



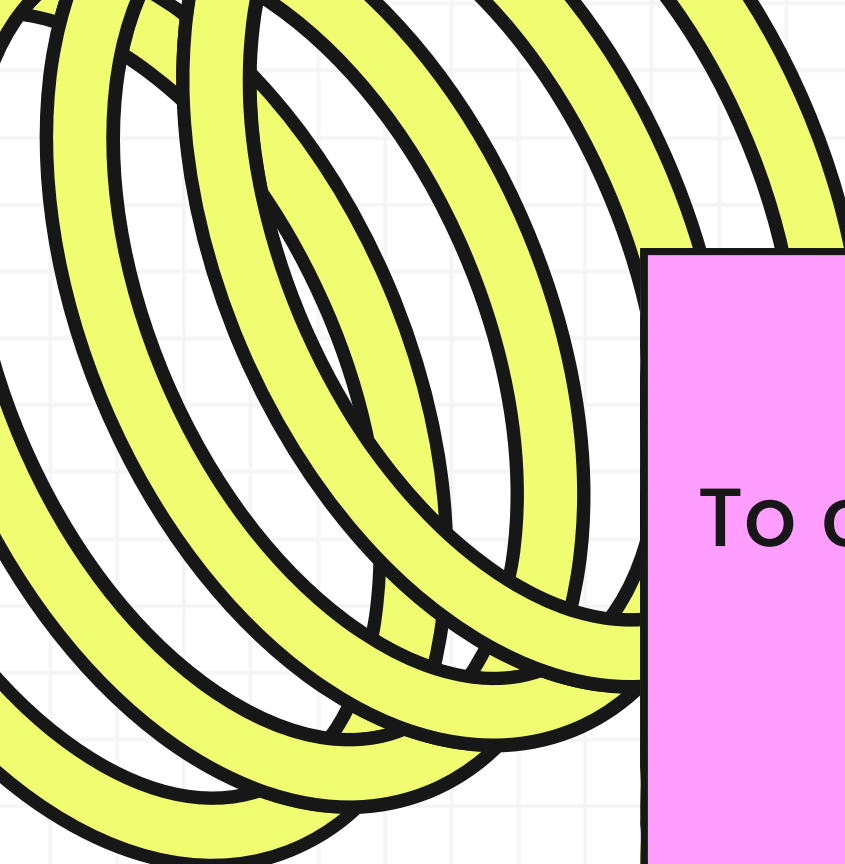
CRITICAL READING & ANNOTATION SKILLS



#1



Why bother with Critical Reading?



To comprehend
the text's
meaning

To engage
emotionally or
intellectually
with the text

To understand
the structure of
the text

To find
connections
between the text
and other
sources

To provide
arguments
for/against the
text

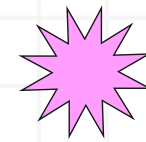
To use the text
as evidence/
support for your
own argument

& more!



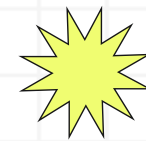


What is critical reading?



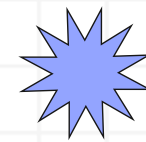
What type of text am I reading?

ex. Fiction, Journal Article, Speech, Textbook



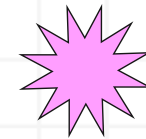
Who is the intended audience?

ex. Students, Academics, Policy Makers



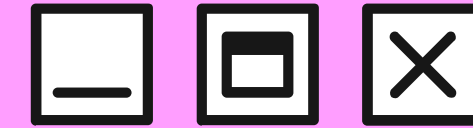
Why would you be asked to read this text?

ex. to recall medical information for medical school examinations.



What reading skills would be helpful for this text?

ex. Skimming, annotating, note taking, underlining.



- 1. Context**
- 2. Reading Goal**
- 3. Reading Strategy**

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

Wild Geese, by Mary Oliver

Context: Literature Class

Reading Goal: Analyse the poem

Reading Strategies:

1. Find out what impression the text is making on me.
2. Find out HOW the text creates that impression.

You do not have to be good.
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Wild Geese, by Mary Oliver

First Pass: What impression does this poem leave on me?

- It makes me feel comforted.
- It reminds me that there is a place for me in the world, even if I feel like I don't deserve it.

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to **walk on your knees**
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the **soft animal** of your body
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the **sun** and the clear pebbles of the **rain**
are moving across the **landscapes**,
over the **prairies** and the **deep trees**,
the **mountains** and the **rivers**.

Meanwhile the **wild geese**, **high in the clean blue air**,
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the **world** offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the **wild geese**, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

Wild Geese, by Mary Oliver

First Pass: What impression does this poem leave on me?

- It makes me feel comforted.
- It reminds me that there is a place for me in the world, even if I feel like I don't deserve it.

Second Pass: How is the text creating this impression on me?

