

Reading Academic Papers

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The Four Levels of Reading (Adler & Van Doren, 1940)

- ▶ **Elementary Reading:** Understanding the basic meaning of words and sentences.
- ▶ **Inspectional Reading:** Skimming to get the gist of the book/paper.
- ▶ **Analytical Reading:** Engaging deeply with the content to understand and critique the book/paper.
- ▶ **Syntopical Reading:** Comparing and synthesizing multiple books/papers to develop a comprehensive understanding.

Active Reading Strategies

- ▶ **Prioritize:** Focus on papers that are most relevant to your most active research idea.
- ▶ **Annotate:** Take notes, underline key points, and write questions in the margins.
- ▶ **Summarize:** After reading, write a brief summary in your own words.
- ▶ **Engage:** Discuss the paper with others to gain different perspectives.
- ▶ **Revisit:** Re-read sections that were difficult or particularly important.
- ▶ **Apply:** Use insights gained from reading to inform your own research or work.

Critical Reading and Analysis

- ▶ **Question Assumptions:** What assumptions does the author make?
- ▶ **Evaluate Evidence:** Is the evidence presented convincing?
- ▶ **Consider Alternative Views:** How do the arguments compare to other perspectives on the topic?
- ▶ **Reflect on Implications:** What are the broader implications of the author's arguments?

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- ▶ **Reading Without Purpose:** Always know why you are reading a particular paper.
- ▶ **Passive Reading:** Engage actively with the text; don't just absorb information.
- ▶ **Reading Everything in Detail:** Focus on what's relevant.
- ▶ **Uncritical Acceptance:** Always challenge the ideas presented; don't accept conclusions without scrutiny.
- ▶ **Neglecting Re-Reading:** Important papers often require multiple readings to fully understand.
- ▶ **Overloading:** Avoid trying to read too much at once; focus on quality over quantity.
- ▶ **Ignoring Context:** Always consider the historical and cultural context in which the paper was written.

The Importance of Reading for Writing

"To write well, you must read well." – Joe Moran

- ▶ **Read to Write:** Reading widely improves your writing.
- ▶ **Learn from Others:** Study how great writers craft sentences.
- ▶ **Critical Reading:** Analyze the structure and style of sentences in the books you read.

Any Questions?