

Guidelines for reading academic and research papers

- first step *before* reading the text: what do you already know or think about the topic? - brief brainstorming for determining and making explicit your own point of departure / your background knowledge

(note: not all of the following questions may be relevant for every individual paper!)

- What is/are the object(s) of investigation? ("topic")
 - What are the aims of the study? Were they reached?
 - What is the structure of the text?
 - How are crucial items/aspects defined?
 - Are there any clear hypotheses? Are they confirmed or disproved?
 - Which perspective is taken on the topic? (e.g. linguistic; philosophical; psychological etc.)
 - Are there any theoretical foundations of, motives for or consequences from the study? Which are they?
 - How does the study position itself vis-à-vis other approaches?
 - Which type of analysis is employed? (general methodology)
 - What kind of data and, if appropriate, method of data collection is used?
 - What are the central results of the analysis?
 - What are the author's conclusions drawn from the results?
 - Which questions are left open/unresolved? Why?
 - Are there any explicit problems/points for further investigation highlighted by the author?
 - Evaluation: What are the strengths or weaknesses of the article? Is there anything that might have been done or presented in a different / better way?
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- do not *only* use a text marker, but make extra notes (it will increase both your understanding of the text and the amount of information remembered later)
 - check all the words (whether terminology or not) you do not know or are not absolutely sure about in a dictionary!