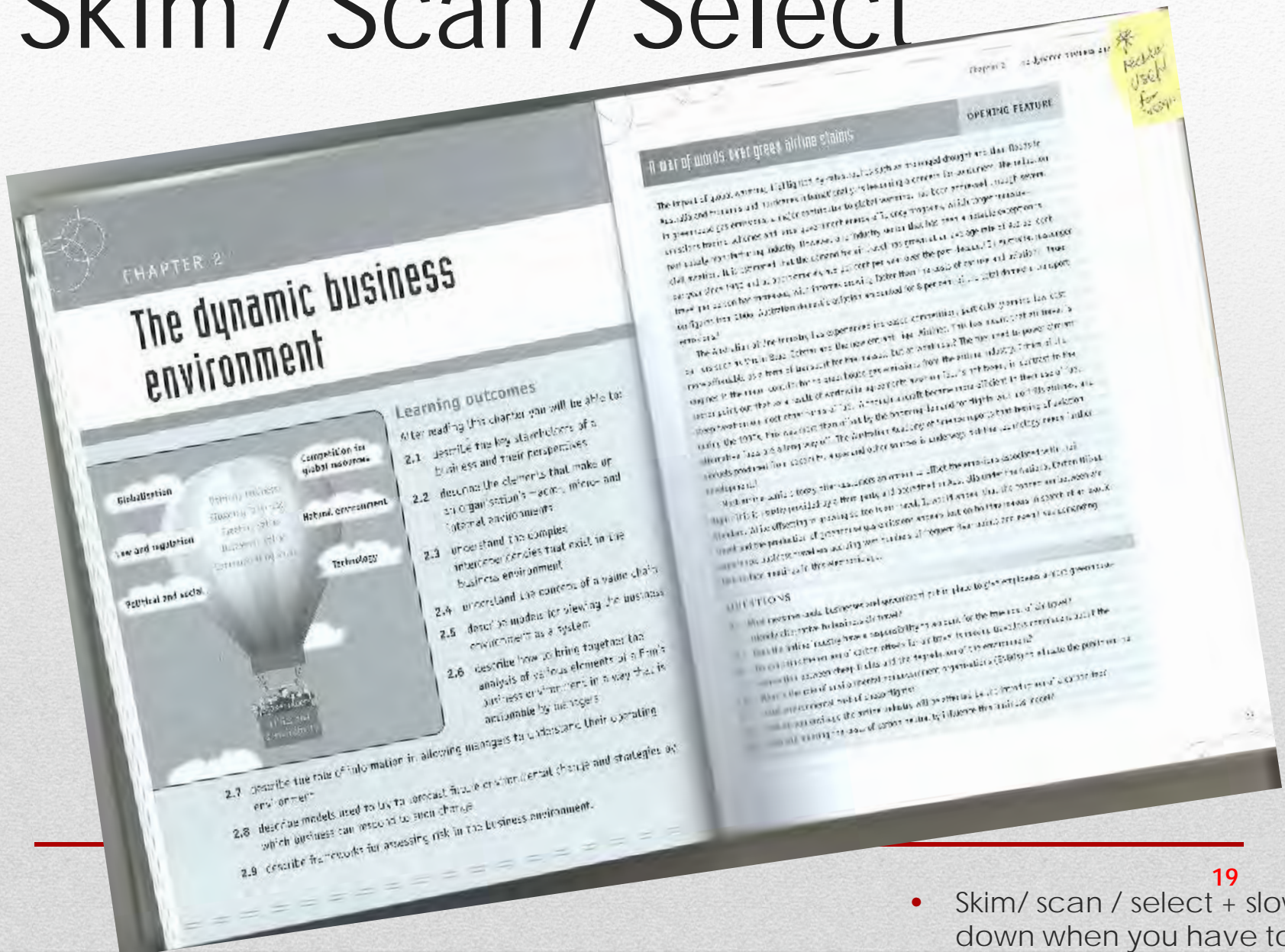
Use table of contents/ index

Take notes as you go along

Summarise what you've read

Reading Strategies

Skim / Scan / Select



- 19
- Skim / scan / select + slow down when you have to!

it moving from a period of stability into one of dynamism? The same environmental change may be seen as an opportunity by one business and a threat by another. The view taken will be influenced by the analysis undertaken, the informed views of senior management and the ability of the business to respond.

