



Anshun Bridge in Chengdu, China

TIPS FOR READING FLUENTLY

Reading slowly, one word at a time, makes it difficult to get an overall sense of the meaning of a text. As a result, reading becomes more challenging and less interesting. In general, it is a good idea to first skim a text for the gist, and then read it again more closely so that you can focus on the most relevant details. Use these strategies to improve your reading speed:

- Read groups of words rather than individual words.
- Keep your eyes moving forward. Read through to the end of each sentence or paragraph instead of going back to reread words or phrases.
- Skip functional words (articles, prepositions, etc.) and focus on words and phrases carrying meaning—the content words.
- Use clues in the text—such as **bold** words and words in *italics*—to help you know which parts might be important and worth focusing on.
- Use section headings, as well as the first and last lines of paragraphs, to help you understand how the text is organized.
- Use context clues, affixes, and parts of speech—instead of a dictionary—to guess the meanings of unfamiliar words and phrases.

TIPS FOR READING CRITICALLY

As you read, ask yourself questions about what the writer is saying, and how and why the writer is presenting the information at hand.

Important critical thinking skills for academic reading and writing:

- **Analyzing:** Examining a text in close detail in order to identify key points, similarities, and differences.
- **Applying:** Deciding how ideas or information might be relevant in a different context, e.g., applying possible solutions to problems.
- **Evaluating:** Using evidence to decide how relevant, important, or useful something is. This often involves looking at reasons for and against something.
- **Inferring:** “Reading between the lines”; in other words, identifying what a writer is saying indirectly, or *implicitly*, rather than directly, or *explicitly*.
- **Synthesizing:** Gathering appropriate information and ideas from more than one source and making a judgment, summary, or conclusion based on the evidence.
- **Reflecting:** Relating ideas and information in a text to your own personal experience and viewpoints.

TIPS FOR NOTE-TAKING

Taking notes will help you better understand the overall meaning and organization of a text. Note-taking also enables you to record the most important information for future uses—such as when you are preparing for an exam or completing a writing assignment. Use these techniques to make your note-taking more effective:

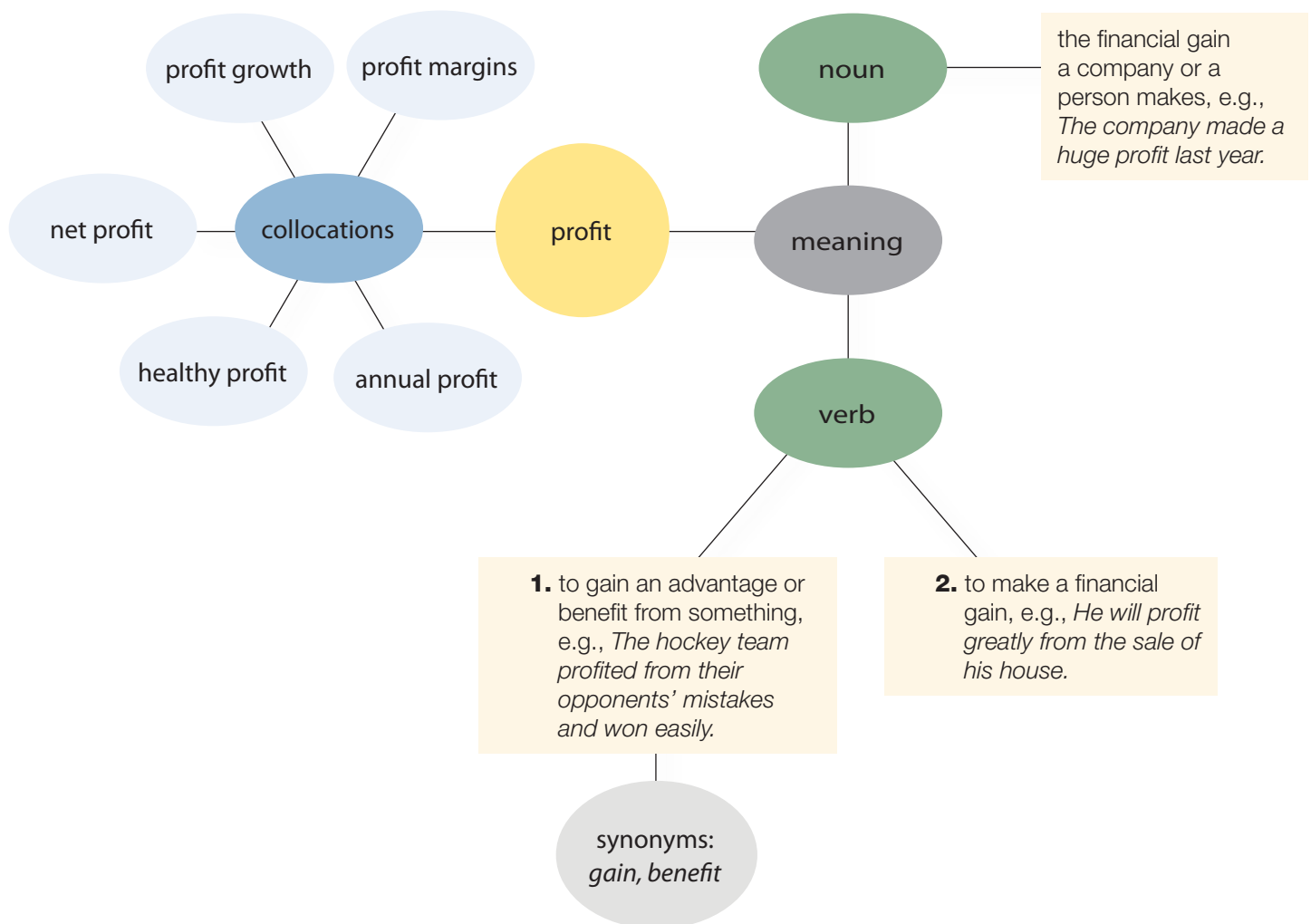
- As you read, underline or highlight important information such as dates, names, and places.
- Take notes in the margin. Note the main idea and supporting details next to each paragraph. Also note your own ideas or questions about the paragraph.
- On a separate piece of paper, write notes about the key points of the text in your own words. Include short headings, key words, page numbers, and quotations.
- Use a graphic organizer to summarize a text, particularly if it follows a pattern such as cause-effect, comparison-contrast, or chronological sequence. See page 64 for an example.
- Keep your notes brief by using these abbreviations and symbols. Don’t write full sentences.

