Tips for Reading Articles*

1. Note author's name and affiliation, title of article, and date of publication.

   Do you recognize the name? Why? (is it good, bad, or merely familiar?)

   What does the title lead you to expect?

   Is it an old article? (possibly out of date, or perhaps germinal)

   Is it a new article? (possibly invigorating new research, opinion, or untested twaddle)

2. What is the author's thesis?

   What point the author trying to make?

   What is the question that the the author is trying to answer?

   Note the field from which they approach the problem (e.g., human factors, user interface design, program development).

3. How does this work fit into the larger research and development context?

→ Answers to these first three points are usually found in the first few paragraphs of the work.

4. How is the work structured?

   Is it thematic?

   Is it a survey of various approaches?

   Is it a standard experimental model?

   Is it a narrative?

   Is it something else?

5. About their sources

   What sources did they used?

      Old articles, new articles, books?
      Personal communication and technical reports?
      Work based on a graduate thesis?

   How are the sources used in the argument?

      Does the author synthesize the views from other works or do they use them in support of a plan of their own?

6. Conclusions and Discussion of Results (for experiments)

   What do they think the import of the work is?

   Some authors won't say everything in the conclusions section so be sure to read the introduction to see what they are trying to say (or do) and then look for more details in the rest of the work.

*Based on TIPS FOR COMPREHENSIVE READING SKILLS (and things to include in written analyses). by T.A. Wendy Stross. Downloaded from ⟨`URL:http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/%7eahood/reading.htm`⟩ on 01 Feb 2000.

Questions to Answer When Reading Articles

1. What would you need to cite this article in a class essay or journal article of your own? What would you need to know to find this article again?
   - ✎ What are the specific bibliographic details for this article (author, title, journal name, volume, number/month, year of publication, etc.)?
2. What would you write about it for inclusion in an annotated bibliography?
   - ✎ Summarize the article.
   - ✎ Why is this article different from other articles? Is it because of what the author says, how they say it, what they did, or something else.
   - ✎ What are the most salient points about the article?
   - ✎ What are the most important points in the article?
   - ☛ Try not to exceed 512 words.
3. What are the best two things about the article?
4. If you could change only two things about the article, what would they be?
5. If you could ask the author(s) one question about the article, what would you ask? (An alternative: if someone were to write a follow-up article, what points would you want them to address?)
6. If you were to ask an undergraduate student two questions about the article (to see if they had read *and* understood it), what two questions would you ask?
7. Did you like the article? Why or why not?
8. Is there anything else that you must say about the article or you will burst?