In the process of developing plans for the future, management needs to be able to answer the questions 'Where are we now?' and 'Where are we likely to go?' given the present performance and future environment. The SWOT summary provides a key input to the planning process. If we assume that we are preparing a business plan for a strategic business unit, SBU (an SBU may be a subsidiary or division of a larger organisation), then the chief executive officer (CEO) has to set the business objectives for the coming financial year. In arriving at a decision the CEO has to balance a number of conflicting demands. The parent organisation and the board of directors will have expectations regarding the performance of the SBU. These will be expressed in financial terms such as return on capital employed, sales revenue, profit as a percentage of sales and rate of growth. The chief executive of the SBU is involved in negotiations during the setting of these objectives. During the process the CEO is conscious of the recent performance of the business (from any internal audit) and the threats and opportunities presented from the SWOT analysis. In accepting the financial objectives from the parent organisation the CEO needs to ensure that they are realistic and achievable, given the current and future business environment. This may seem obvious, but remember that the parent organisation may be a multinational with a head office in another country or continent.

The environmental forces to which the head office managers and directors are exposed may be quite different from those influencing the local SBU. In negotiating the objectives with the parent and in setting the SBU's objectives it is beneficial to state explicitly the key assumptions made. Therefore, if the growth rate of the economy will directly influence the performance of the business it is necessary to state what level of growth you have assumed over the planning period; likewise for interest rates, levels of disposable income, business confidence indices, exchange rates etc. These would all be primary assumptions. If the business is dependent on others then some secondary or derived assumptions may need to be stated. If 80 per cent of the firm's business sales to the automotive industry, then specifying the assumed level of car sales would be important. Assumptions about the growth rate of the automotive sector may be derived—in part at least—from assumptions about growth in the national economy. Similarly, if a firm manufactures bathroom suites and fittings, its business is directly dependent on sales of new housing and the refurbishment of existing housing stock, both of which are influenced by the level of interest rates and consumer confidence.

Planning in larger businesses is a complex activity. If the business operates over a number of product groups, industries and international markets, then an environmental analysis needs to be conducted at the local level as well as the SBU and corporate level. Forming a cohesive view about the environment becomes much more difficult. In managing a business, senior executives have to balance the immediate requirements of existing operations against the longer-term requirements of shaping and developing the future business. Where does the organisation wish to be in 5 and 10 years' time? Since the organisation cannot change the business environment it would be wise to attempt to monitor and predict it and then to shape the business to maximise the opportunities and minimise the threats posed by the environment.

Managing operational risk

So far, risk and uncertainty have been discussed at a strategic level. But in addition to making decisions at a macro level, businesses must increasingly address the issue of risk at a much more operational level. While operational risks may not normally pose such a threat to the survival of an organisation as strategic risks, they

can nevertheless have serious consequences for an organisation. The subject of risk assessment has become an increasingly important item on businesses' agendas and there are now numerous consultants who undertake risk assessments of an organisation's activities. Risk assessment has become increasingly important at an operational level for a number of reasons.

1. Western societies have become more litigious with consumers' rights increasingly being enshrined in legislation. Consumers now have more grounds for obtaining legal redress against a firm that has failed to deliver its promises, in contrast to previous times when organisations might have been able to get away with their failings.
2. The volume of government regulation of business has increased, for example, organisations are increasingly required to protect the ecological environment and risk increasingly heavy fines if they fail to do so. Legal and regulatory issues such as these are addressed in more detail in Chapter 5.
3. The rights of employees have tended to increase and organisations must assess the risk of disadvantaging individual employees or groups of employees who could potentially have a claim against the organisation.
4. With the growing importance of consumer brands, it has become increasingly important for an organisation to preserve its image. Even though a business might not have broken any law, its association with unethical practices may do incalculable harm to the sustainability of the organisation.

