



What are you currently researching?
For what class/context?

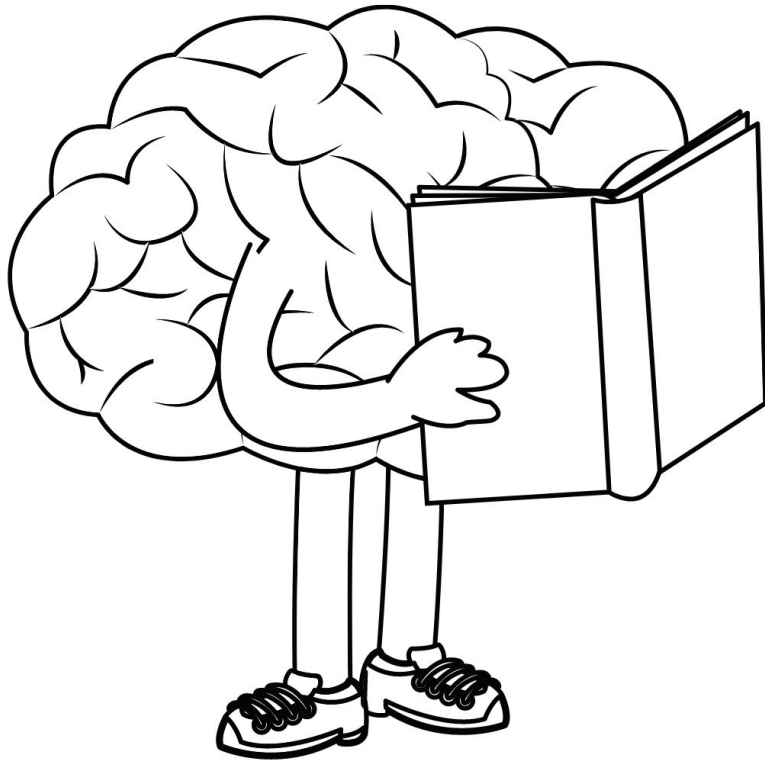


Reading for Research: From the Outside In

A Writing Guide Presentation

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Today's Workshop: Reading for Research

- Goals when Reading for Research
- Different Strategies for Different Goals
- Reading from the Outside In

Goals when Reading for Research

What are we looking for when we read for research?

Determine a source's
relevance or credibility

Get a basic summary or
understand key findings

Decide whether/how we
want to use a source

Extract specific
information

Depending on where we are in the
process, we might need to...

Define its key terms

Understand how it relates to
the conversation as a whole

Figure out what role a source
might play in our argument

Locate useful quotes
or material to analyze

Goals when reading for research

What we need to get out of a reading depends on where we are in the research process

Exploration: Determining Usefulness & Relevance

- What's the basic summary of this source? What are its main findings, takeaways, or argument?
- Is this source relevant to my project? Does it do or have what I need?
- Is this source credible? Can I use it?

Conversation: Establishing Role & Relationships

- How does it fit in the conversation I'm exploring?
- How does it relate, either directly or indirectly, to the other sources I've gathered so far?
- What role might this source play in my own argument? (e.g. background, example, evidence, argument/counterargument, method, etc.)

Goals when reading for research

What we need to get out of a reading depends on where we are in the research process

Extraction: Locating Useful Moments

- Based on how I'm using the source, what material do I need to extract for direct use in my draft? (e.g. info, statistics, quotes, terms, etc.)
- If I'm looking for specific information, where in the source am I likely to find it?
- How does this moment/material fit in with or relate to my project?

Expansion: Signaling Further Possibilities

- Does this source spark ideas for other voices to bring into the conversation?
- Does it illuminate angles/perspectives I hadn't considered that are worth exploring or seeking out?
- Who/what does this source cite, and are those sources useful/relevant for my project?