- Animal imagery
- Vast natural landscapes
- Contrast between desert and clean blue air

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to **walk on your knees**
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.

You only have to let the **soft animal** of your body
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

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Wild Geese, by Mary Oliver

Preliminary Analysis:

Mary Oliver uses **vast and inspiring natural imagery** to stir the reader's imagination about the world.

- The imagery of sun and rain moving across landscapes, prairies, deep trees, mountains, and rivers, announces the vast range and diversity of the earth. The movement of the rain over all these features implies a huge sprawl, signalling the massive scale of the world.

The world that Oliver invokes inspires **awe** and **humility**.

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to **walk on your knees**
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.

You only have to let the **soft animal** of your body
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
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Wild Geese, by Mary Oliver

Preliminary Analysis:

Through the image of the **wild geese**, the reader is reminded about their place in a world that is **greater than themselves**. This encourages the reader to let go of the **guilt that is constraining them**.

- Oliver refers to the reader as a "soft animal", relating us to the other animals - geese - mentioned in the poem. When Oliver described the wild geese, high in the clean blue air, heading home, it contrasts with the initial image of a person walking for a hundred miles in the desert, repenting. The image of the wild geese, free in a vast ecosystem reminds us the world is much greater than our worries, and that we have a place in this wide world.

Literature

- **First Pass:** understand the denotative meaning of the text. **Develop an understanding of the overall story, its structure, and main themes.**
- **Second pass:** Hone in on specific passages for a closer reading. Notice **the impression the texts leaves on you.** Notice impressions that are particularly interesting, odd, confusing, or intriguing.
- **Third pass:** So you have an impression. Investigate **HOW** the text creates this impression. Look at:
 - Vocabulary, syntax, metaphors, rhetorical devices, etc.
 - How does the text, using the above tools, create the impression you experience?

- **First Pass:** Read through the text with the intention of **locating the "conclusion" or final claim** of the argument amongst the paragraphs.
- **Second Pass:** Work your way backwards through the text to **find the main premises/claims** that support the conclusion.
 - **Pass 2.b:** Read the sign-posts and connecting phrases to identify the relationships between the premises + overall argument structure.
- Refine your conclusion and argument structure in light of the above. This is a reiterative process!

Philosophy

Pro-tips for skimming



- You don't need to know everything in the text! Sometimes, trying to know everything can be detrimental to your reading goals.
- Read the **Abstract, Intro, and Conclusion** for a general understanding of a journal article or scientific study.
- Notice **how the material is presented** - there might be a background, analysis, and appendix section. Skim the section headers to get a sense of what kind of content is placed where. Which portion of the text is most relevant to your class?
- Look out for signposts that signal main ideas:
 - "the aim of this article is-"
 - "I will argue that-"
 - "the evidence demonstrates that-"
- If you are allowed, consider reading reviews of the books (they usually point out the key features + main argument of the book!)



Pro-tips for deep reading



- Sometimes, deeper reading sessions are required for close-reading, creative classes, and qualitative analysis of data.
- Understand what you are reading for.
 - Reading for **comprehension**?
 - Reading for **intellectual response**?
 - Reading to **excavate features/structures/interconnections** of the writing?
- When reading a larger text, use **annotation symbols/underlining/highlighting** to identify key building blocks, evidence, and analysis for the author's argument. This helps you **trace different ideas within a larger text**.
- Note passages that are confusing, puzzling, or troubling. These can be the focus of interpretive work.
- Use a **citation manager** (such as **Zotero!**) to keep track of key quotes and references.

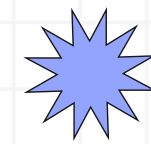


EXERCISE #1

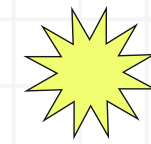
Take out a reading that you are doing for a class this week.

Use some of the critical reading strategies we have discussed and attempt your reading for the next 10 minutes.

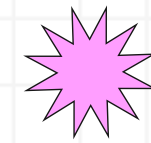
Identify:



CONTEXT

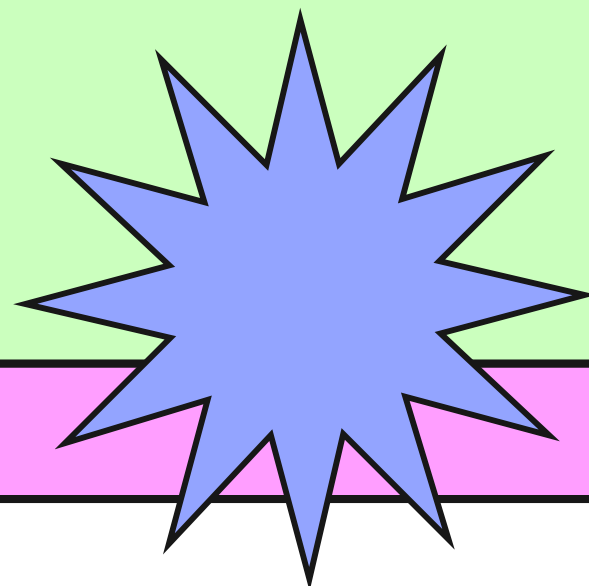


READING GOAL



READING STRATEGIES

10:00



Annotation is a very important strategy when you're trying to achieve your reading goals.