How should organisations respond to operational risk? They need to reconcile the potential benefits of an activity with the downside risk of certain undesirable events happening. Many approaches to risk assessment seek to develop a risk profile of an activity and estimate the cost to the firm if an event occurs and the probability that it will actually occur. An organisation can therefore choose between alternative courses of action on the basis of their expected cost. Of course, calculating these values can be quite speculative. For example, how would a food manufacturer estimate the probability of terrorist groups sabotaging its factories or environmental campaigners blockading its distribution depots? It may be even more difficult to calculate the cost to the organisation of such events occurring. The costs of physical damage may be relatively easy to assess and may possibly be covered by insurance. But it is much more difficult to assess the damage to a firm's reputation.

Summary

Stakeholders play an important role in shaping the business strategy. Information is becoming increasingly important as a means by which organisations gain advantage in a competitive business environment. With advances in a firm's ability to collect data, greater attention is now paid to the effective use of information. This chapter has explored the ways in which an organisation can create knowledge to build up a picture of what the business environment may look like now and in the future. The exploration of stakeholder theory considers organisations and individuals within the environmental set with increased access to information may have influence over the business. Numerous frameworks are available for analysing the business environment. The choice of framework will depend, among other things, on the complexity of the environment, the speed of change and the cost of inaccurately predicting change in the environment.

This chapter has reviewed the complex nature of an organisation's business environment. The environment is analysed at three levels: the microenvironment, comprising firms and individuals that an organisation

Risk assessment
An analysis of the probability of an event happening and the seriousness of its effects.

Skim/ Scan/ Select/ Take notes

Becoming A Critical Reader



Exercise

- Q: Do you believe everything you read?
- Do you believe every academic paper you read?
- Is it OK to disagree with the academic literature?

Questions

What is Critical Reading?

- The purpose of critical reading is to gain a deeper understanding of the material. It involves reading in depth and between the lines.

Some further questions you should ask yourself while reading are:

- Has the writer backed up statements and ideas with credible evidence?
- Are logical arguments used?
- Does the writer present the two sides of a case evenhandedly?
- Is there any evident bias from the writer's viewpoint?

Critical Reading

An example of critical thinking

Manson, 2006 has stated that climate Change is a naturally occurring phenomenon and is not influenced by human population of the Earth.

Research by Greer, 2009 shows that human activity and increases in Co2 have caused climate change.

Is Climate Change caused by human activity? –Critically analyse and discuss.

Blake, Wilson & Nicks, 2008 claim that climate Change is a naturally occurring phenomenon which is not directly linked to human activity.

Tests carried out by Brown and Longman, 2007 have shown that human activity, increased deforestation and pollution have influenced climate change.

Based on what I've been reading, what I have experienced, what common sense tells me and what the research/literature tells me.....I now THINK.....

The Stern Report, 2010 advocates that climate change is directly linked to increases of Co2 in the atmosphere as a result of human activity.

- **Efficient academic reading strategies are based on the structure of academic writing. For instance, you should begin by:**
- Reading the introduction to search for the thesis point or main argument presented, and to verify the overview provided by the contents page; also....
- Scanning by topic sentences, i.e. the sentence which makes the point of the paragraph and which is usually the first sentence of the paragraph.

Reading Tips

The thesis statement. What is it?

