

## Thinking Writing: Short reading/writing tasks

- Short reading/writing task 1

Spend two minutes writing in response to the following questions before you read:

What are you about to read? Why this text? How is it/might it be related to what you are studying? What do you hope to find/think you will find? How long have you got to read it and how much of it do you hope to cover?

- Short reading task 2

Before you read, frame a particular question (or questions) to ask of the text. For example, 'what is this writer's standpoint on feminism?' or 'does this article say anything about evolutionary learning theory?' or 'how is the idea of home defined here?' or, (more focused and complex), 'How does this article/writer respond to another article/writer's idea of x?' While you read, make a note of sections of the text that you feel might say something about your question; you may also want to make a note of your reactions to those sections during your reading or once you have finished.

- Short reading/writing task 3

When you have finished reading your chosen text, spend 3 minutes writing a short paragraph answering:

1. State the purpose of the section/article/book – what problem or issue is the author addressing. What is their intention?
2. Sum up the argument made.
3. Finally, give the claim(s) made by the author - be clear about the point they are trying to make.

Optional further steps:

[4. Now spend a short time writing a response to this article/book – how does it fit into your thinking (about your topic)?]

[5. Go back to the text for a while and look for any additional details, possibly a quotation, which might help you refine your understanding of and use of this text.]

Suggestions above adapted from Pat Thomson's ideas on reading, found at <http://patthomson.wordpress.com/>

- Short reading/writing task 4

Highlight the section of the text that you feel is most crucial – now paraphrase it. Now add a sentence or two explaining why this point/section is key for you.

[Optional extension – once you have done this with two texts, write a paragraph that discusses both points: you could start 'If we consider [text 1/idea 1] in the light of [text2/idea 2]...' or 'By looking at [text 1/idea 1] and [text2/idea 2] together...' or 'By doing y, [text 1/idea 1] shows the x about [text2/idea 2]...']

Adapted from the WiD Faculty training initiative at <http://www.quinnipiac.edu/institutes-centers/writing-across-the-curriculum>

- Short reading/writing task 5

Negative summary – instead of highlighting the points you feel are important from a text, make a fresh copy of the text and delete all the things you feel are not important – aim to keep less than 5% of the text.

- Short reading/writing task 6

Choose three key terms/phrases from your text and define and/or explain them in your own words.

- Short reading/writing task 7

As you read or once you have finished, write down the question(s) that you think the writer is answering or trying to answer in the text – for example, ‘in section 3, Marx is answering the question “how does power influence ideology?”’ or ‘Chapter 1, Friedland - “is it possible to chart depression in terms of an epidemic?”’

- Short reading/writing task 8

As you read or once you have finished, write down any question(s) that you have about the text – about meaning, how ideas relate to other ideas/texts, stages of an argument and so on. These can be a useful resource to return to in the future to see what aspects of a text you might want to read again or think more about.