



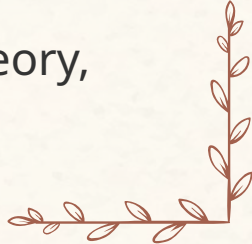
Strategies for Reading Scholarly Sources

Reading to Prepare for a Research Project







Before Reading

- **Establish Context:**
 - Consider the journal, year, intended audience.
 - **Get an Overview:**
 - Read the abstract carefully to get an overview of the article's content. If there is no abstract, read the introduction and subject headings.
 - **Identify Reading Goals:**
 - Ask: Why am I reading this? What do I need to know?
 - Look for relevance to your research question or topic.
 - Identify what the text contributes to your project: context, theory, methods, findings, or arguments.
- 
- 
- 



Active Engagement: Take Notes

- Write a summary in your own words. May summarize each major relevant section or even paragraphs.
 - Identify research question and thesis, main argument/contribution.
 - Make connections to other readings (use synthesis matrix).
 - Make connections to your research project, including. . .
 - Relevant theories, concepts, quotes
 - Relevant cited sources
 - Gaps, unanswered questions, and sub-questions your primary research might answer
 - Ask questions about the source, concepts, findings, implications.
 - Reflect and react: Develop an opinion and connect with your ideas and experiences.
- 
- 



Reading an IMRAD Article

Abstract: The overview. Always read this first, then skim subject headings.

Introduction: Research context and purpose. Find research question and/or thesis, then jump to conclusion. Focus on literature review to identify key sources and debates in the field.


Methods: How study was conducted. Skim unless replicating methodology.

Results: Key findings. Read or skim as needed for your topic.

Discussion: Interpretation and implications. Focus here. Critical for connecting to your research.

Conclusion: Jump here and skim after the Introduction for main points.

References: Look for additional sources relevant for your project.



Effective Skimming Techniques

- **Start with the Abstract:** Decide if the article is relevant and how.
- **Scan Headings and Subheadings:** Identify key sections to focus on.
- **Read Topic Sentences:** Capture the main idea of paragraphs.
- **Jump to Figures, Tables, and Captions:** Quickly grasp data and findings.
- **Skip Irrelevant Sections:** For example, unless replicating methods, you can usually skip it.





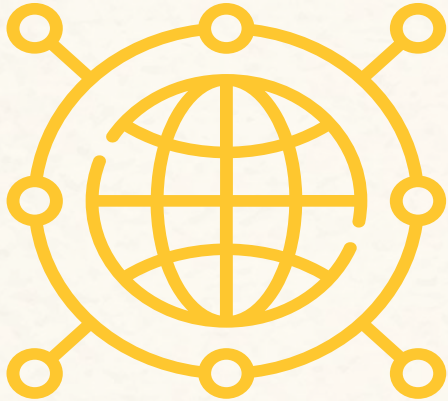
Strategies for Reading Difficult Texts



- **Pre-Reading Strategies:** Read or skim the abstract, headings, and conclusion to preview the argument.
- **Chunking:** Break reading into sections and focus on one at a time.
- **Resting and Revisiting:** Take breaks to process challenging sections.
- **Rephrasing:** Summarize complex sentences in your own words.
- **Outside Help:** Look up unfamiliar terms and concepts. Use AI tools to clarify concepts. Use AI to supplement understanding, not replace reading.



Ethical Use of AI for School Readings



- **Use Abstract instead of AI Summaries:** Most scholarly sources have an abstract that offers an author-written summary of the source. This is almost always superior to an AI summary.
- **Supplement, Don't Replace:** Read the source yourself, consulting AI to define terms and simplify complex concepts.
- **Critical Engagement:** Avoid relying on AI-generated interpretations without verifying accuracy.
- **Transparency:** Disclose any AI assistance in your research process.

Reading to Prepare for Literature Review

What Is Known?

Use sources to summarize what is already known about your topic. This will be the bulk of your Literature Review, which establishes context and credibility for your research study.



What is Unknown?

Use sources to generate sub-questions for your topic. You will end Lit Review paragraphs and sections with these sub-questions and later use them to develop coding categories for primary research.

Generating Sub-Questions: Apply Concepts and Theories

Identify key concepts and theories and consider how they can be applied to your topic. Example:



- **Source Insight:** Research identifies common strategies for establishing ethos (credibility), such as citing expertise, displaying fairness, or using shared values.
- **Sub-Question:** "Which ethos-building strategies are most frequently used in the Fantasy Faction Facebook group?"





Generating Sub-Questions: Expand on Existing Research


Ask how existing findings apply to your specific case. Examples:

- **Source Insight:** Research identifies features of toxic online communities, such as gatekeeping and personal attacks.
 - **Sub-Question:** "To what extent do the identified features of toxic communities—like gatekeeping—manifest in this Facebook group, and how are they addressed by its members?"
 - **Source Insight:** Research on fandoms suggests that shared values, such as creativity or inclusivity, play a role in community cohesion.
 - **Sub-Question:** "What values—such as creativity, inclusivity, or tradition—are explicitly or implicitly emphasized in this Facebook group, and how do they align with broader trends in fandom research?"
 - **Source Insight:** A study finds that shared language (e.g., inside jokes or terminology) fosters group identity in online communities.
 - **Sub-Question:** "What specific language or terminology is used in this group to signal belonging, and how does it compare to examples from other online communities?"
- 
- 





Generating Sub-Questions: Use Contradictions among Sources

When sources present conflicting theories or findings, use these contradictions to guide your sub-questions.
Example:



Source Insight: One source suggests nostalgia fosters community-building, while another critiques it as a barrier to innovation.

Sub-Question: "How is nostalgia for classic fantasy books framed in this group—as a source of community bonding or a limitation to embracing new works?"





Using Sources to Prepare for Primary Research



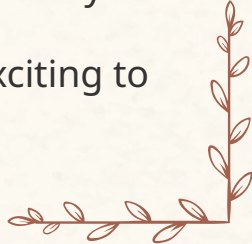
Later you will use Secondary Sources and Sub-Questions to generate coding categories and codes for your Primary Research. Example:

Source Insight: Nostalgia and Community-Building

Sub-Question: "How is nostalgia for classic fantasy books framed in this group—as a source of community bonding or a limitation to embracing new works?"

Coding Category: Nostalgia

Codes Applied:

- Nostalgia as Bonding: Posts or comments celebrating classic works and their influence (e.g., "Reading The Hobbit together as kids brought us closer").
 - Nostalgia as a Limitation: Critiques of nostalgia as restrictive (e.g., "We need to move beyond Tolkien and support modern authors").
 - Mixed Framing: Comments balancing both views (e.g., "I love the classics, but it's exciting to see new voices in the genre").
- 
- 
- 

Key Takeaways

- Read with purpose: Focus on relevance to your research question.
- Skim strategically: Identify sections that matter most to your work.
- Approach difficult texts with strategies to maximize comprehension.
- Leverage AI ethically: Support understanding without bypassing critical engagement.
- Use secondary sources to prepare for Literature Review and primary research.





Questions?



Drop me through WebCourses or visit me in office hours if you have any questions or would like to discuss more strategies for reading and using your sources.

ChatGPT 4.0 was used to generate example source insights and sub-questions for slides 9-12.

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by **Slidesgo**, and includes icons by **Flaticon**, and infographics & images by **Freepik**

Please keep this slide for attribution