- The role of the introduction is to give background to the topic and to put forward the writer's thesis statement (or main argument).
- This thesis statement can often be found towards the end of the introduction.
- The thesis point is usually reiterated in the conclusion as well.
- **To gain a good idea of the argument being put forward and the main evidence being presented you should read both the introduction and the conclusion first.**

Critical Reading



Exercise

Human beings have existed on earth for about half a million years. Agriculture, the necessary basis of fixed settlements, is only about twelve thousand years old. Civilisations date back no more than some six thousand years or so. If we were to think of the entire span of human existence as a day, agriculture would have come into being at 11.57. The development of modern societies would get under way at 11.59.30. Yet as much change has gone on in the last thirty seconds of the 'human day' as in the whole of the time leading up to it.

Critical Reading / Thesis

Source: (Education Review, 2006)

Reflecting upon past experience is an important capability for all professionals in order to develop better communications skills, conflict resolution and enhance future performance. To look back on the simulation that was conducted as group work this semester has allowed participating students to gain many practical skills in our industry. This paper will reflect upon the role that I personally played in this simulation activity, as well as critically analyse our performance. It could be argued that our team performed well overall; yet more effective delegation and organisation skills could have been improved. This paper will comment upon the team dynamics, communication style, as well as suggest possible improvements in any future simulation activity.

Example 2/ thesis

(UTS HELPS 2015)

- A further strategy is to **read topic sentences** of each paragraph.
- This can be particularly effective for difficult articles or heavy academic texts.

Critical Reading



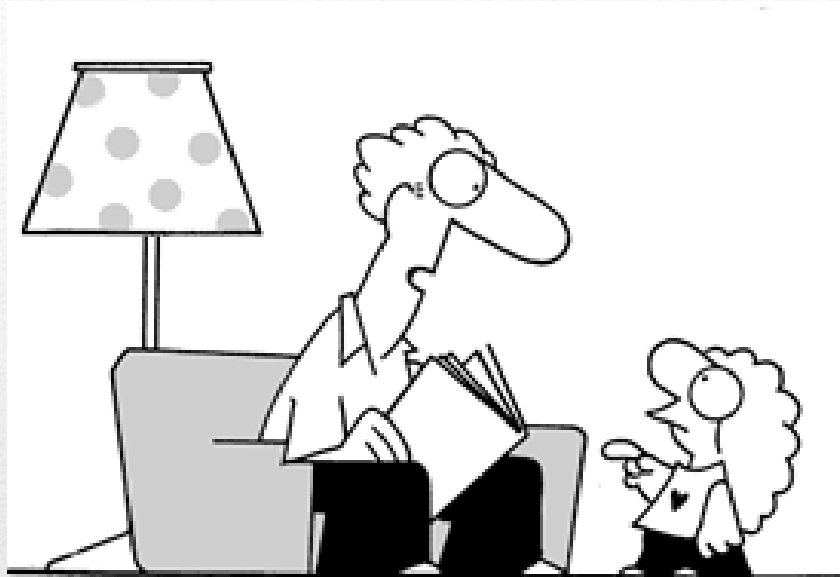
Exercise

- **Task: Identify the topic sentences in this short passage:**

The stress or accent pattern within a word is intimately related to the sounds in it, especially to the vowel sounds. In English, vowels are longer, louder, and often higher in pitch when they are in stressed (accented) syllables than when they are in unstressed syllables. In addition, if adding an ending to a word causes the stress to shift from one syllable to another, some of the vowels in the word may change more drastically and actually become different phonemes. These changes are often not reflected in spelling. For example, when the word declare is used to make the word declaration, the stress changes: the first syllable gains a little stress, the second syllable loses its stress while the strongest stress goes to the third syllable.

In constructing sentences and sentence meanings, stress has many uses: the most familiar is probably contrastive or emphatic stress, as when one says "I want the black book, not the green book" with the strongest stresses on black and green. Compare this sentence with "I want the black book, not the black notebook"; in the latter the strongest stresses are on the first book and on note.

Critical Reading



“It’s called ‘reading’. It’s how people install new software into their brains.”