Crucial Takeaway:

**We don't need to
achieve all of these
goals in one read!**

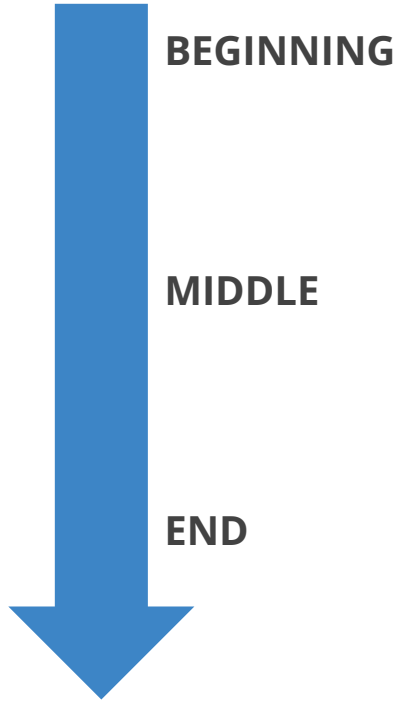
Different Strategies for Different Goals

Different Strategies for Different Goals

How you approach a text changes based on what you're reading *for*

Strategy	Description	Goals
Linear Reading	Experiencing the text from beginning to end – the order an author intended it to be experienced	Reading for narrative Reading to experience a story/argument arc Reading to track the development of a project
Close-Reading	Making specific observations about choices an author made, often looking closely at the sentence or word level	Reading for analysis Reading to locate tensions in a single text Reading to illuminate a deeper understanding
Reading Across Texts	Examining multiple texts for connections between them	Reading for conversation Reading to establish status quo and/or gaps Reading to locate tensions across texts Reading to understand uses of common terms
Reading from the Outside In	(What we're talking about today!)	Reading for content Reading to get a general overview/summary Reading to extract specific information Reading to determine a source's use/relevance

