

ACE Quick Guide to Creating a Reading Log

A reading log **promotes a structured approach to research**. It allows you to **systematically record sources, summarise key arguments**, and **critically reflect** on their **relevance** to your assignment topic.

The Benefits of Creating a Reading Log



Creates a **systematised approach** whereby sources are **stored centrally** and are easy to locate.



Improves **time management** during the assignment planning process.



Supports the development of clear, **evidence-based arguments** in your writing.



Encourages **critical reflection** across a broad range of source types and helps establish links and disparities across the research.

Preparing to Create your Reading Log

1. Review the Assignment Brief

Ahead of gathering sources and beginning your research, it is important you have a solid **understanding of the assignment brief**. You can use the [ACE Quick Guide to Understanding an Assignment Brief](#) to break down the task description, **identifying the directive, subject matter, and limiting words**.

Reviewing the individual tasks will help you to **detect knowledge gaps** and **collate sources** which are **relevant** to the **assignment brief**.



2. Begin Gathering and Storing Your Sources

A good place to start is by **reviewing the set texts on your module reading list**. You can also **identify sources referenced** or **recommended** in your **lectures** and look on your **module page** for additional recommended reading.

Here, the aim is to gather a broad range of sources and store these in an **effective file system**. You may adopt a singular folder, a digital storage system such as **OneNote**, or an **Excel spreadsheet** – any system which allows you to return to files with ease.

For further suggestions on digital note storage, see the [ACE Quick Guide to OneNote](#).

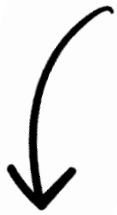


3. Conduct a Search for Further Sources using Online Research Tools

There are many credible, open access **research tools** that are completely free to use; examples include the [Directory of Open Access Journals](#), [JSTOR](#), [Semantic Scholar](#) and [Google Scholar](#).

Google Scholar provides a way to search for **relevant academic literature** in one convenient place. You will find different source types, such as books and journal articles, most of which are available as free and complete PDFs.

For additional guidance on how to use Google Scholar, see the [ACE Quick Guide to Google Scholar](#). Again, make sure you store the sources effectively.



4) Identify and Prioritise Most Relevant Resources

While gathering sources, it is important to **determine** if these sources are **appropriate for use in your assignment**. The **CRAAP test** provides a list of questions to assess a source's **Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose**. For more information on how to **identify appropriate sources**, see the [ACE Quick Guide to Evaluating Sources and Reading Critically](#).

You can assess a source's relevance while in the gathering stage or when you have finished compiling your initial research folder. You may want to further categorise your sources and create a sub-folder which **prioritizes sources of high relevance**.

Reading Log Techniques

Once you have gathered and prioritised your sources, you are ready to **create your reading log**. It is important that you find a system that works for you. Please see the two examples below – you can access the [Excel](#) and [Word](#) templates by clicking the links.

1. Excel	Visually clear method using rows and columns. Research can be further categorised via filters, colour coding and tabs.
2. Word	Simple and effective way to store research for an assignment. Useful for establishing links between sources.

Excel Reading Log

Create a column for **author** and **date**. This will enable you to **sort, filter** and **group** sources easily.

Include the **quotation** or **section of text** you are referring to in its **original form**.

Provide a bullet point **summary** or **paraphrase** the original text. See **ACE Quick Guide to Paraphrasing**.

Assess the **strengths** and **limitations** of the research and record a few **bullet points**. For further guidance see, **ACE Quick Guide to Evaluating Sources**.

For each source included in your log, provide a **link to the source** or the **reference list citation**.

Explore **how the findings relate** to your assignment and/or organisational context

Can you **link** the sources to **other research** you have read? What **similarities** or **contradictions** are there? Consider using the **filter function** to **group** these sources.

You can **create tabs** for each assignment and **create additional tabs** to further planning and notetaking.

You can **colour code sections** according to task or themes, which can be **categorized** using the **filter function**.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
		Author	Date	Hyperlink / Citation	Quotation / Section of Text	Summary / Paraphrase	Strengths	Limitations	Relating Theory to Practice	Link to Other Research
1										
2	Task One									
3	Task One									
4	Task One									
5	Task Two									
6	Task Two									
7	Task Two									
8	Task Three									
9	Task Three									
10	Task Three									
11	Task Four									

Assignment Title | Planning Further Notes | +

Sort & Filter | Find & Select

Word Reading Log

Make a note of the **purpose of the source** and the **methodology** (if applicable)

Extract the **main points** and the **key findings** relevant to your assignment

Write down a **paraphrase** and/or a **quotation** to use in your assignment

Think about how what you have read **compares to other sources**. Do they support or oppose the findings?

Citation	Purpose and methodology	Main points and key findings	Paraphrase and/or quotation	Limitations	Relating theory to practice	Links to other research
Task 1						
Task 2						
Task 3						

For each source included in your log, provide the **reference list entry**

Identify **potential limitations of the source**. Is there bias or has anything been overlooked?

Explore how what you have read **relates to your professional practice and organisational context**

You can **divide your reading log into different tasks or topics** so it's easy to see what reading is relevant to different parts of your assignment.



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