Source: <http://insertmedia.office.microsoft.com>

More Tips

- **General Reading Strategies:**– tips for reading better at Uni
- Quickly skim and scan and read for general meaning.
- Look at the title of the paper- what is it about/ useful?
- Read the introduction and conclusion first.
- Read the topic sentences and concluding sentences of each paragraph in the main body of the article.

How to become a **more efficient** reader

- Is there clear **credible evidence** for arguments do you think?
- Is there any **bias** evident in the article?
- Who else **agrees** and **disagrees** with these arguments?
- Are there any included tables that give **additional useful information** to enhance the article or its meaning?
- How would you **summarise** what the reading is about?

How to become a **more critical** reader



NOTE-TAKING STRATEGIES

Taking Effective Notes

- Buy a dedicated notebook for each subject
- Don't write word for word- be selective!
- Use bullet points / short phrases
- Make lists
- Abbreviate words –especially common words
- Develop individual 'short-hand' system
- Software is OK

Note-taking cont.

When taking notes quickly use some shorthand symbols to help you write quicker e.g.

- w = with
- th = that/those/then –any th word
- + = and
- 2 = to / 4 = for
- B = be/being
- U = you

- Altho not acdmc if u can mke notes using abbr sytm will sve u time in class + u will slwly b able 2 mke notes whilst ur lctr is tlking –th systm is bit lke txt mssg on mbile phne –use it 4 ur note mking only thou + nt 4 ur essays/assgnts!

- Q: DO you have a good note-taking system?
- Please share your ideas with the table

Over to you...

Note-taking example

1. Start each new lecture's notes on a fresh page. Add date, name of lecturer & topic.

2. Draw a margin on the side of page – useful for refs/comments.

3. Add numbers & headings, get key words/ideas only as you take notes- not full sentences.

5. Take care with your handwriting –so that you CAN read your notes later.

4. Make notes on other resources that you should read/check or cross reference in the margin – easy to check later.

6. Use your short-hand system to make note-taking quicker.

7. Have a section ruled off at the bottom –for homework/to do / follow ups

8. Make sure you can understand your notes the next day & the week after.

UTS FILE NOTE

lecture - 22nd March
- lecturer - S. Harris

Topic - Understanding learners Reading:

① - Learning styles
↳ need to consider L.S for effective learning & teaching - Dexter - (Dexter, 2001)
(read again)

② - Environmental perspectives
↳ cognitive + physiological perspectives of learning
↳ understanding your own preferred L.S → see text p38

→ Definition - 'learning styles is an approach that an ind can use & his/her learning colour Gardner. (Gardner, 2009)
* find in the library

Homework/To Do
- re-read notes, find + summarise Gardner article

Page 1 of 3

e: learningsupport@uts.edu.au

- Split page system

October 3

Types of Leadership Theory

Pg. 127

Cue Column

MASLOW

Pg. 122

Why do some believe in Theory X and others Theory Y?

Motivational Theories -

- Explain how human relations affect motivation.

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (motivational theory)

1. Physiological Needs - survival, food, shelter
2. Security 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.

Note-Taking Area

Motivational theories explain how and why people are motivated. 2 motivational theories are Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Theory X and Y

Summary Area

Ima Student
World Studies 5/6
August 1, 2015

Archetypes

What are archetypes, & why are they important to this class?

Who advanced the idea of archetypes?
Carl Jung - famous psychiatrist

What is the **collective unconscious**?

- part of the mind
- 1. common to mankind
- 2. inherited / innate / instinctual @ innate

How do archetypes relate to the collective unconscious?

- archetypes are part of the unconscious
- universal ^{archetypal} images & ideas ^{original}
- **universal** _{returning from the beginning}

What is an archetype?