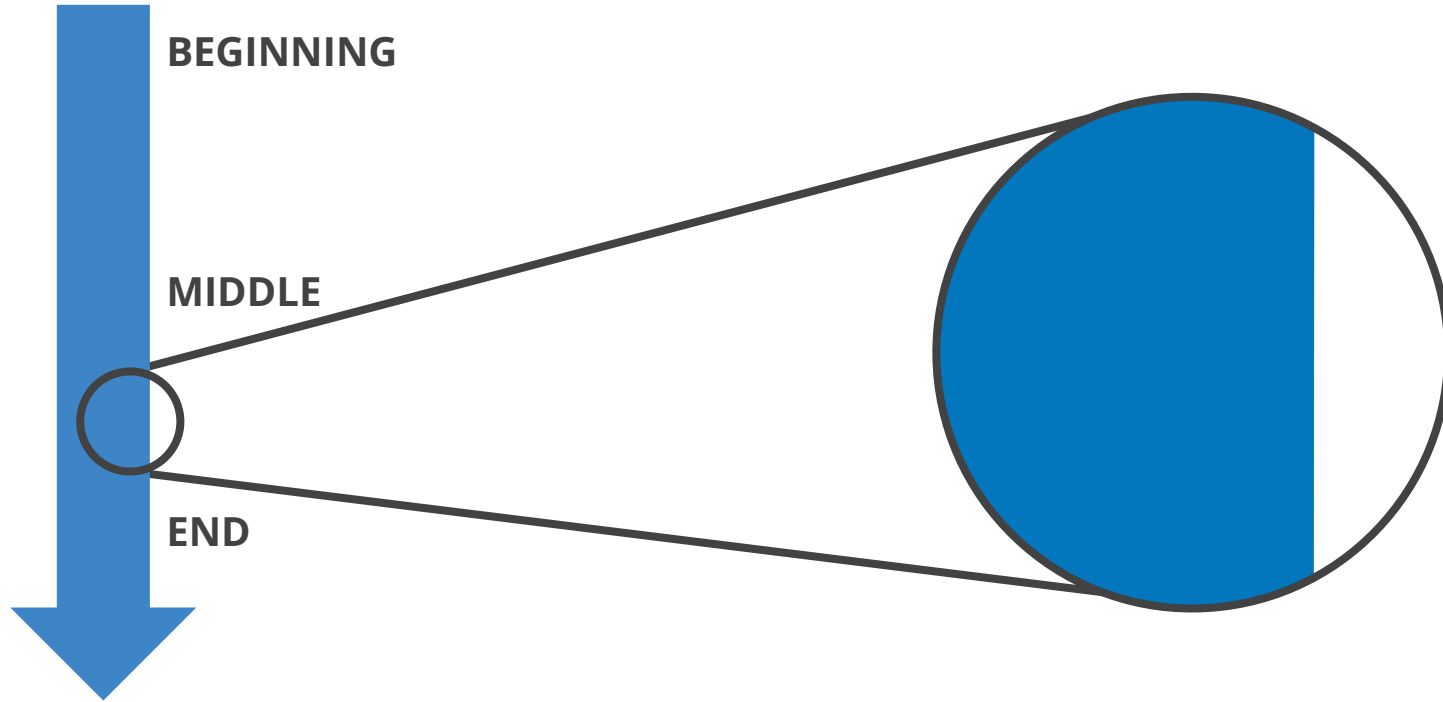
READING LINEARLY



READING LINEARLY

VS

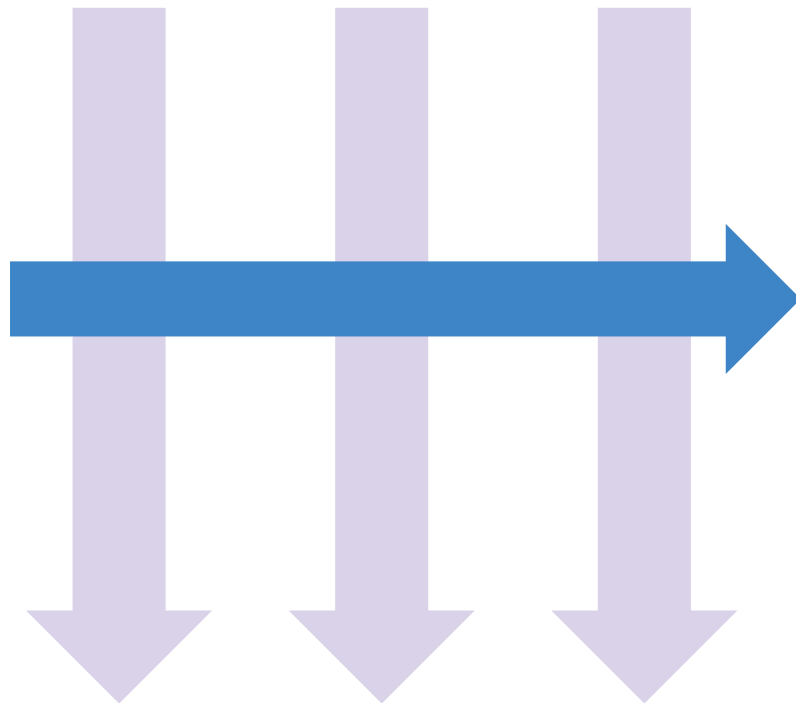
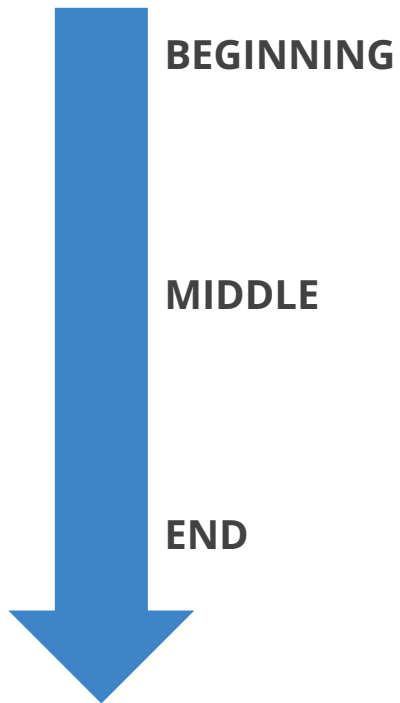
CLOSE-READING



