TYPES OF READING

SKIMMING

Use skimming to gain an overview of a text, and to help you choose your reading from long reading lists in which you are given a choice of texts. Look at the title page, contents list, introduction, index and publication date. Skim through a couple of chapters, to see if the text is written at an appropriate level and in language you can understand. Use the *Evaluating Sources of Information* sheet for further guidance on this.

INTENSIVE READING

This is in depth reading for study. Before you start, know why you are reading the text and/or the questions you would like answering – this gives you some focus for your reading. For example, you may wish to find a particular piece of information; you may need some general background on a topic; or you may be looking for detailed arguments for and against a particular viewpoint.

Where relevant, read critically. How to do this is covered in detail in the Critical thinking and analysis topic [link to Critical thinking and analysis – student menu - content].

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

NOT UNDERSTANDING LONG WORDS OR JARGON

Use a good general dictionary, such as Collins, Oxford or Chambers. There are also specialist dictionaries on many subjects. Your university, college or public library will have some of these in the reference section.

NOT UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ, OR LOSING TRACK OF AN ARGUMENT

Persevere and re-read the passage. Look for clues in the rest of the text. Ask your tutor.

NOT REMEMBERING WHAT YOU READ

Unless you are revising for an exam, you don't have to remember everything you read, just the main points. To help with this, make notes as you read, and go over these notes regularly. You can also use a reading system [Two similar (but different!) reading systems information sheet]

GETTING BORED OR FALLING ASLEEP!

Keep your reading active by making notes, and take regular breaks; for example, between chapters.

For guidance on notetaking, see the remainder of this topic [link to Reading and notetaking - student menu – content]