

CAMBRIDGE

**SECOND EDITION**

# STUDY *reading*

A course in reading skills for academic purposes

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# UNIT 1

## Getting to know your textbook

This unit aims to develop the reading strategies and skills required for:

- 1 surveying a textbook
- 2 using an index
- 3 dealing with word problems.

### Before you read

During your studies, you will learn from your lecturers, your fellow students and from written information resources, both in print form and online.

#### TASK 1

Tick the written information resources you expect to use in your course. Then rank your choice (1 to 9, with 1 being the most popular) and compare your ranking with others in your group.

Textbooks		Journals	
Lecture notes		Indexing and abstracting databases	
Encyclopaedias		Websites/e-learning materials	
Dictionaries		Theses and dissertations	
Other – specify			

A textbook can be one of your most valuable sources of information. Knowing the parts of a textbook is the first step to using it properly.

#### TASK 2 *Parts of a textbook*

Study this list of some of the parts of a textbook. Try to match the parts with the correct descriptions. When you have finished, compare your answers with your neighbour.

Parts of a textbook	Descriptions
a) bibliography	1 the units of the book
b) title page	2 sources used by the author
c) appendix	3 a list of the main topics by chapter
d) preface/introduction	4 a list of books, articles, etc. which provide further reading on the themes covered in the book; usually found at the end

e) acknowledgements	5 an alphabetical list of topics in detail
f) contents	6 additional information, often for reference purposes, found at the end of the book
g) chapters	7 selling points, author information, positive reviews
h) references	8 thanks to people who have helped with the book
i) glossary	9 the author's aims and the coverage of the book
j) index	10 a mini-dictionary of specialist terms used
k) back cover	11 title, author and publisher
l) foreword	12 a short introduction to the book written not by the author but by someone familiar with the author's work

.....  
 : **TASK 3** Identify the parts of a textbook that are shown below. Then compare your answers with those of your neighbour. What is the book about?

**1 Salience.**

- 1) The importance a brand holds for different groups of people. It is a measure or indication of emotional closeness to, or distance from, a brand; it is different from awareness.
- 2) The extent to which a brand comes readily to mind (e.g. measured by first mentions in answer to a brand awareness question) or the most frequently mentioned brand in connection with a set of associations.

**2** First published 1999

**Admap Publications**

Farm Road  
 Henley-on-Thames  
 Oxfordshire RG9 1EJ  
 United Kingdom

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>3</b> I Qualitative Research – New or Old Discipline? | 14 |
| II Qualitative Research – Warts & All                    | 52 |
| III A Review of Qualitative Methods                      | 74 |

**4** This book is a very personal effort to explain how I *think* about human beings and their relationships to brands, communications and the delivery of service, and hence what I *do* as a quantitative researcher. My credentials for attempting to do this are 30 years of experience.

- 5 Lesley Thompson is an excellent quantitative researcher whom I admire. She read each chapter twice, challenged my point of view and willingly contributed additional thoughts and examples.
- 6 S. Adams, *The Dilbert Principle*, Harper-Collins, 1997.  
K. Blanchard, *Mission Possible*, McGraw-Hill, 1997.  
J.M. Dru, *Disruption*, John Wiley & Sons, 1996.
- 7 'This book covers the landscape of qualitative research in a way that inspires the reader new to the subject and stimulates the experienced researcher to think more deeply. Even after 20 years' involvement with research, I found my knowledge both challenged and increased.'

**Sally Ford-Hutchinson, Global Planning Director, DMB&B**

**TASK 4** Why would you read these parts of a textbook?

- 1 Covers
- 2 Title page
- 3 Publishing details – publisher, date, place of publication
- 4 Foreword, Preface or Introduction
- 5 Contents
- 6 Index
- 7 Bibliography

When you have recorded all your answers, go on to Task 5.

**TASK 5** Study this passage to find the reasons given for reading each of the textbook parts listed in Task 4. Discuss with the others in your group any differences between your answers to Task 4 and the reasons given in the passage.

<p>Before accepting information published in a book, you should spend a few minutes examining its structure, for this will assist you in evaluating the book. The dust jacket often contains information on the qualifications of the author and the author's point-of-view. Allowance must, of course, be made for the natural desire of the publisher and author to present the book in its best light. The title page should always be read carefully. It may</p>	<p>contain a sub-title explaining the intention or scope of the work, or the qualifications of the author. The imprint (place of publication, publisher and date) is of value. The work is likely to be authoritative if published by a publisher who specializes in the subject of the book. The date will indicate how up-to-date the book is and the reverse of the title page should also be examined, in case this reveals whether the edition is</p>	<p>15</p> <p>5</p> <p>20</p>
--	--	------------------------------



substantially a reprint of an older work. The foreword, preface or introduction will often summarize the purpose of the volume (see Fig. 53). The table of contents will not only outline the way the work is arranged and help you to trace a particular piece of information (see Fig. 28) if the index is defective, but will also suggest the point-of-view. Every book is based on a combination of objective facts and subjective interpretation of them. The contents will suggest whether the author has set out to prove a theory or to spread a particular belief. The book may be of great value even if it contains

