



1 - How To Read a Paper

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▼ Implementation	No
📅 Started On	@Jun 26, 2020
▼ Status	Completed
🔗 URL	http://ccr.sigcomm.org/online/files/p83-keshavA.pdf

ABSTRACT

THE THREE PASS APPROACH

THE FIRST PASS

SECOND PASS

THIRD PASS

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This article outlines a practical and efficient **three-pass method** for reading research papers.

THE THREE PASS APPROACH

First Pass:

gives you general idea about the paper

Second Pass:

lets you grasp the paper's content but not its details.

Third Pass:

Helps you understand the paper in depth.

THE FIRST PASS

Steps:

1. Carefully read the title, abstract, and introduction
2. Read the section and sub-section headings, but ignore everything else
3. Read the conclusions.
4. Glance over the references, mentally ticking off the ones you've already read

This should take only 5-10 minutes.

Questions that should get answered:

1. **Category:**

- What type of paper is this ?

2. **Context:**

- Which other papers is it related to?
- Which theoretical bases were used to analyze the problem?

3. **Correctness:**

- Do the assumptions appear to be valid?

4. **Contributions:**

- What are the paper's main contributions?

5. **Clarity:**

- Is the paper well written?

Using this information, you may choose not to read further.

SECOND PASS

Steps:

1. Look carefully at the figures, diagrams, graphs and other illustrations in the paper.
2. Mark relevant unread references for further reading.

This should take up to an hour.

THIRD PASS

In this pass, you should attempt to virtually re-implement the paper. Identify and challenge every assumption in every statement. This pass should take about 4-5 hours for a beginner and about one hour for an experienced reader.

You should be able to reconstruct the entire structure of the paper from memory.