

## Reading techniques, taking notes

Taken and adapted from:

Philpot, Sarah. Academic Skills. Level 2. Oxford: OUP, 2006. ISBN 978-0-19-471567-6

7 Read the handout for new students about reading. Answer the questions.

- 1 Which two ways of reading are the quickest?
- 2 Which way would you read for enjoyment?
- 3 Which way of reading is the slowest?

### Effective Reading

During your course, you will do a lot of reading. It is essential that you learn how to be an effective and efficient reader in order to make the best of your study time. Learning to be a good reader takes practice. You need to develop different strategies or methods of reading.

#### Skimming

Sometimes you will read just to get a general idea of a text. This is skim reading. First, identify your reason for reading, for example, to decide whether an article meets your needs, or perhaps to understand a writer's attitude. To do this, read the text very quickly. Don't worry about reading and understanding everything. Instead, look particularly at the first and last paragraphs, and the first and last sentences of paragraphs. These often summarize the main points.

#### Scanning

Sometimes you will read quickly to find particular pieces of information, for example, a statistic, a date, a person's name, or the name of a place. Again, you do not need to read every word to find this information. Instead, scan the text using a finger or a pencil to move quickly through the words. You could time yourself to see how long it takes you to find the information. Always try to improve your speed.

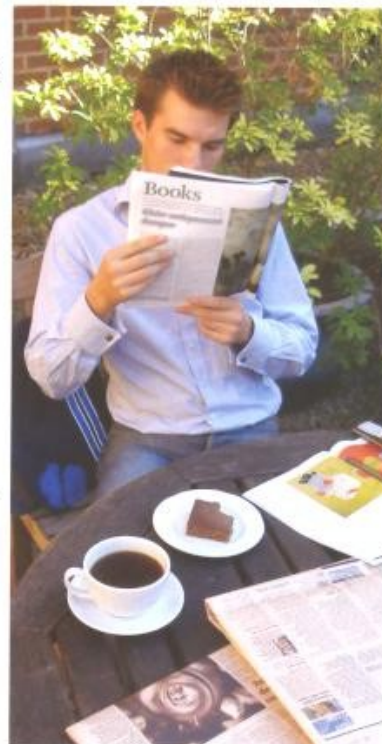
#### Intensive reading

Sometimes you read for every detail, for example, a description of a process, the results of a scientific study, or a set literature text. To do this, take your time. Stop and think about what you are reading. Have you understood the text? You may need to read the text more than once, in order to make notes or highlight important points for future reference. This is called intensive reading or study reading.

#### Extensive reading

Sometimes you will read for pleasure – perhaps as extra research, or purely for interest. You may concentrate, but you don't have to worry about detail. This is extensive reading.

We do not always read the same kinds of texts in the same way, and we often use more than one method of reading for a single text. Your reason for reading will help you decide how to read.



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8 Choose five examples of reading materials from exercise 5 on page 5. *Why* and *how* do you read?

text book	Why?	to find a relevant chapter to take notes
	How?	scan contents page read intensively

9 Look back at exercises 2 and 4 on pages 4 and 5. In which exercise did you 'skim' and in which did you 'scan'? **Read Study Skill**

6 Unit 1 • International student

### STUDY SKILL Reading methods

You usually have a reason for reading something. That reason changes the way you read, and the time you spend on a text.

Think about what you want from the text, and decide the best way to get it. For example:

- Skim a journal to find an article of interest.
- Scan an article for specific information.
- Read relevant parts of an article intensively to make notes.

## Taking notes

Taken from:

Gairns, Ruth.Redman, Stuart. Oxford Word Skills. Oxford:OUP, 2008. ISBN 978-019-462003-1

### RESEARCH Notes

- 1 Think of four reasons for making notes? (See Study Skill p22.)

Notes help you:

understand what you read, ...

- 2 **Read Study Skill** Match the ways of making notes a–d from the Study Skill box with examples of students' notes 1–4.

1

#### Tower House of Yemen

The **Tower Houses of Yemen** are located in the old city of **Sana'a**, the capital of Yemen. ... They were built by local builders and they are **hundreds of years old**. They are **made** of stone and brick.

2

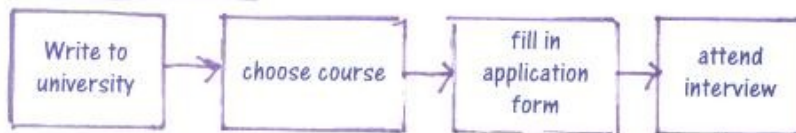
#### Measuring hurricanes.

Cat 1 – weakest  
winds 119–  
153km/hour

We measure hurricanes by categories – from 1 to 5.  
A Category 1 hurricane is the weakest. It has winds of between 119 and 153 kms per hour. A Category 5

3

#### Applying to university



- 3 Look at the text about Moscow State University. What information is highlighted?

**Moscow State University** is one of the most famous universities in the world. It was **opened** in **1755** and is more than 250 years old. The **main building** is on Sparrow Hills overlooking the Moscow River. The building has **36 floors** and is **240 metres high**. It was once the tallest building in Europe. The total number of **undergraduate students** is now about 40,000 and **postgraduate students** number about 7,000. There are also **9,000 professors, teachers, and researchers**. In 1755 Moscow State University had only three faculties. Today it has **27 faculties**. These are Mechanics and Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Geology, ...

- 4 Read about Harvard. Underline or highlight important information.

**Harvard University** is a private university in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the USA. It is one of the world's most famous universities. It was founded in 1636 and is the oldest higher education institution in the USA. At first it was called the New College, but in 1696 it was named Harvard College after John Harvard. He gave money and books to the college. It became Harvard University, in 1780. Today Harvard University has about 2,300 professors. The number of undergraduate students is 6,650 and there are about 13,000 graduate students. It has nine faculties. These are Arts and Sciences, Law, Business, Medicine, ...

- 5 Find information about a college/university. Make highlighted notes. Work with a partner. Use your notes to talk about the college/university.

### STUDY SKILL Making notes (2)

There are many ways of making notes:

- making a list of points
- using diagrams and arrows
- underlining or **highlighting** words in the text (use coloured pens)
- making notes in margins of books or articles

4

#### Ways of reading

- study/intensive reading
- skimming (for information)
- scanning (for general meaning)