SO MUCH TO READ...

Lengthy reading lists for courses and essays can be frightening, particularly when the subject is unfamiliar. What appears to be an impossible task becomes possible when you start asking yourself questions about what you need to find out, and then select reading that relates to your questions.

People have different beliefs about reading depending on their experience. Some believe that they must read a book from beginning to end, or read and understand every word. However, others start at the end to see if they will like the book, or else read the most exciting bits!

For most people, tertiary study demands a great deal of reading, and new skills need to be learned in order to cope with the workload.

Only rarely will you be expected to read all the references.

If the thought of all that reading is daunting, don’t hesitate to ask a lecturer or study skills tutor to help.

BEGIN WITH YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

Work out what you already know on the topic you are reading.

You could:
- talk over your ideas with someone
- jot down what you know
- make up a diagram representing your ideas.

It is vital to begin with your own ideas and experience if the reading is to make sense. This will stimulate questions and highlight where to begin your search for information. If the topic is new to you, its language might be littered with confusing jargon.

Firstly, read quickly to get the general idea, and then read more carefully a second time, to gain more of the meaning.

When reading material that is difficult to understand, the following ideas might help.
- Begin with a basic or general introduction.
- Jot down new terms that keep recurring. Make sure that you spell the new terms accurately!
- Look up at the meanings of these terms in a dictionary or reference book.
- See if you can state the meaning in your own words. Check with someone else if you are still unsure.
SHORT CUTS

There are many efficient short cuts to finding the information you need. If possible, select a book or article from your reading list that gives an overview of the topic.

Other tips include:
- use the contents page first. Does this mention what you are looking for? It may raise more questions.
- go to the index at the back. Does this include the key words or names you need to follow up?
- *skim* through the first chapter. Skimming is moving quickly from paragraph to paragraph reading only the key sentences.

Instead of reading the whole chapter, simply:
- read the first and last paragraphs
- ask yourself what they are saying
- read the first or last sentence of each paragraph.

From this, you can gain an overall view of the content and the author's opinion, enabling you to decide on the relevance of the book to your topic.

**Record details** of author, title, date, and place of publication now so that you don't have the frustration of trying to find the book again when preparing your bibliography.

For your own future reference, note down brief comments about the book.

You may need to skim through several books before deciding what you want from each.

THE READING PROCESS

Readers make sense of what they read when they are able to link the ideas expressed by the author with what they already know.

Reading becomes *interesting* if it contains information that the reader wants to know.

When you read, you use the knowledge of:
- the *world*
- the *sentence structures* of the language
- the *letter - sound relationships*
- to help you find and construct meaning.

If all of these are familiar to you, then you will be able to read quickly with little attention to detail.

When any of the three are not what you expected, and you need to know the material, then more careful reading is required.

It takes energy to be an efficient reader, but far more is learned and retained by using this active approach.

SEARCH THE eLIBRARY:

The eLibrary is available at [www.kangan.edu.au/library](http://www.kangan.edu.au/library). To find LLC resources on reading effectively use these key terms to search:

- Reading   - Reading effectively    - Fast reading

If you need extra help *Ask a librarian!* In person, over the phone 9279-2424 or via email LLC@kangan.edu.au