<i>approx.</i>	approximately	→	leads to / causes
<i>e.g./ex.</i>	example	↑	increases / increased
<i>i.e.</i>	that is / in other words	↓	decreases / decreased
<i>etc.</i>	and others / and the rest	& or +	and
<i>Ch.</i>	Chapter	<i>b/c</i>	because
<i>p. (pp.)</i>	page (pages)	<i>w/</i>	with
<i>re:</i>	regarding, concerning	<i>w/o</i>	without
<i>incl.</i>	including	=	is the same as
<i>excl.</i>	excluding	>	is more than
<i>info</i>	information	<	is less than
<i>yrs.</i>	years	~	is approximately / about
<i>para.</i>	paragraph	∴	therefore

TIPS FOR LEARNING VOCABULARY

You often need to use a word or phrase several times before it enters your long-term memory. Here are some strategies for successfully learning vocabulary:

- Use flash cards to test your knowledge of new vocabulary. Write the word you want to learn on one side of an index card. Write the definition and/or an example sentence that uses the word on the other side.
- Use a vocabulary notebook to note down a new word or phrase. Write a short definition of the word in English and the sentence where you found it. Write another sentence of your own that uses the word. Include any common collocations (see *Word Partners* in the Vocabulary Extensions).
- Use memory aids, or mnemonics, to remember a word or phrase. For example, if you want to learn the idiom *keep an eye on someone*, which means “to watch someone carefully,” you might picture yourself putting your eyeball on someone’s shoulder so that you can watch the person carefully. The stranger the picture is, the more likely you will remember it!
- Make word webs or word maps. See the example below.



Common Affixes

Some words contain an affix at the start of the word (*prefix*) and/or at the end (*suffix*). These affixes can be useful for guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words and for expanding your vocabulary. In general, a prefix affects the meaning of a word, whereas a suffix affects its part of speech. See the examples below.

Prefix	Meaning	Example
com-	with	compile
con-	together, with	constitute
em- / en-	making, putting	empower, endanger
ex-	away, from, out	explode
im- / in-	not	imperfect, independent
inter-	between	interact
mis-	wrongly	mislead
mono-	one, only	monotonous
pre-	before	preview
pro-	forward, outward	prominent
re-	back, again	restore
trans-	across	transfer
un-	not	unclear
vid- / vis-	seeing	video, vision

Suffix	Part of Speech	Example
-able / -ible	adjective	affordable, feasible
-al	adjective	traditional
-ary	adjective	evolutionary
-ate	verb	generate
-ed	adjective	dedicated
-ent / -ant	adjective	confident, significant
-er	noun	researcher
-ful	adjective	harmful
-ic	adjective	nostalgic
-ical	adjective	hypothetical
-ism	noun	mechanism
-ity	noun	minority
-ive	adjective	inventive
-ize	verb	criticize
-ly	adverb	definitely
-ment	noun	replacement
-tion	noun	determination

TIPS FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

There are many types of academic writing (descriptive, argumentative/persuasive, narrative, etc.), but most types share similar characteristics. Generally, in academic writing, you should:

- write in full sentences.
- use formal English. (Avoid slang or conversational expressions such as *kind of*.)
- be clear and coherent—keep to your main point; avoid technical words that the reader may not know.
- use signal words or phrases and conjunctions to connect your ideas. (See examples below.)
- have a clear point (main idea) for each paragraph.
- use a neutral point of view—avoid overuse of personal pronouns (*I, we, you*) and subjective language such as *nice* or *terrible*.
- use facts, examples, and expert opinions to support your argument.
- avoid using abbreviations or language used in texting. (Use *that is* rather than *i.e.*, and *in my opinion*, not *IMO*.)
- avoid using contractions. (Use *is not* rather than *isn't*.)