READING LINEARLY

VS

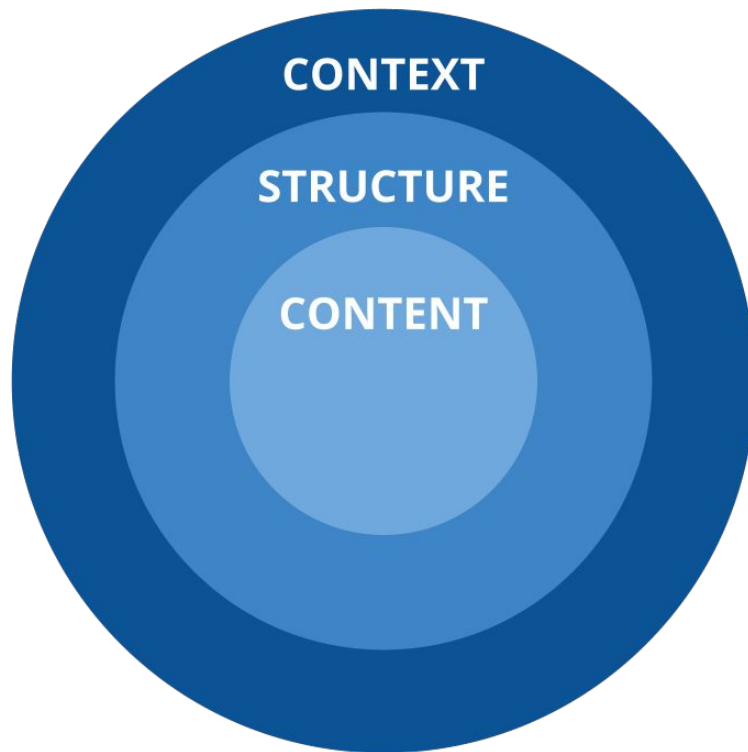
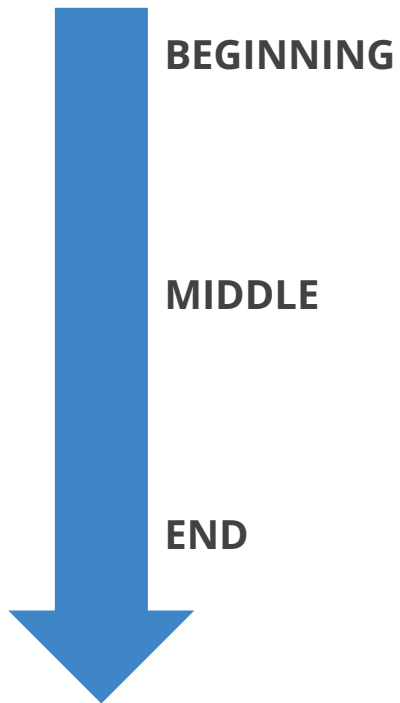
READING ACROSS TEXTS



READING LINEARLY

VS

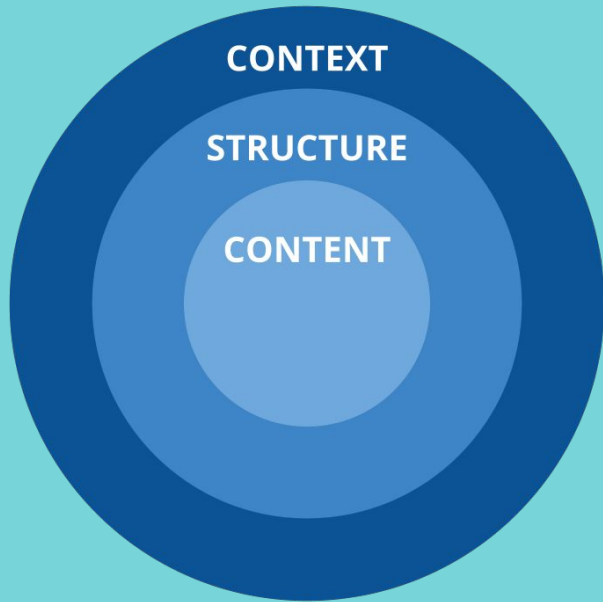
READING FROM THE OUTSIDE IN



Reading from the Outside In

Ritzenberg, Aaron & Sue Mendelsohn. *How Scholars Write*. Oxford University Press, 2020.