25  
30  
35

propaganda, but greater care must be taken in evaluating the information. The running headlines on the top of the pages may contain useful information on the text. The index can reveal the scope of the book by listing the topics discussed (see Fig. 54) and the number of pages devoted to them. It can also reveal the author's sources and will indicate whether they are up-to-date and thorough in their approach.

40  
45

[Source: Chandler, G. (1982) *How to Find Out: Printed and On-line Sources*, 5th Edition (Oxford: Pergamon Press), pp 1–2]



**TASK 6** This form can be used to make a quick survey of a textbook. Look through a textbook which is unfamiliar to you, preferably in your own subject. Try to survey the book in about 10 minutes. Use this textbook if you cannot get one in your own subject.

- 1 Title \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Author/s or Editor/s \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Publisher, Date and Place of Publication \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Edition \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Level \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Aims \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Main Topics Covered \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Special Features \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 Library Shelf-mark/Call Number \_\_\_\_\_

## Scanning

Scanning means reading to find specific information. You have a specific target and you search the text quickly for the information you need. Scanning is one of the reading skills you require to locate information quickly in the index of a textbook. To do this, identify the keywords in your search item. Then let your eye go up and down the index columns until you find references beginning with the keywords. Then focus more finely to search for the specific references you want. With practice, you can become faster at scanning by narrowing the area you scan – moving from coarse to fine focus – as quickly as possible.

Sometimes you may not be able to find the information you want in an index, although the book may contain all the information you need. If you cannot find your topic, first make sure that you are using the correct keyword. (The most likely keywords in the following examples are highlighted.)

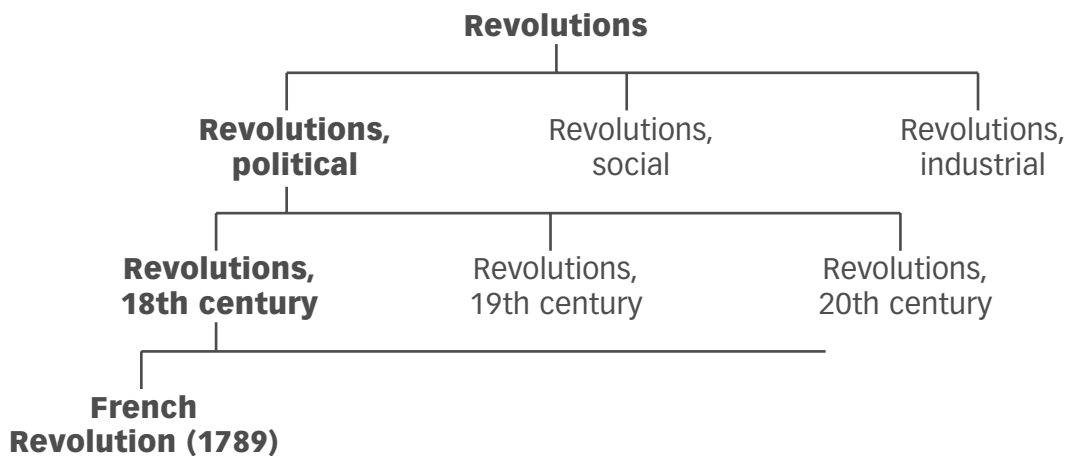
Often more than one keyword is possible. For example, ‘The eclipse of the Moon’ may be listed in an index as:

**Eclipse**, of the Moon

or

**Moon**, eclipse of

If you cannot find a very specific reference, try a more general keyword. For example, to find ‘The French Revolution of 1789’ you may have to try any of the terms highlighted.



**TASK 7** Each of the following topics (1–10) come from a geography textbook; match them with a more general keyword (a–j) from the index.

Topic	Index keyword
1 railways	a) ores
2 cultivation of oranges	b) urbanisation
3 troposphere	c) sea routes
4 cotton growing	d) mining
5 underpopulation	e) transportation
6 Panama Canal	f) climate
7 growth of New York	g) atmosphere
8 uranium	h) population
9 coal production	i) industrial crops
10 rainfall	j) citrus farming

**TASK 8** Which page or pages would you refer to first in this extract from the index of *Natural Disasters* to find information on the following? Be prepared to justify your choice. Work as quickly as you can and note the time you take. When you have found your answers, compare them with another student's. Note: a **boldface** entry indicates a figure; an entry in *italics* indicates a table.

