

Reading Checklist

A reading checklist of active reading steps to understand and remember any text.

Preview before you read

- Read the title, headings and any chapter summary.
- Skim the introduction and conclusion first.
- Look at images, charts, bold terms and questions at the end.
- Note why you are reading this and what you need from it.
- Estimate how long the reading will take and plan breaks.

Set a purpose and questions

- Turn each heading into a question to answer as you read.
- Write down what you already know about the topic.
- Note the main question the text seems to address.
- Decide what level of detail the assignment requires.
- Keep a pen or device ready for notes.

Read and annotate actively

- Read one section at a time rather than the whole thing at once.
- Highlight or underline only the key claims and evidence.
Marking everything is the same as marking nothing.
- Write questions and reactions in the margins.
- Circle unfamiliar words and look them up.
- Number or label the main points as you go.
- Pause to check the section answered your heading question.

Summarize as you go

- After each section, look away and recall the main idea.
- Write a one or two sentence summary in your own words.
- Note how the section connects to the overall argument.
- Capture any quotes or data you may need to cite.
- Flag points you found confusing to revisit.

Review after reading

- Write a short overall summary of the whole text.
- Answer your original heading questions from memory.
- Reread your annotations and confusing sections.
- Connect the reading to class notes or other sources.
- List any follow-up questions for class or further study.