Reading at University

Why should I read at university?
- To develop your disciplinary, professional and technical knowledge
- For independent study and preparation for class discussions
- To research existing knowledge and help generate new knowledge
- To inform your assessment tasks

Three steps to help you become an efficient and effective reader

1. Preliminary Reading
   - Familiarise yourself with text to understand the overall content and its relevance to you.
   - Identify the author, the type of publication and the date of publication. Consider how reliable and current the information is.
   - Read the abstract, executive summary or any other overview to identify the:
     - Topic
     - Overall argument
     - Approach
     - Structure
     - Conclusions
   - Skim the whole text noting signposts such as:
     - Headings
     - Tables and graphics
     - Keywords (use word search)
     - Topic (and concluding) sentences
   - Read the introduction and conclusion

2. In-depth Reading
   - Critically engage with and understand the text, the relationships between ideas and how evidence is used to support positions.
   - Read the text in some detail but do not get stuck at any one point. Mark bits you don’t understand and move on.
   - As you read, you can annotate the following:
     - Key points, particularly the overall message
     - Points where you agree or disagree
     - Anything you don’t understand (to follow up)
     - Any ideas the text gives you
     - Cited texts that you would like to read
   - You can also take notes separately, in which you:
     - Note main ideas and stages of the text (ie from the introduction to the conclusion)
     - Include page numbers
     - Note any questions or disagreements
     - Use graphics - tables, arrows, diagrams etc.
     - Relate new ideas to what you already know
     - Write in your own words (paraphrase) preferably in full sentences

3. Pulling it all together
   - Confirm understanding, formulate your position and understand how the content relates to other texts.
   - Based on the work you did in steps 1 and 2 and referring back to your annotations and notes articulate the following:
   - Bibliographic information:
     - The type of text
     - Who wrote it
     - The purpose
     - The audience
   - Content:
     - The overall message
     - The evidence for the overall message
     - Any issues with overall message and the evidence as it is presented
   - Your view:
     - Whether you agree or disagree and why
     - The relevance of the text to your study
     - Connections to other information or ideas on the same topic