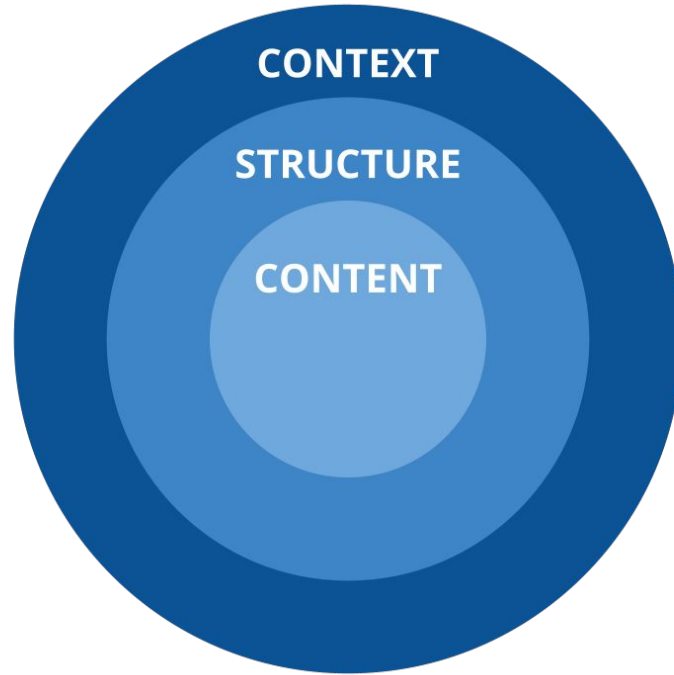
Reading From the Outside In



Can be used in many genres, but is especially useful for:

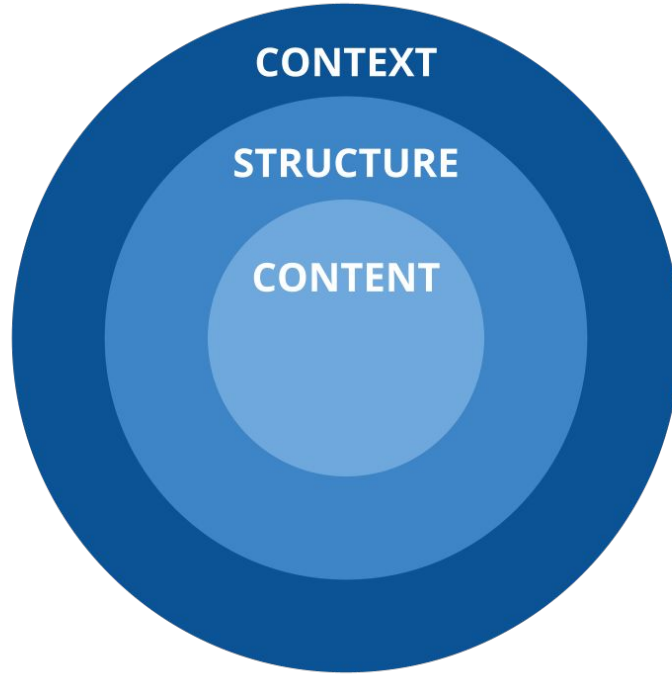
- Information- or argument-driven texts
- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- STEM or Social Sciences texts
- Long texts with multiple sections/subheadings
- Book-length works
- “Secondary” sources (sources “about” other texts or objects – analyzing or making an argument about the “primary” sources)

