

Access to Higher Education Unit

This unit forms part of an Access to HE Diploma. If delivering the graded version of this unit, please refer to the Provider Handbook for details on grading descriptors and the application of these across units within your programme.

Unit Title: Academic Reading and Note-Making Skills

Graded Unit Reference Number:

Ungraded Unit Reference Number: UD33DEV39

Module: Developmental

Level: Three (3)

Credit Value: Three (3)

Minimum Guided Learning Hours: 30

Units barred for selection against this unit:

- **Communication: Reading Strategies (UD23DEV20)**
- **Personal Development: Study Skills (UD33DEV26)**

Learning Outcome (The Learner will):	Assessment Criterion (The Learner can):
1. Understand and apply a range of academic reading strategies	1.1 Explain the purpose of different reading strategies (e.g., skimming, scanning, deep reading, critical reading).
	1.2 Demonstrate the use of skimming and scanning to identify relevant information in academic texts.
	1.3 Apply strategies for reading comprehension and retention to a selected text.
2. Understand the use of language in academic texts	2.1 Define the concept of authorial voice and register.
	2.2 Identify the purpose and context of at least two academic texts.
	2.3 Evaluate how language choices (e.g., tone, diction, jargon, rhetorical devices) support the author's purpose in two texts.
3. Be able to take effective notes from a range of sources	3.1 Produce notes for a specific purpose from spoken communication (e.g., lecture, podcast).

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| 3.2 | Produce notes for a specific purpose from written communication (e.g., article, textbook). |
| 3.3 | Compare at least two note-taking techniques and evaluate the effectiveness of own approach. |

Indicative Content

Learners could cover the following:

(The information below is provided for guidance only and is not mandatory)

LO1	AC1.1 Reading strategies overview: Purpose of strategy selection for academic study; efficiency in managing large volumes of reading; relevance filtering. Skimming: identifying gist, main ideas, overall structure, headings and subheadings, topic sentences; when to skim (early research stages, initial source selection). Scanning: locating specific details (dates, definitions, statistics, keywords); appropriate contexts (researching evidence, locating precise information). Deep reading: slow, focused reading to understand complex arguments, theories, or dense material; full engagement and concentration; methods for improving comprehension such as summarising, highlighting key concepts, checking unfamiliar vocabulary. Critical reading: questioning assumptions, recognising bias, evaluating reasoning and evidence, comparing sources; used for analysing arguments and interpreting academic texts. Purpose alignment: choosing the right approach based on assignment needs, research questions, or comprehension goals. AC1.2 Skimming skills: identifying text structure (introduction, subheadings, topic sentences, conclusions), spotting repeated themes/keywords, noticing visuals (tables, diagrams), recognising relevance quickly; using physical or digital navigation tools. Scanning skills: searching for specific terminology, numerical data, quotations, author names, dates; using search functions in digital texts; pattern recognition to locate key facts. Application tasks: applying skimming to judge if a text is worth reading in depth; using scanning to collect specific evidence for assignments. Practice behaviours: using timers to increase speed, using a finger or pointer to guide eyes, identifying when to switch from fast-reading strategies to detailed reading. AC1.3
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	Deep reading techniques: breaking long texts into manageable 'chunks', taking regular breaks, using supplementary sources to improve understanding, practising active recall. Critical thinking elements: identifying arguments, evaluating evidence, noticing assumptions, comparing with other texts, recognising tone and intent. Reading techniques: Active reading (annotating, highlighting, noting questions, writing summaries), SQ3R method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review), and chunking for complex texts. Retention strategies: mind mapping, summarising key points in own words, vocabulary building, reviewing notes within 24 hours. Outcome expectations: learner demonstrates comprehension by extracting main ideas, summarising arguments, and identifying how information fits assignment needs.
LO2	AC2.1 Authorial voice: how an author's personality, stance, and intentions appear in writing; shaped by tone, diction, sentence structure, rhetorical devices, and argument style. Register: formality level (formal/informal), objective vs subjective language, active vs passive voice; influence of genre (e.g., academic paper vs editorial). Examples: academic writing often formal, objective, precise; reviews may be subjective and informal; scientific texts tend to be technical with passive constructions. Importance: voice affects reader interpretation, credibility, clarity, and engagement. AC2.2 Purpose: informing, persuading, explaining, analysing, reflecting; identifying primary and secondary purposes; using textual clues (titles, introductions, tone). Context: author background, historical moment, intended audience, cultural influences, genre conventions, mode (written/spoken/hybrid). Analytical features: how purpose shapes language choices; how context shapes argument style and structure. Examples: research papers aim to inform specialists using formal language; newspaper editorials aim to persuade general audiences using evaluative and emotive language. AC2.3 Diction: formal/technical vocabulary, abstract vs concrete wording, connotation analysis. Tone: tentative vs confident expressions; how tone influences interpretation (e.g., cautious language in scientific reporting vs assertive tone in opinion pieces). Jargon: specialist terminology; when jargon is appropriate; potential barriers to understanding.

	Rhetorical devices: metaphor, analogy, repetition, examples; how they strengthen arguments or improve accessibility. Critical evaluation: assessing whether language is effective, biased, persuasive, ambiguous or misleading; relationship between language, audience, and purpose.
LO3	AC3.1 Preparation: reviewing prior materials, anticipating key points, identifying aims for note-making (e.g., evidence gathering, understanding key concepts). Listening techniques: identifying signposting language (“most importantly...”, repetition, tone shifts); recognising examples and explanations; avoiding transcription. Note-making approaches: linear notes, Cornell method (right column detail, left column prompts, bottom summary), double-entry journal (information vs reactions), mind mapping for visual learners. Practical considerations: dealing with fast-paced speech, using abbreviations, symbols, colour coding; reviewing notes afterwards to fill gaps and add reflections. Quality indicators: notes show structure, capture essential information, meet the set purpose, and show comprehension of spoken content. AC3.2 Preparation: skimming text first; setting focus (e.g., argument extraction, evidence mapping, concept clarification). Techniques: highlighting, annotating, summarising paragraphs in own words, identifying arguments, identifying unfamiliar vocabulary for later research. Note-making frameworks: Cornell method; double-entry journal for reflective engagement; mind maps for conceptual relationships; linear notes for sequential arguments. Reading-to-note strategies: identifying main arguments, supporting evidence, counterarguments, definitions, examples; avoiding copying large text chunks. Reviewing: refining notes, creating summaries, linking notes to assignment questions. AC3.3 Technique comparison: strengths/weaknesses of linear notes (simple, sequential), Cornell method (structured, encourages active review), double-entry journals (promotes critical thinking), mind maps (visual, good for complex topics). Evaluation criteria: clarity, usefulness for revision, level of engagement, ability to capture relationships vs detail, personal learning preferences. SWOT analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats for each method; when different methods suit different tasks (e.g., mind maps for planning, Cornell for revision). Reflection: justification of chosen techniques based on purpose and outcomes; identifying areas for improvement.

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