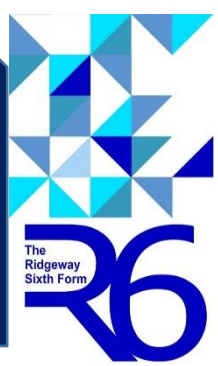




# EFFECTIVE READING & NOTE TAKING



## EFFECTIVE READING TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC STUDY

Acquiring effective reading skills to support academic study will help with both your R6 courses now and with post year 13 study in the future. Developing these skills will help you read efficiently in order to access and select information to meet your needs quickly and effectively. Before you embark on your reading you need to consider what it is you want to find out, what it is going to be used for and what you already know about the topic. You also need to be mindful of different types of reading material, their target audience, and when they were written. Advanced academic reading skills can be explained by the SQ3R model detailed overleaf – it sounds complicated but it isn't so have a look if you fancy it! Research Skills 1 & 2 Help Sheets also contain hints and tips about selecting appropriate sources to meet differing study needs.

## READING TECHNIQUES

### SCANNING

#### DEFINITION

Reading text quickly to pick out specific information, for example a word, phrase or date.

#### FUNCTION

To establish whether the text could be relevant for your information need.

#### HOW TO SCAN

Decide on a key word or phrase – from your essay question or research topic.

Let your eye move quickly over the text, index, contents page or abstract to locate the keyword.

Find the relevant page and read the text around the keyword to establish relevance, and whether detailed reading is needed.

Use one keyword at a time.

### SKIMMING

#### DEFINITION

Reading a text quickly to get a general idea of the gist or theme.

#### FUNCTION

To preview/review text to establish the main points and relevance; to become familiar with the resource.

#### HOW TO SKIM

Be aware of the nature of the information you need by recognising relevant key words, phrases or names.

Read quickly over the text, skipping the detail; you do not need to read every word.

Focus on skimming through chapter overviews or summaries, headings and sub-headings, words in bold/italics to decide whether detailed reading is needed.

### DETAILED READING

#### DEFINITION

A detailed study of the text, frequently read word-for-word.

#### FUNCTION

To extract information accurately.

#### HOW TO READ IN DETAIL

Actively engage with the text, reading carefully and being mindful of what you want to achieve. Concentrate and be in the right mindset to read actively before you even start.

Read the passage/article without stopping, even if there are words or phrases that you do not understand. Backtracking disrupts the reading flow.

Re-read the piece if necessary, paying particular attention to words/phrases not understood first time round.

# EFFECTIVE READING & NOTE TAKING

## SQ3R - ADVANCED ACADEMIC READING SKILLS

SQ3R is a study method, based on research in cognitive psychology developed by Francis P Robinson, which claims to increase a reader's understanding of text by following a 5-step sequence. SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review.

**Survey:** Survey or skim the text to ascertain content by reading the title, introduction, sub-headings, bolded text and tables.

**Question or Query:** Actively engage with the text content by posing questions about it which relate to your needs. For example, "What is the author trying to demonstrate in this paragraph?" or "How does the content of this paragraph relate to my essay?"

**Read:** Read the text trying to answer the questions you have already posed, adjusting the questions as you go where necessary.

**Recite or Recall:** Use your own words to interpret the text and answer the initial and adjusted questions, ensuring that you have obtained the information you need.

**Review:** repeat back, using your own words the main points in the text, ensuring that all the initial and adjusted questions can be answered. Read pertinent sections again where necessary.

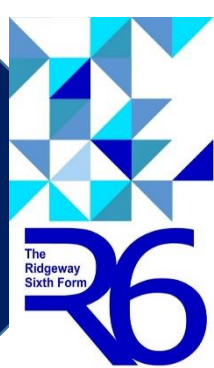
**This system is based on evidence that active reading and obtaining information from text efficiently is more effective when searching for answers to user relevant questions.**

<b>SQ3R</b> <b>HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE READER!</b>		<b>READ</b> Read the whole text quickly. Don't stop. Even if there is something difficult that you don't understand.
<b>SURVEY</b> Scan the text and identify its structure. <i>Do you need to read this text?</i>	<b>QUERY</b> Ask yourself about each section. <i>What do you expect to discover?</i>	<b>RECALL</b> Look back at your query questions. <i>Can you identify which sections help you?</i>
		<b>REVIEW</b> Read <u>important sections</u> again slowly. Remember why you are reading. <i>Take notes so that you can remember <u>helpful information</u> and where you found it.</i>

Marbella International University Centre (2020) *What is the SQ3R study method and how to use it?* Available at: <https://miuc.org/sq3r-study-method/> (Accessed: 6 May 2021)



# EFFECTIVE READING & NOTE TAKING



## NOTE TAKING SKILLS TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC STUDY

You are likely to encounter three sources of information from which you will need to make notes – reading (physical and online), listening (teacher, podcasts) and watching and listening (videos, YouTube etc.).

