

## **READING FOR RESEARCH: Strategies and Examples**

As you research your topic, you'll need to read with different purposes and in different ways. These approaches to reading will help you to understand what is already known about your topic, to identify what isn't known or fully understood, and to identify your own contribution and to shape your argument. Reading for research isn't a linear process, so you should expect to revisit each of these different approaches at various times. Which of these purposes is familiar to you in the research process? Which is surprising? Why?

1. **Read for familiarity with a topic.** Get a sense for what the known, accepted information is, what the current debates are, and how writers across genres approach the topic.

“I'm interested in veganism. **I've learned** from reading scholarly sources, including medical journals, that people can live healthy lives through veganism and even have a profound health advantage over non-vegans. I've also learned, from reading public intellectual sources, that, although veganism is currently experiencing a rise in popularity in a way that makes it seem 'trendy,' the decision to go vegan is a controversial one, often met with deep skepticism from more 'traditional' eaters.”

2. **Read for acknowledgment and response to the current conversation about the topic.** Locate what seems to be missing or under-emphasized when scholars address the topic as a way of beginning to situate your own views in response.

“When reading about veganism, **I noticed that**, while many sources discuss why people choose to go vegan, or what the potential health benefits and risks are, **no one seems to be talking about** why, the rejection of veganism from some circles is so vigorous, with a tone of almost personal offense. A substantial consideration of why the choice to not eat animal products is met with such vehement negativity in some circles is missing from the ongoing conversation about veganism.”

3. **Read for possible answers to the question you've raised.** Expand your reading to other possible disciplines outside of your topic that may help you formulate your argument.

“In order to try to suggest a new idea that might help to explain the powerfully negative reactions to declarations of veganism, **I decided to expand my reading beyond** just veganism itself, and on to food psychology, where I learned about the deeply personal, often heavy family- and tradition-influenced decisions that make eating, a physical act of survival, into more of an expression of a belief system. I also read about the food industry, including the companies that produce meat, dairy, and eggs, and the wide-ranging influence they've been able to have on our food choices through steadfast and energetic long-term advertising. Finally, I read about food history, and the food choices and beliefs of our ancestors, and how that information is often presented in a distorted way through marketing campaigns for certain foods and diets. **Together, all of this information has helped me be able to suggest the new idea that the powerful negativity directed toward veganism could in part be related to [this unexpected or previously unmentioned thing or things]...**”