- 1 the reasons for subsidence in Venice
- 2 the sociology of disasters involving skyscrapers
- 3 effects of snow in cities
- 4 aid for developing world countries
- 5 disasters in Texas
- 6 frequency of tornadoes in the USA
- 7 psychological stress
- 8 relationship between tides and earthquakes
- 9 assessing the stability of slopes
- 10 how tornadoes are formed

slope stability	246–51	Small Business Act (USA)	592
Bishop method	249	snow	
factor of safety	246–7	drift	204
Janbu method	250	fall, impact of	201–6
method of moments	247–8	metamorphosis	190–1
stress analysis	249	natural dissipation	202
slopewash erosion	221	sociology of disasters	554–60
slow-onset disaster <i>see</i> creeping disaster		and tall buildings	353–5
slump	253	and tornadoes	180

socio-psychological reactions	559–66	tents	437–8
soil	218–20	tephra	93
erosion <i>see</i> erosion		ejection	96–7
loss tolerance level (T)	226	Teton Dam, Idaho	361–2
solar masking	98–9	Texas, disasters in	161, 285
solum	219	Thematic Mapper (TM)	385, 391
spatial model of disaster	25–6, 27, 465	therapeutic community	561
SPOT satellite	384, 388	thermal anomalies (volcanic)	103
squall line	182	Thermal Infrared Multispectral	
state of maintenance of buildings	320	Scanner	391
storm surge	137, 160–1	Third World	432, 440–3, 450–1, 495–549
stratovolcano	94	aid and relief	15–6, 511–4, 518–9
stress, physical		threat, concept of	7
effective normal	245, 249, 276	threshold	
seismic and landslides	269–70	angle of stability	243
stress, psychological	564, 569	in erosional systems	220
strong motion of the ground	43	tides, effects on earthquakes	65
structural		tide gauge	85
integrity	333–6	tiltmeter	63, 102, 108
survey <i>see</i> damage survey		time periods in	
unit	60	disaster	20–21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 446
stunting	522	tolerance	
sturzrom	255	of erosion	226
subduction		of risk	574–5, 577–9
process	90	Tonal Ozone Mapping	
zone	46	Spectrometer (TOMS)	391
sublimation	190	tornadigenic vortex signal (TVS)	181
subsidence	276–86	tornado	170–83
at Venice	281–2	funnel	173
causes	276–85	generation	171–4, 172, 174
monitoring of	285	impact of	181–3
socio-economic aspects	280–6	incidence in North	
tectonic causes of	285	America	174–80, 176, 177, 178
sudden impact disaster	9	intensity scales	33–4, 175
supplementary feeding		model of	393
programme	515–16, 570	path	174, 175, 176
surface deformation		prediction	181
seismic	63–5, 268	warning system	177, 180–1
volcanic	102	transient strength	271
surface wave	45	trap efficiency of reservoirs	365
sustainable development	7, 616	trauma	
swelling potential of clays	286–7, 286	collective	556–8, 561
symbiosis with environment	7	physical	461, 525
Tangshan, China (1976 earthquake)	43		
taut-wire buoy	86		
taxation	85–6		
technological hazards	338		

[Source: Alexander, D. (1993) *Natural Disasters* (London: UCL Press Limited), p 630]

## Text exploration

### *Discourse study: Textbook structure*

A typical textbook has this structure:

Introduction  
Contents  
Chapters  
1  
2  
3  
etc.  
Further Reading  
Appendices  
Index

The best guide to the organisation of the textbook and the topics it covers is provided by the Introduction and the Contents. Pay particular attention to any section of the introduction labelled 'Advice to the Reader', 'To the Student', 'How to use this book', etc. You can safely ignore the Acknowledgements.

### *Word study: Words which substitute for other words*

Words are one of the first problems that readers face – words which are unfamiliar, words which change, and words which are missing. In this unit we will study ways of dealing with some of these problems.

Writers often use different words in a text to refer to the same thing – the meaning remains the same but the words change. Study the examples that follow.

- 1 Before accepting information published in *a book*, you should spend a few minutes examining its structure. *The work* is likely to be authoritative if produced by a publisher who specialises in the field. The foreword, preface or introduction will often summarise the purpose of *the volume*.

*Work* and *volume* do not signal new topics. They are simply different words for *book* in this text. If you meet an unexpected change of topic in your reading, look back in the text for a possible link. The writer may be using a new word for an old topic.

- 2 *The index* can reveal the scope of the book by listing *the topics* discussed and the number of pages devoted to *them*. *It* can also reveal bias by the number of references under particular topics.

To avoid repeating a noun, writers may change it to a pronoun. In this example *topics* becomes *them*; *index* becomes *It*. If you have difficulty with a pronoun, look back in the text to find the noun referred to.

