

Tips for Reading Journal Articles

Minnesota English Language Program

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Here is a guide for reading a journal article more efficiently and effectively, to find the information that will be the most helpful for you.

	Reading Strategy	Tips
Abstract	Read the title and abstract first.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify the “literature gap” or the problem the research is trying to solve.● Determine if this study might be helpful to your research.
Introduction	Read the last paragraph in the introduction to learn about the study purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Skim the literature review section.● Highlight important notes about how other scholars have contributed to this research.● Identify any other articles you want to read from this section.
Methods	Skim the methods section to briefly learn about the study design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Look for key words to give clues about how the study was conducted: i.e., case study, cohort study, randomized trial, etc.
Results	Scan the tables and charts to get familiar with the key findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Don't get stuck here. If the results are unclear, you can often learn more about the results in the discussion section.
Discussion	Read the first part of this section carefully, which will summarize the results and explain the implications of the research. Take notes on the key findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The authors will often use signal words to organize their discussion of three or four key findings.● Look for transition words here and pay close attention to the sentences that summarize the main finding, such as “the first theme shows how teens rely on social media to maintain friendships...”
Review	Go back and re-read any part that was unclear..	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Focus on getting the most clarity about the results & discussion sections.

Try it out! Take notes as you read the article.

Levecque, K., Anseel, F., De Beuckelaer, A., Van der Heyden, J., & Gisle, L. (2017). Work organization and mental health problems in PhD students. *Research Policy*, 46(4), 868-879.

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