



Notes about reading

With some documents, you may decide that the document is important enough to your work to read it from cover to cover. More usually, when making a case for funding, we want to find information from a reliable source which will add some useful support to the argument that we want to present. To do this, work through the document systematically until you find what you want. Try this method:

1. Re- read **the title** of the document. *Make sure you understand what you are about to read and ask yourself again: Is it relevant?*
2. Read the **abstract or introductory** paragraphs. *Does it still seem relevant?*
3. Using any headings, read the **relevant parts of the summary** and more if you need the context. *Hopefully, by now you have what you need but if you need to go further...*
4. Use the summary to guide you to **relevant pages in the document**. *Skim read these pages for relevant phrases and then read the selected paragraphs carefully.*
5. Search for most **relevant words or phrases in the index**.
6. Search for most **relevant words or phrases in the document**.

Remember! At each of these stages there is the option to:

- a) Stop reading when you have reached your goal.
- b) Stop reading if you find that the source is not relevant to your aim.



Evaluating sources

P *Presentation*

- ▶ How is the information presented? Badly presented material will affect your ability to make sense of the information.

R *Relevance*

- ▶ How relevant is the information to what you are trying to find out about? Consider what geographical area the information relates to, what level of difficulty or technicality it involves and the emphasis of the piece of work. How relevant is it?

O *Objectivity*

- ▶ Every piece of writing or information comes with the author's position of interest. Think about the author or authors. You need to be aware of possible bias in what you read, and to take account of this when you interpret the information.

M *Method*

- ▶ How has this information been put together? What is it based on? For example, qualitative or quantitative data, a single point of view. Are the conclusions based on opinions, research or something else?

P *Provenance (Where does it come from? Who does it come from)*

- ▶ The 'credentials' of a piece of information might support its status and value. It is important to be able to identify the author, sponsoring body or source of your information.

T *Time*

- ▶ When was the material produced or published? When did the research or observation that it is based on happen? If this is a long time ago, you need to assess whether or not it is still useful to your needs

Adapted from the Open University website: Further information at:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/library/help-and-support/finding-resources-for-your-assignment>