

CREATING A READING TEMPLATE: A STRATEGY FOR EFFECTIVE READING

This strategy is most useful when reading journal articles or book chapters, and when reading similar sources over the course of a term or project (and perhaps comparing or contrasting them!) You can use a reading journal template in many ways, so feel free to adapt the template to your preferences.

BEFORE READING, ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING:

What do I need to know? How will I use the information I learn when I read this material? Why is this reading important to my course or research? These questions can help you focus on the kinds of information you may want to record in your notes!

For example, you may want to search for and record different information depending on whether you are reading to:

- Prepare for an exam
- Prepare for a discussion or tutorial group
- Prepare to write a research essay

FURTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Does the course outline or assignment outline mention any types of information your professor would like you to learn? What are you curious about? If you will be writing based on what you learn, what sections will your paper include and which information will you need to complete that writing task?

Decide which questions you would like to answer or which information you are seeking, and then create questions to respond to or sections to fill in. Keep this template with you as you read, search for the information that will help you answer the questions you created, and fill in the template as you go!

Refer to the sample questions below and the sample template on the back to design your own templates!

- **Main argument:** What is the author arguing?
- **Methods:** How is the author proving their point? How did they do their research?
- **Context:** What are other scholars saying about this topic? Are there any debates, agreements, disagreements?
- **Sources:** What kinds of evidence, examples, or source materials has the author used to prove their argument? Do they effectively prove the argument? Why or why not? How?
- **Theories:** Are there important theories or concepts described in this reading? What are they?
- **Strengths:** What is strong, effective or valuable about this reading? Which parts do you agree with?
- **Weaknesses:** What is less effective or problematic about this reading? Which parts do you disagree with?
- **Gaps:** Are there questions or concepts that the author has ignored or set aside?
- **Your opinions:** What do you think of this reading? What are you still curious about?

SAMPLE READING JOURNAL TEMPLATE

(Remember: this is just one idea –create a template based on YOUR interests!)

The author's main argument is:

Other scholars working on this topic and their positions:

Sources the author has used:

What is effective in this reading?

What is not convincing or not effective in this reading?

Things I didn't understand or have more questions about: