



**Maynooth  
University**

National University  
of Ireland Maynooth



National Learning Network

Investing in People, Changing Perspectives

# Study Skills



GENERAL STUDY SKILLS



ACTIVE READING



RESEARCHING

# Overview



Plan ahead – make a **study timetable** a few weeks before exams start.



**Prioritise** tasks – rank in order of importance



Make a **To-do** list



Make **Post it** notes



Establish a **routine**



Set alarms and **reminders** on your phone

Organisation is  
Key!



# Organisation is key

- Invest in a **planner, a diary or notebook**.
- Break down the task into small **manageable chunks** e.g. Monday - Do 2 readings; Tuesday - read over notes from class; Wednesday- write the introduction.
- Set **realistic** and achievable goals
- Minimise **distractions** (put phone on focus mode)
- Use **incentives** e.g. Netflix show.

# Getting started



Remember that **Activation precedes motivation.**

## What does this mean?

- Very often we will not feel motivated to complete a task, especially when it is something difficult/unenjoyable.
- Therefore, we must **ACTIVATE** the behaviour first (i.e. Start working and motivation will increase)
- Use the **5-minute rule** if you are really struggling to get started – tell yourself you will do it for 5 minutes without stopping and see if you still want to stop after 5 minutes.



# Set smart goals

I will write my introduction to the essay

I will write 300 words

I can manage 300 words

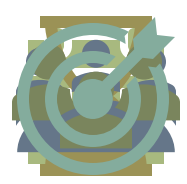
It is for my next deadline

I will do it tonight between 6pm and 8pm

# Study Week Timetable Example

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Frid	Sat	Sun
9-11.30	Psych101	Soc202	Psych103	Bio104	Soc103	Bio102	Rest
<i>Break</i>							
12-2.30	Psych101	Soc202	Psych103	Bio104	Soc103	Bio102	
<i>Lunch</i>							
3.30-6	Psych101	Soc202	Psych103	Bio104	Soc103	Bio102	
<i>Dinner</i>							
<i>Flexi-time</i>	Exercise/ Netflix/ Friends *	Exercise/ Netflix/ Friends *	Exercise/ Netflix/ Friends *	Exercise/ Netflix/ Friends *	Exercise/ Netflix/ Friends *	Exercise/ Netflix/ Friends *	





# Timetable Tips

Prioritise studying for closest exams first.

Schedule Flexi-time to cover topics that are more difficult to grasp or topics you ran out of time to study.

Ensure to include breaks/ exercise and downtime.

Either study one module all day or mix and match subjects on different days depending on your study style.

Aim to create notes as you study that you can highlight/ glance over right before exams..

Be realistic with your time and aim to start studying early to avoid cramming.



# Active Reading



Think: What is the goal of reading this document?

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Exam

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Assignment

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Understanding the Text

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What information am I looking for



# Record

1. Title of paper
2. Author's name
3. Year of Publication
4. Page numbers



# Active Reading

**Previewing**- to find if a text is useful, read the title, authors name, year & headings, graphs

**Skimming**- quickly locate a relevant section, read first and last lines of paragraphs & key words

**Scanning**- After skimming and finding relevant information. Focus on this paragraph. Slow down during a relevant section

**Critical reading**- preparing for exams & assignments. Find the theoretical approaches and the pros and cons of the text.

Active Reading:

Reading to  
remember

# SQ3R



• Survey



• Question



• Read



• Recite



• Review

# Step 1: Survey



*Look through the whole reading/chapter to preview it.*

## **Look at:**

- Titles/subheadings
- Abstracts/summaries
- Introduction & conclusion
- Pictures, charts/graphs
- The first & last sentences in paragraphs
- The conclusion



# Step 2: Question



*As you are doing Step 1 of surveying, note down questions- this will keep you alert!*

## **Ask yourself**

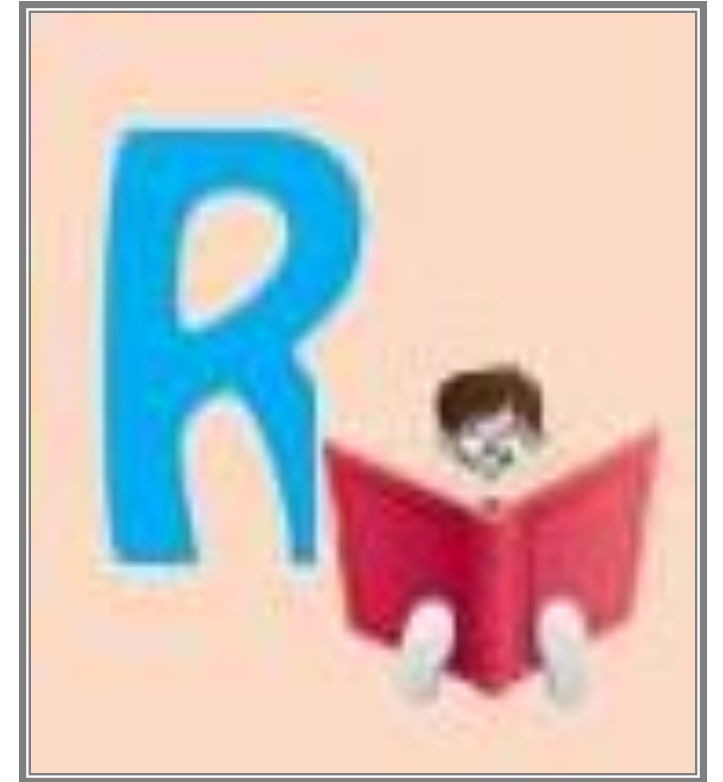
- What is this chapter or article about?
- What did my lecturer say about the chapter or subject?
- What do I already know about this paper?
- What? Who? How? Why?

## **You can also devise questions that will guide your reading**

- What are the specific questions you are looking to answer?
- Turn subheadings of the paper into questions

# Step 3: Read

- Look for answers to the questions
- Carefully read the important sections that you identified in Step 1.
- Skim the less important sections
- Make notes/Underline/highlight important concepts.
- Question the author's reasoning.  
Justified? Enough evidence?
- Make sure you are understanding what you are reading.  
Reduce your reading speed/reread difficult passages.



**Take brief notes while reading**



# Step 4: Recite



1. Close your book
2. Try to remember each section
  - What were the main points?
3. Say it out loud in your own words
4. Write a summary of the paragraph or section
  - Note cards/mindmaps



# Step 5: Review

1. Check the accuracy of your notes against the original paper
2. Look over your reading notes and quiz yourself on the information
3. Revisit it weekly and test yourself on new and old material each week

# Researching



# Why research topics?

Important component of your assignment preparation process.

Through reading and thinking about that material and writing it in your own words that your learning is increased and also demonstrated to your lecturer.



- ▶ Saves time
- ▶ Produces more relevant results
- ▶ Allows you to evaluate information
- ▶ Increases your knowledge base
- ▶ Gets you better grades

# Define the Task



## Good research begins with good preparation

- Define Research Problem/ task. Try to understand exactly what the question is asking, so you know how to answer it really well.

## Read your brief carefully

- Before starting to research, ensure you haven't missed any key parts of the assignment.

## Identify key ideas and concepts

- Identify what kind of information you want to know about and essential information.

# Create a Search Plan

You will need a **search plan** to begin your search for information.

- Go back to your assignment brief. Again, ask yourself what is the question and what information do you need to answer the question?
- Highlight key words and begin making a list of keywords for each concept
- Include similar words (synonyms) or alternative spellings.



# Look at your assignment brief

Use a different highlighter and underline what you are expected to write about.

Compare and contrast two communication models and discuss how they are used in advertising practice. Identify two examples to support your findings.

This question is asking you to look at two communication models and discuss how these are used in practice in the role of professional advertising agencies.



## Search Plan

1. You must find the two models

2. Assess their validity or usefulness

3. Identify two examples of advertising in which the theories are recognisable to you. In other words, you need to demonstrate how these theories are used in practice.



# Locate relevant resource material

What sources are available? What are the best sources to use? Identify what to look for and where to find it.

Library catalogues, databases, bibliographies, search engines, recommended texts, books, journals, images, people,

Decide search terms and research parameters



## Organising (sorting/structuring)

This step of the research process requires a more detailed reading of the resource material and the development of a structure for the assignment.

Here, the skills of note-taking and arranging information are necessary.



# Tips for Organising your Research

Keep your notes focused on the topic

Write in your own words (This will save you time later)

Sort information into categories

Consider how various elements of the topic connect to one another

Establish a detailed plan or outline of the assignment

Develop an argument (NB to critically evaluate info)

Use quotations effectively and sparingly

Reference as you go!



# Notetaking

- Do not spend hours writing out notes!!
- Its not about **Quantity** its about **Quality** – you do not need to note down everything the lecturer says.
- Everyone has their own notetaking style..
- Some styles include:
  - ✓ Cornell
  - ✓ Mind Mapping
  - ✓ The 5 R's
  - ✓ The Outlining Methods
- More on this next week...😊

The background is a solid teal color with a pattern of overlapping circles of various sizes. Each circle contains a white question mark. The circles are semi-transparent, creating a layered effect.

Any Questions?