A (non-exhaustive)
list of

Annotation Techniques

Summarizing

Paraphrasing

Identifying
structure

Underlining Main
Ideas

Writing in the
margins

Providing
Examples

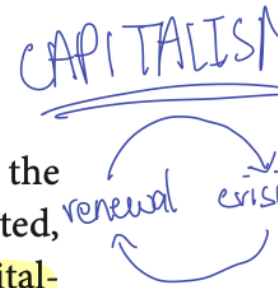
Connecting ideas across the text/
connecting the text with external
sources

Prologue
The Crisis of Capitalism
This Time Around

→ example/evidence
→ sub-idea
→ main idea (important)

→ Crises are essential to the reproduction of capitalism. It is in the course of crises that the instabilities of capitalism are confronted, reshaped and re-engineered to create a new version of what capitalism is about. Much gets torn down and laid waste to make way for the new. Once-productive landscapes are turned into industrial wastelands, old factories are torn down or converted to new uses, working-class neighbourhoods get gentrified. Elsewhere, small farms and peasant holdings are displaced by large-scale industrialised agriculture or by sleek new factories. Business parks, R&D and wholesale warehousing and distribution centres sprawl across the land in the midst of suburban tract housing, linked together with clover-leafed highways. Central cities compete with how tall and glamorous their office towers and iconic cultural buildings might be, mega-shopping malls galore proliferate in city and suburb alike, some even doubling as airports through which hordes of tourists and business executives ceaselessly pass in a world gone cosmopolitan by default. Golf courses and gated communities pioneered in the USA can now be seen in China, Chile and India, contrasting with sprawling squatter and self-built settlements officially designated as slums, favelas or *barrios pobres*.

→ But what is so striking about crises is not so much the wholesale reconfiguration of physical landscapes, but dramatic changes in ways of thought and understanding, of institutions and dominant ideologies, of political allegiances and processes, of political subjectivities,



Manufacturing consent: role of media in capitalism's renewals.
Seventeen Contradictions

of technologies and organisational forms, of social relations, of the cultural customs and tastes that inform daily life. Crises shake our mental conceptions of the world and of our place in it to the very core. And we, as restless participants and inhabitants of this new emerging world, have to adapt, through coercion or consent, to the new state of things, even as we, by virtue of what we do and how we think and behave, add our two cents' worth to the messy qualities of this world.

In the midst of a crisis it is hard to see where the exit might be. Crises are not singular events. While they have their obvious triggers, the tectonic shifts they represent take many years to work out. The long-drawn-out crisis that began with the stock market crash of 1929 was not finally resolved until the 1950s, after the world had passed through the Depression of the 1930s and the global war of the 1940s. Likewise, the crisis whose existence was signalled by turbulence in international currency markets in the late 1960s and the events of 1968 on the streets of many cities (from Paris and Chicago to Mexico City and Bangkok) was not resolved until the mid-1980s, having passed through the early 1970s collapse of the Bretton Woods international monetary system set up in 1944, a turbulent decade of labour struggles in the 1970s and the rise and consolidation of the politics of neoliberalisation under Reagan, Thatcher, Kohl, Pinochet and, ultimately, Deng in China.

→ With the benefit of hindsight it is not hard to spot abundant signs of problems to come well before a crisis explodes into full view. The surging inequalities in monetary wealth and incomes of the 1920s and the property market asset bubble that popped in 1928 in the USA presaged the collapse of 1929, for example. Indeed, the manner of exit from one crisis contains within itself the seeds of crises to come. The debt-saturated and increasingly deregulated global financialisation that began in the 1980s as a way to solve conflicts with labour by facilitating geographical mobility and dispersal produced its denouement in the fall of the investment bank of Lehman Brothers on 15 September 2008.

It is, at the time of writing, more than five years since that event,

crisis
↓
mental shake down
↓
adaptation to new capitalism.

Some cold, hard

Note Taking Tips (#1)

Take Advantage of Excel when writing Literature Reviews, Annotated Bibliographies, or conducting research where you are synthesising many different sources,

Full Citation	Author	Year	Title	Journal/Book Title	Key Words	Main Idea(s)	Relevance to my project
Ahn Jean (2003) The Socio-Economic Background of the Gwangju Uprising, New Political Science, 25:2, 159-176, DOI: 10.1080/07393140307187	Ahn Jean	2010	The Socio-Economic Background of the Gwangju Uprising	New Political Science	Economics; Socioeconomic Analysis; Cultural Analysis	The Gwangju Uprising is not a singular 10-day event, but is an eruption of socio-economic contradictions of South Korean society in the late 1970s.	Background to the uprising, framing the factors that led to the conflict

Some cold, hard

Note Taking Tips (#2)

Take note of all your key passages in one document, with the page number and key-words to tag the content of each passage.

