**Academic Reading Guide**

**Timing:**

Is this a textbook chapter, a long article, or a short passage? Make sure you give yourself enough time to read and absorb the material. This may mean breaking the reading up into smaller chunks or taking breaks.

1. Check ahead of time to see how much reading you have to do.
2. Schedule or allot yourself enough time to comfortably get your reading done…and then some! Keep in mind your reading speed, whether or not the information is new or review, and how accessible the text is (is it academic jargon or more casual?).
3. Do your reading at a time when you can focus completely. If you are exhausted at the end of the day, that’s not the best time to try and absorb new information. Try to find a time and place where you can minimize distractions.
4. DO NOT do your reading at the last minute. You will be rushing through the text and your brain won’t have enough time to fully organize and store the information.
5. Take breaks! If you find yourself losing focus or rereading the same passage over and over, it’s time to switch tasks for a bit. Stand up, stretch, get some water, etc.

**Funnel Your Information:**

It’s more important to read efficiently than to read every single word on the page. Instead of reading from beginning to end, try reading like an information funnel; start with broader information and concepts then get into the details. This will also help you see how individual details fit into the bigger picture.

* If you have a set of *discussion questions* or a *writing prompt*, read those first so you know what information you should be looking for.
* If you’re reading an **article**, then look at the *abstract* if there is one. This will summarize the text. There may also be a list of key terms below the abstract. If there isn’t an abstract, read the *introduction*.
* If you are reading a **textbook**, look for *section headings*. These will list the main concepts you need to learn. Textbooks may also include bolded or italicized *key terms* with their definitions. As you look over these key terms, note which ones are unfamiliar to you. Read the sections with unfamiliar key terms in full.
* Once you have completed the above, read the *topic sentence* of every paragraph then skim the rest of the paragraph. If you understand the information, you can move on to the next paragraph. If not, read the paragraph in full or mark it to be read after you finish skimming the whole text.
* Lastly, read the *conclusion*. This is a way to double-check you’ve gleaned the pertinent information from your skimming earlier. If something in the conclusion is still unclear, then go back and (re)read the section/paragraph regarding that topic.

*Optional: when you encounter unfamiliar passages, concepts, or key terms, make a list of them with the page number where you found them. You can also highlight longer passages or important quotes if possible. This will serve as a helpful study guide for later. You may also be able to use the important quotes in future essays.*

Still lost? Here are some additional resources:

* Tutoring Center- https://wou.edu/freetutoring/
* Writing Center- https://wou.edu/writingctr/
* Peer Academic Coaching- https://wou.edu/advising/peer-academic-coaching/
* https://www.onlineschools.org/academic-reading-guide/