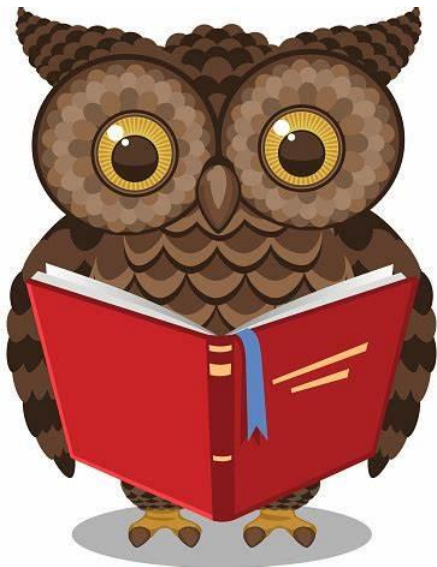


Effective Reading

What does it mean to read effectively? Perhaps it is easier to consider what reading ineffectively is, we've all done it at some time. Having to re-read the same paragraphs or sentences over and over because we just haven't taken in the information. Often that could be because we are too tired, distracted, or perhaps the light level is wrong, or we have forgotten our reading glasses!

Effective reading, however, can be the very opposite, instead of poring over every word repeatedly, you can cover often large amounts of text with ease and speed.



How can you do that though?

You can become a more effective reader by employing some techniques and practice. We will consider these below:

We all read for different reasons and in different ways, for example you may read a novel for pleasure and at your own pace, but an academic textbook or paper is a different proposition altogether. So even before you start reading, consider **Why** you want to read that text, ask yourself what do you want to get out of it?

Perhaps you have some questions in mind that you have been asked to answer, or you can formulate your own set of questions. Useful prompts for formulating questions are Who, What, Why? and When, do this for all paragraph headings and sub-headings.

Useful Tip! It can be useful to write these questions down before you begin reading, then you can answer them as you go along. If you write each question down on a flashcard and the answer on the other side, you will find these to be a useful tool when it comes to revising for an assessment.

We can often feel overwhelmed when faced with a large volume of text, it's off putting and let's be honest, we often don't have the



time or the patience to wade through it all, but that need not be a barrier for effective reading.

For example, you may want to find out if a given article or book is relevant to your area of study, and therefore worth your time reading, in which case you can use a technique called **Skimming**: You can do this by reading the summary or review if there is one, looking at headings and sub-headings, looking out for words in **bold** or *italics*, also pay attention to diagrams, charts etc. Check the contents page too for relevant words or topics to give you a general impression about what it's about.

Also, you could look out for recommendations or reviews online of the material you are considering, to give you an idea of its usefulness.



You can also **Scan**, this is speed reading with a purpose, you're scanning the text looking for relevant words or phrases, it's a way to find specific information or facts quickly.

Read the first and last sentences of paragraphs. Look out for phrases such as 'however', 'therefore', 'meanwhile' or 'similarly', these are often cues that important points are to follow.

If you need a more in depth or a complete knowledge of the subject, you may just have to bite the bullet and read the whole piece.

If you have a copy you can do so on, underline or **highlight** important words or passages of text. Look up any words, phrases or concepts you are unfamiliar with.

A good way to check if you have retained what you have read is the Read, Cover, Record and Check method. Once you have finished your reading, put it out of sight and either write down or voice record what you can remember, then check it against the original.

Another name for this is the SQ4R, you can find more information and view a video on it here: [Effective Reading - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsZE_GsphzE)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsZE_GsphzE

The emphasis on all these methods is on **active** as opposed to **passive** reading. So even though you might not be reading every word you will be reading with purpose and by checking things you are unsure of also with understanding.