

## **Tips for Reading a Primary Research Article**

1. Read the abstract
2. Read the introduction carefully
3. Read the conclusion carefully
4. Skim the middle, looking at section titles, tables, figures, etc.
  - a. What is the paper's research question(s)? Write it down.
  - b. What type of study is the paper?
  - c. Do the research methods seem valid and logical?
    - i. What is the sample size (if applicable)?
    - ii. Does it state if the results are statistically significant?
    - iii. Do the graphs have error bars/confidence intervals?
5. Read the paper from beginning to end quickly. Focus on:
  - a. What was the main problem the paper attempted to solve?
  - b. Did one or two papers stand out in the Related Works section as being most important to this study? How is this study novel from that one?
  - c. How did they perform data collection?
  - d. How did they analyze data (methods, statistics, etc.)?
  - e. What were the results? How were they presented?
  - f. What are the main limitations of the study?
  - g. What was the paper's greatest contribution?
  - h. Do you think the study answered the research question? Why or why not?
6. Don't spend too much time focusing on equations
7. Write down words you don't know
  - a. If one appears more than once in the paper- look it up
8. Be patient. The first article you read in a field will take the longest and feel the most overwhelming- it becomes faster and easier the more you read and learn!