Signal Words and Phrases

Use signal words and phrases to connect ideas and to make your writing more academic.

Giving personal opinions	Giving details and examples	Linking ideas
<i>In my opinion, ...</i> <i>I (generally) agree that ...</i> <i>I think/feel (that) ...</i> <i>I believe (that) ...</i>	<i>An example of this is ...</i> <i>Specifically, ...</i> <i>For instance, ...</i>	<i>Furthermore, ...</i> <i>Moreover, ...</i> <i>In addition, ...</i> <i>Additionally, ...</i> <i>For one thing, ...</i>
Presenting similar ideas	Presenting contrasting views	Giving reasons
<i>Similarly, ...</i> <i>Both ... and ...</i> <i>Like ... , ...</i> <i>Likewise, ...</i>	<i>On the other hand, ...</i> <i>In contrast, ...</i> <i>While it may be true that ...</i> <i>Despite the fact that ...</i> <i>Even though ...</i>	<i>This is because (of) ...</i> <i>This is due to ...</i> <i>One reason (for this) is ...</i>
Describing causes and effects	Describing a process	Concluding
<i>Therefore, ...</i> <i>As a result, ...</i> <i>Because of this, ...</i> <i>If ... , then ...</i>	<i>First (of all), ...</i> <i>Then / Next / After that, ...</i> <i>As soon as ...</i> <i>Once ...</i> <i>Finally, ...</i>	<i>In conclusion, ...</i> <i>In summary, ...</i> <i>To conclude, ...</i> <i>To summarize, ...</i>

WRITING CITATIONS

Below are some examples of how to cite print sources according to the American Psychological Association Style.

Guidelines	Reference entry	In-text citation
For an article , include the author's name, year and month of publication, article title, the name of the magazine/journal, and page references.	White, M. (2011, June). Brimming pools. <i>National Geographic</i> , 100–115.	(White, 2011) White (2011) says ...
For a book , include the author's name, year of publication, title of the book, and the name of the publisher.	Hawking, S. (1988). <i>A brief history of time</i> . Bantam.	(Hawking, 1988) Hawking (1988) says ...
If there are two authors , use & to list their names.	Sherman, D., & Salisbury, J. (2008). <i>The west in the world: Renaissance to present</i> . McGraw-Hill.	(Sherman & Salisbury, 2008) Sherman and Salisbury (2008) say ...
For a book that is not the first edition , include the edition number after the title.	Turnbull, C. M. (2009). <i>A history of modern Singapore, 1819–2005</i> , (3rd ed.). NUS Press.	(Turnbull, 2009) According to Turnbull (2009), ...

TIPS FOR EDITING

Capitalization

Remember to capitalize:

- the first letter of the word at the beginning of every sentence.
- proper nouns such as names of people, geographical names, company names, and names of organizations.
- days, months, and holidays.
- the word *I*.
- the first letter of a title such as the title of a movie or a book.
- the words in titles that have meaning (content words). Don't capitalize *a*, *an*, *the*, *and*, or prepositions such as *to*, *for*, *of*, *from*, *at*, *in*, and *on*, unless they are the first word of a title (e.g., *The Power of Creativity*).

Punctuation

- Use a period (.) at the end of any sentence that is not a question. Use a question mark (?) at the end of every question.
- Exclamation marks (!), which indicate strong feelings such as surprise or joy, are generally not used in academic writing.
- Use commas (,) to separate a list of three or more things. (*She speaks German, English, and Spanish.*)
- Use a comma after an introductory word or phrase. (*However, William didn't let that stop him.*)
- Use a comma before a combining word—*and*, *but*, *so*, or *or*—that joins two sentences. (*Black widow spider bites are not usually deadly for adults, but they can be deadly for children.*)
- Use an apostrophe (') for showing possession. (*James's idea came from social networking websites.*)
- Use quotation marks (" ") to indicate the exact words used by someone else. (*"Our pleasures are really ancient," says psychologist Nancy Etcoff.*)

Other Proofreading Tips

- Print out your draft and read it out loud.
- Use a colored pen to make corrections on your draft so you can see them easily when you write your next draft.
- Have someone else read your draft and give you comments or ask you questions.
- Don't depend on a computer's spell-check. When the spell-check suggests a correction, make sure you agree with it before you accept the change.
- Check the spelling and accuracy of proper nouns, numbers, and dates.
- Keep a list of spelling and grammar mistakes that you commonly make so that you can be aware of them as you edit your draft.
- Check for frequently confused words:
 - *there*, *their*, and *they're*
 - *its* and *it's*
 - *your* and *you're*
 - *then* and *than*
 - *to*, *too*, and *two*
 - *whose* and *who's*
 - *where*, *wear*, *we're*, and *were*
 - *affect* and *effect*