Sentences which appear to have words missing may also cause problems. Sometimes writers omit words to avoid unnecessary repetition. Study these examples:

Compare versions 3 and 4:

- 3 It is important that you have a clear purpose when you read. If not, you may waste valuable study time.
- 4 It is important that you have a clear purpose when you read. If *you do not have a clear purpose*, you may waste valuable study time.

Compare versions 5 and 6:

- 5 Dictionaries and encyclopaedias are important information sources. Both can be found in the reference section of your library.
- 6 Dictionaries and encyclopaedias are important information sources. Both *dictionaries and encyclopaedias* can be found in the reference section of your library.

.....  
: **TASK 9** The following is a preface from a reference book. Study it and answer the numbered questions.

This book has been prepared to provide a guide to sources of information on engineering and its various branches. It [(1) *What does 'It' refer to?*] should prove of interest to all persons engaged in the engineering profession and those [(2) *Add the missing word*] contemplating entering the [(3) *Add the missing word*] profession. It is hoped that Chapters 1 and 8, on careers, and education and training, will assist both advisers and potential students seeking information about these important matters. [(4) *Which important matters?*] This book has been arranged according to the Dewey Decimal classification that is commonly employed in public libraries. Although the work [(5) *Which work?*] is reasonably comprehensive, there are so many textbooks available that it has

not been possible to make specific recommendations [(6) *Of what? Add the missing words*]. This matter [(7) *Which matter?*] is better dealt with by tutors and others concerned with teaching. However, in certain chapters selected books have been mentioned in addition to reference books and the like [(8) *The like of what?*] when it has been felt that the details [(9) *Details of what?*] would augment the general information provided [(10) *Information provided where?*]. A number of the books referred to contain neither bibliographies nor guides to further reading.

[Source: Parsons, S.A.J. (1972) *How to find out about engineering* (Oxford: Pergamon Press), p xiii]

**Self-study** *Appendix 1* lists some of the key words you will meet when reading academic texts. One way of remembering the important words in Academic English is to keep a vocabulary notebook or a set of word cards. What kind of information do you think it would be useful to note for each keyword? Here are some possible answers:

- Translation in your language
- Part of speech
- Pronunciation
- Example sentence
- Words with a related meaning
- Words which are related grammatically
- Words which occur together with the key word (collocations)

Study this example of a word card:

Key word	Translation
<i>publication</i>	
Part of speech <i>noun</i>	Pronunciation <i>'pʌblɪkeɪʃən</i>
Example <i>She is a prolific writer with many publications in her field.</i>	Related meaning <i>book, article, paper</i>
Related grammatically <i>publish, publisher</i>	Collocations <i>official+, research+</i>

Design your own card to include the information you think is important for your academic reading. Remember that you need not fill in all of the information at the same time.

## Application

### TASK 10

The extract that follows is from a study skills guide. Study it, then answer the questions: Which part of the publication is it from? Which chapters in the guide will provide help with these problems?

- 1 planning essays
- 2 acquiring basic study skills
- 3 setting out references
- 4 finding suitable books
- 5 preparing for examinations
- 6 looking for a job

## How to Read this Book

There are seven chapters in the book, arranged in a sequence which roughly mirrors a student's progress through college. The first chapter deals with 'Starting off in higher education' and is intended mainly for people who are just about to go to university/college or who are in their first year there. If you are an experienced student, you may still find it useful to read this chapter fairly quickly. 5

Our next three chapters tackle different aspects of normal coursework. Chapter 2 deals with 'Generating information', finding literature, using it effectively, and making notes. 10 Chapter 3 describes 'Analysing concepts and theories', particularly explaining how to place problem concepts within a whole field of ideas. Once you have gathered enough information and you understand the major concepts involved in an area, Chapter 4 moves on to 'Writing essays'. It describes how to de-bug essay topics, plan your response, and write up finished text. 15

The next two chapters relate to course assessment. You may move on in your final year to 'Writing dissertations', the subject of Chapter 5. Dissertations pose some problems over and above ordinary essay writing, especially in organizing research, writing up a longer piece of text and referencing sources. Chapter 6 deals with the final and most critical stage in most courses, 'Revising for exams' and answering exam questions. 20 25

Chapter 7 on 'Turning study skills into life skills' is likely to be of immediate relevance if you are beginning the 'milk round' of career interviews and job applications. However, it is worth reading well in advance of this stage, since by then it is generally rather late to do anything about acquiring career-relevant skills. The earlier you think through some ideas about possible career lines, the greater the opportunity you have to undertake relevant activities and develop key personal qualities. 30

[Source: Dunleavy, P. (1986) *Studying for a Degree in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (London: Macmillan Education Ltd.), pp 1–2]