- **pattern** that can be ^{copied} is copied
- **symbols, situations, characters** that appear again & again
- same b/c they are **mindless**
- help to understand **things**

Images/story by which the unconscious is to be understood

Images/story by which the unconscious is to be understood

Images/story by which the unconscious is to be understood

Images/story by which the unconscious is to be understood

1.1 Finding and Using Rates

Goal: Explain the concepts of patterns of change between the independent and dependent variables for a linear relationship.

Linear Relationships & Linear Equations

at 1000 ft → (base on camp)

Expression: It is independent of its dependent

1) 10 meters in 5 seconds = 2000

2) $\frac{5000}{250} = 2000$. It would take me 250 seconds to walk 5000m.

3) $2000 \times 60 = 120000$. I would walk 120000 in 30s.

4) $5t = d$

5) $2(10) = d = 20$

6) $2(25) = d = 50$

7) $2(30) = d = 60$

Implication:
A linear equation has 2 variables and a rate of change. If I know the value of one variable I can solve for the value of the other.



Image source:
(studyskills.org 2014)
(Smartereducation.com 2015)

examples

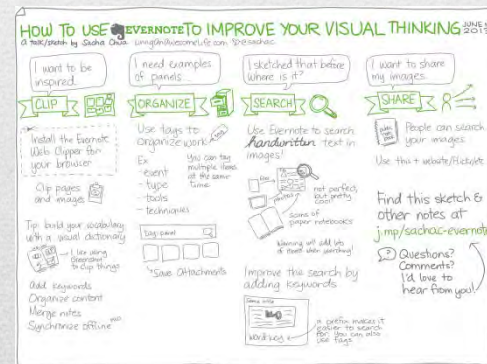
Template

Note taking template :					date
Text / Title / Author					Further reading / Useful References
Points made					
Points made					
Points made					
Critical thinking rubric	What else have I read that agrees with this?	What have I read that disagrees with this?	How do I feel about this? Do I agree or disagree? Show evidence.	Useful / not useful?	
To do: / Follow up Actions	1 = 2 = 3 = 4 =				

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Useful note-taking software

- [Microsoft OneNote](#) (part of Microsoft Office; also available as iOS / Android app)
- [Evernote](#) (free and paid versions; also available as iOS / Android app)



Note-taking software

Images: (Evernote 2015)

Descriptive writing	Critical analytical writing
states what happened	identifies the significance
states what something is like	evaluates strengths and weaknesses
gives the story so far	weighs one piece of information against another
states the order things in which happened	makes reasoned judgements
says how to do something	argues a case according to the evidence
explains what a theory says	shows why something is relevant or suitable
explains how something works	indicates why something will work (best)
notes the method used	identifies whether something is appropriate or suitable
says when something occurred	identifies why the timing is of importance
states the different components	weighs up the importance of component parts
states options	gives reasons for selecting each option
lists details	evaluates the relative significance of details
lists in any order	structures information in order of importance
states links between items	shows the relevance of links between pieces of information
gives information	draws conclusions

Descriptive VS Critical Analysis

Once you have the **relevant** information:

- What have you discovered and learnt?
- How does your new knowledge help your understanding?
- What arguments or evidence have you discovered?
- How have your ideas/opinions been influenced?
- Do you now have a clearer understanding of the topic/task?

Reflect on your Research

What can you do if you don't understand something?

- Ask in class
- Go see your lecturer personally (take a draft)
- Go see another member of faculty
- Ask peers/classmates
- Email your lecturer for help
- See a HELPS advisor (drop-in consultation)
- ALWAYS seek help if you need it!!

Having Trouble?