SAMPLE →

This really helps in avoiding accidental plagiarism!

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

VOLUME XLIV

JULY 1938

NUMBER 1

URBANISM AS A WAY OF LIFE

LOUIS WIRTH

ABSTRACT

The urbanization of the world, which is one of the most impressive facts of modern times, has wrought profound changes in virtually every phase of social life. The recency and rapidity of urbanization in the United States accounts for the acuteness of our urban problems and our lack of awareness of them. Despite the dominance of urbanism in the modern world we still lack a sociological definition of the city which would take adequate account of the fact that while the city is the characteristic locus of urbanism, the urban mode of life is not confined to cities. For sociological purposes a city is a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of heterogeneous individuals. Large numbers account for individual variability, the relative absence of intimate personal acquaintanceship, the segmentalization of human relations which are largely anonymous, superficial, and transitory, and associated characteristics. Density involves diversification and specialization, the coincidence of close physical contact and distant social relations, glaring contrasts, a complex pattern of segregation, the predominance of formal social control, and accentuated friction, among other phenomena. Heterogeneity tends to break down rigid social structures and to produce increased mobility, instability, and insecurity, and the affiliation of the individuals with a variety of intersecting and tangential social groups with a high rate of membership turnover. The pecuniary nexus tends to displace personal relations, and institutions tend to cater to mass rather than to individual requirements. The individual thus becomes effective only as he acts through organized groups. The complicated phenomena of urbanism may acquire unity and coherence if the sociological analysis proceeds in the light of such a body of theory. The empirical evidence concerning the ecology, the social organization, and the social psychology of the urban mode of life confirms the fruitfulness of this approach.

Central Themes from Wirth's Urbanism as a Way of Life

Impersonality and the lack of intimate human relationships

Quotes organised by Central Themes

FROM WIRTH

- 'acquaintances tend to stand in a relationship of utility to us in the sense that the role which each one plays in our life is overwhelmingly regarded as a means for the achievement of our own ends' (12)
- 'loss of the 'spontaneous self-expression, the morale and the sense of participation that come with living in an integrated society' (13)
- 'physical contacts are close but our social contacts are distant' (14)
- 'close living together and working ...spirit of competition, aggrandisement, and mutual exploitation' (15)
- 'weakening the bonds of kinship, and the declining social significance of the family, the disappearance of the neighbourhood, and the undermining of the traditional basis of social solidarity' (21)
 - 'transfer of industrial, educational, and recreational activities to specialised institutions outside the home has deprived the family of some of its most basic historical functions'
 - CC: increasing specialisation?

Page Numbers

OWN IDEAS

- Singaporean's being known as kiasu, or afraid to lose out → could stem from the lack of emotional ties as pointed out by Wirth

Distinguishing your ideas from your sources is always a good first step in the essay writing process!

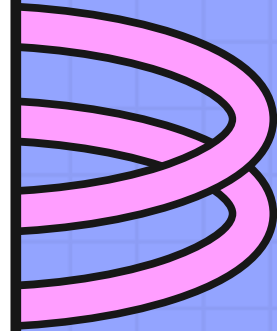
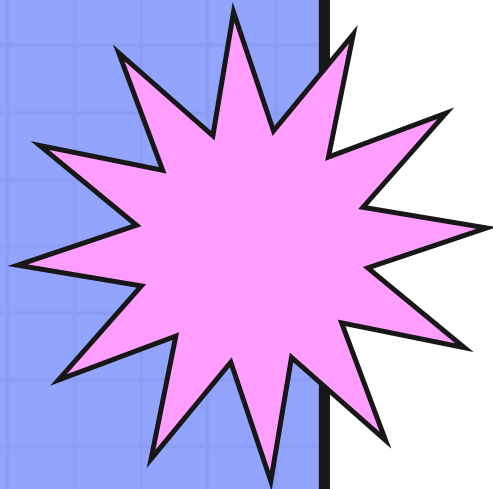
Exercise #2



Take out a reading you are working on for a paper, an upcoming lesson, or a presentation.

Activity: Annotate your text in a way that will be helpful for your overall reading goals

Keep the genre of the text and your reading goals in mind when figuring out a system of annotation!



— X

Feedback



⏪ ⏩

A digital interface for providing feedback. It features a yellow header bar with a close button (X) and a yellow footer bar with navigation icons (back, play, forward). The main content area is white and contains the word "Feedback" in a large, bold, black font, followed by a large QR code centered on a light gray background.