Good and effective note taking records information for future use, whether that be for coursework, essays, or revision. Frequently your teachers will provide handout material which you can annotate with additional information during the course of the lesson which provides an automatic framework for your note taking. However, if you are taking notes independently, there are a number of methods you can adopt and these are detailed below. **CHOOSE A METHOD THAT WORKS FOR YOU AND STICK WITH IT.**

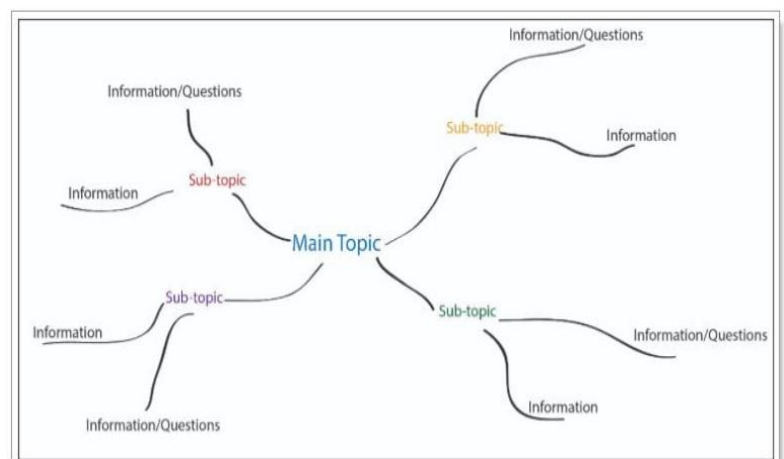
## LINEAR NOTE TAKING TOP TIPS

Linear note taking is a method of recording information in sequence as you listen to or read it.

1. Summarise the main themes in your own words. Engaging with the content makes you think and helps you remember.
2. Record keywords and phrases.
3. Use headings, sub headings, and bullet points.
4. Use shorthand or abbreviations for keywords that make sense to you ie Gvt. for Government.
5. Be mindful of what you need the notes for – this will influence the detail you record.
6. Record where the information is from in case you need to refer back.
7. Leave space in the margins, between lines for additions.
8. When reflecting on your notes, use coloured pens, highlighters, post it's to mark important sections.
9. Only record verbatim, if you think you will use a direct quotation in your work.

## MIND MAPPING

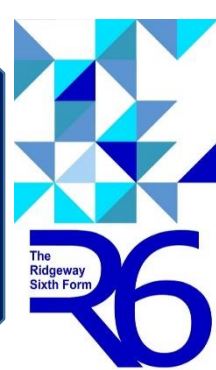
Mind mapping involves creating a diagram in which ideas and themes are linked together around a central core concept. Instead of writing notes in list form, keywords or short phrases are added around a central theme, linked together by lines to indicate their relationship. A mind map would be useful when taking notes over-viewing a topic or during the planning process of an essay, to identify key words or themes, before taking linear notes.



The University of Auckland (2021) *Mind Mapping* Available at: <https://learningessentials.auckland.ac.nz/key-study-skills/note-taking/mind-mapping/> (Accessed: 11 May 2021)



# EFFECTIVE READING & NOTE TAKING



## KEEPING YOUR NOTES ORGANISED

Whether you note takes on paper or on a computer you must keep them organised, otherwise you will not find what you need, when you need it.

### ON PAPER

- Use a separate folder for each topic. Consider using coloured dividers.
- Label the files and dividers clearly.
- Consider numbering and labelling pages, using a contents page to easily find your notes.

### ON A COMPUTER

- Use the folder/sub folder tool to organise your notes.
- Set up sub-folders for different topics before you start.
- Rename pdf files before saving so that the author and year (possible title) appear in the new name.
- Call the file names something meaningful.

The University of Southampton (2017) *Notemaking* Available at: [https://library.soton.ac.uk/ld.php?content\\_id=31130834](https://library.soton.ac.uk/ld.php?content_id=31130834)  
(Accessed: 11 May 2021)

## CONSIDER USING EXCEL FOR RECORDING YOUR NOTES

Whilst it is not the conventional way of recording notes, it can be useful to use Excel.

- You could use three columns – keyword or theme, source information, notes.
- Use the filter tool to sort your content by theme.

Most University websites have information on effective reading and note taking. Here are some which are well worth a look –

[http://edshare.soton.ac.uk/4064/1/navigating\\_the\\_page.pdf](http://edshare.soton.ac.uk/4064/1/navigating_the_page.pdf)

[https://library.soton.ac.uk/ld.php?content\\_id=31130834](https://library.soton.ac.uk/ld.php?content_id=31130834)

<https://www.port.ac.uk/student-life/help-and-advice/study-skills/research-reading-referencing-and-citation/effective-reading>

<https://help.open.ac.uk/notetaking-techniques>

<https://www.languagecentre.manchester.ac.uk/resources/online-resources/online-skills-development/academic-english/study-skills/note-taking/>

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/learnwithustransition/academic-skills-guides/index.page>