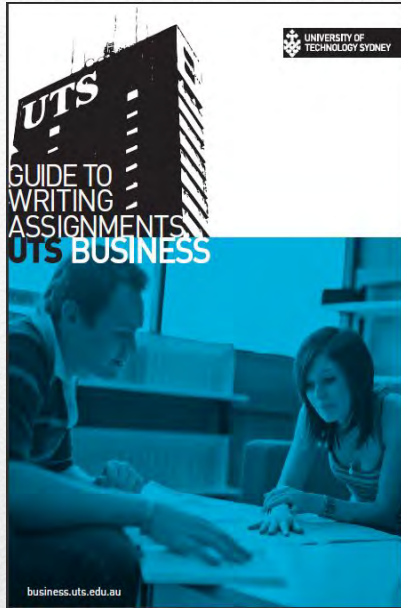
1. Don't leave things to the last minute
2. Don't read when they are too tired
3. Read in 50 mins blocks
4. Analyse and skim materials before reading in-depth
5. Read abstracts, intros and conclusions first
6. Check the meaning of new words/ yet don't overuse dictionaries
7. Are critical thinkers in their approach/ evaluate texts
8. Take good notes following a logical system
9. Summarise what they've read
10. Look for thesis statements & topic sentences for clues
11. Highlight text selectively & use copious 'post-it' notes
12. Keep accurate bibliographic reference details as they go along
13. Ask for help if they need it

What Good Readers do....

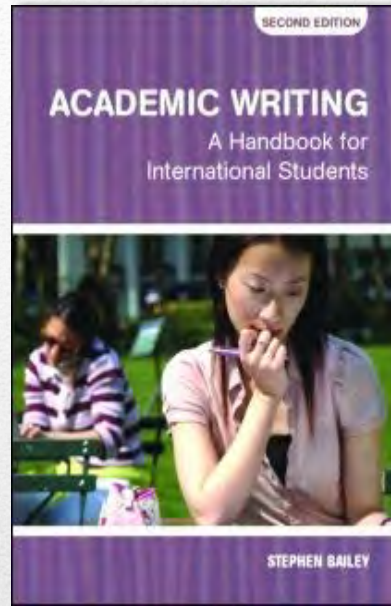
Effective Critical Reading + Note-taking

➔ strategies for better critical reading.

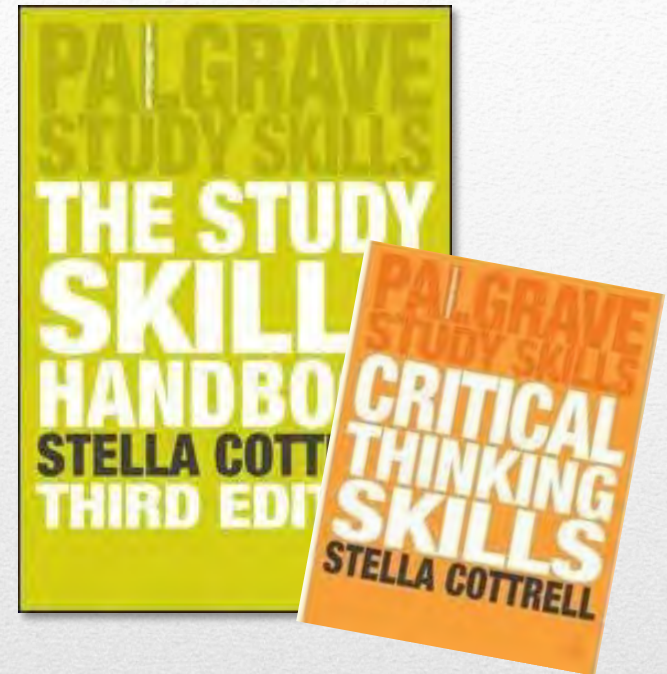
- ▶ Inspect text first
- ▶ Scan rapidly / ascertain
- ▶ Question / Question / Question /
- ▶ Locate specifics quickly
- ▶ Read at the right speed for the task
- ▶ Recall / review / summarise through your notes
- ▶ Note-take / note references accurately
- ▶ Read SMART
- ▶ Save time!
- ▶ Achieve task



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Published by Routledge Press. Approx \$52



Published by Palgrave Macmillan Approx \$40

Useful Further Resources

- Thank you for your time today.
- Good Luck with your studies!

Any Questions?

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