This is a GOAL-ORIENTED strategy



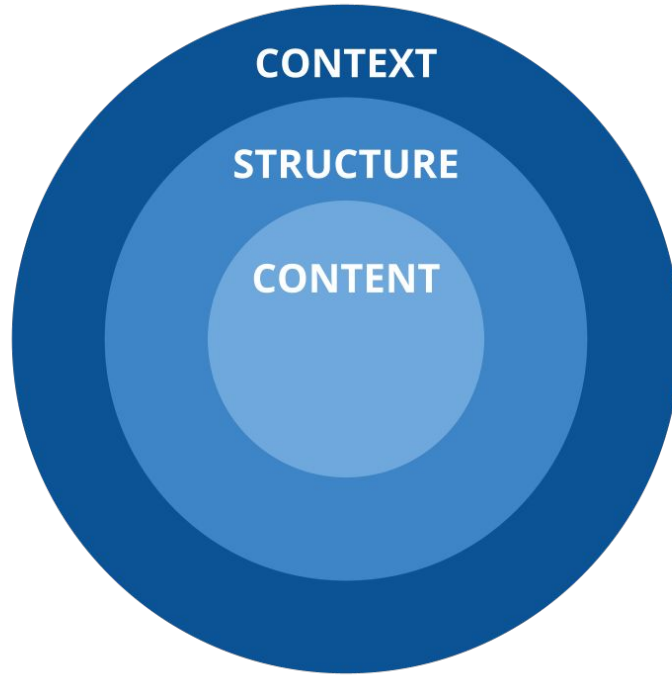
This is a GOAL-ORIENTED strategy

Your specific goal
will affect how you
implement this
strategy



This is a GOAL-ORIENTED strategy

Your specific goal will affect how you implement this strategy



- Get an overall sense of a text, a general summary, or initial skim
- Locate or extract specific info from a source
- Determine how (or whether) you might use a source

Pick one of the sources you've gathered for a current research project (or a class-assigned text) you haven't read yet.

What is the **goal** of this initial read?
What do you need to read *for*?

In the chat: 1, 2, or 3?

1. Getting an overall picture
 2. Locating something specific
 3. Determining how/whether to use it
-

STEP ONE: Context

Contextual info can give you a sense of the focus of the piece even before you start reading the main text.

Publication context

- Where was this published?
(Or: what class is this for?)
- When was this published?

Title context

- What is the title? Subtitle?
- What do we expect based on this title?

Author context

- Who is/are the author(s)?
- Any familiar names? (already read OR listed on the syllabus?)
- What information do you have about the author(s)? (affiliations, bio, COI, etc.)
- Bonus tip: check the bibliography!

STEP TWO: Structure

Getting a sense of a piece's structure helps us figure out where we're headed.

Note: If the piece has an **abstract**, this is a good time to read it! Then skim for structure:

What does the beginning look like?

- Is there an abstract?
- Is there a separate introduction?

What does the end look like?

- Is there a conclusion or discussion section?

What does the middle look like?

- Are there standard section headings? (e.g. methods, participants, results/findings, etc.)
- Are there other kinds of headings, subheadings, or chapter titles? (e.g. indicating topic or focus of a section)

STEP THREE: Content

Not beginning to end,
but STRATEGICALLY
from the outside in!

From the outside in:

1. **Abstract**

- Overview/preview

2. **Concluding section**

- What the author(s) really want(s) to hammer home

3. **Introductory section**

- Context and exigence

4. **Then you can read the rest!**

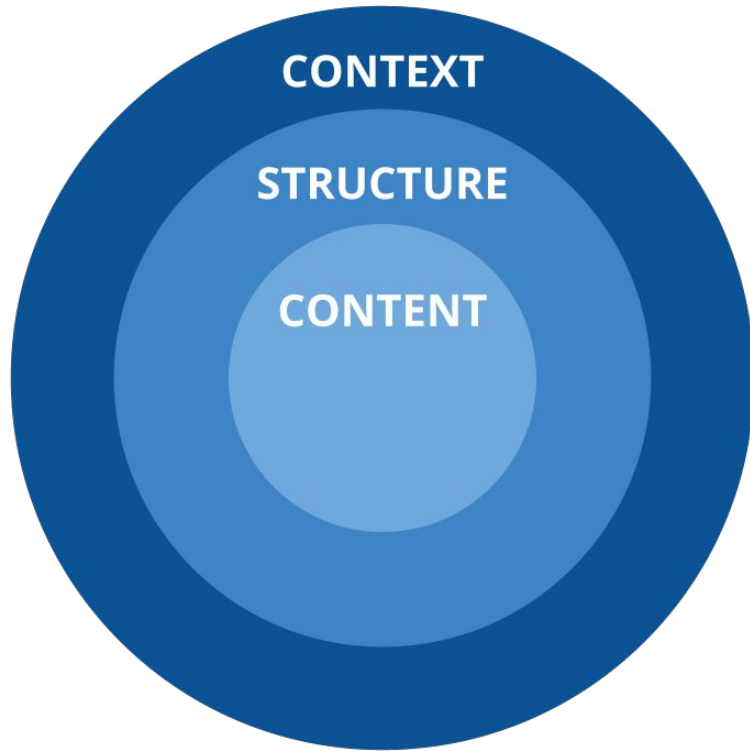
For “the rest” – decide where you want to spend more/less time based on your goals, the structure you noted in Step 2, and what you ultimately need to do with the text

Key principle:

**Only read as much as you need
to accomplish your goal!**

You will likely be returning to this text with another reading strategy (e.g. close reading or reading across texts) so it's okay if you don't do everything right now!

Reading From the Outside In



1. Context

- Publication
- Title
- Author

2. Structure

- Abstract
- Beginning section headings
- Ending section headings
- Middle section headings

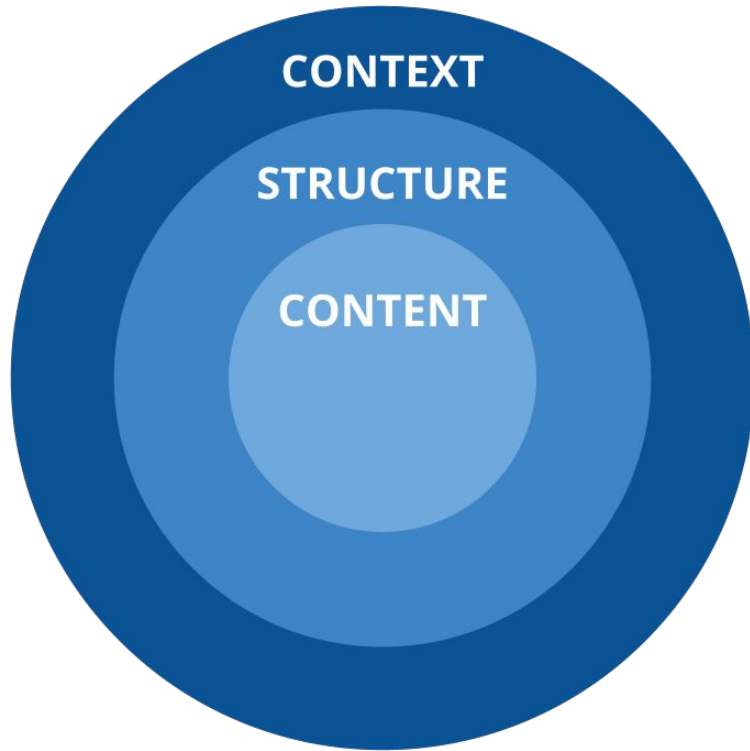
3. Content

- Abstract
- Concluding section
- Introductory section
- The rest

What next? Returning with a different strategy

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Reading Across Texts	Examining multiple texts for connections between them	Reading for conversation Reading to establish status quo and/or gaps Reading to locate tensions across texts Reading to understand uses of common terms
Reading from the Outside In	Noting context, then scanning for structure, then moving strategically through the content of the text	Reading for content Reading to get a general overview/summary Reading to extract specific information Reading to determine a source's use/relevance

Reading From the Outside In



1. Context

- Publication
- Title
- Author

2. Structure

- Abstract
- Beginning section headings
- Ending section headings
- Middle section headings

3. Content

- Abstract
- Concluding section
- Introductory section
- The rest

Questions?



What is **one thing** you will take away from this workshop to apply to your semester planning?



References

- Ritzenberg, Aaron & Sue Mendelsohn. *How Scholars Write*. Oxford University Press, 2020.