

## Tips on Reading Academic Material

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Purpose of Academic Material:

-To offer new perspectives, analyses, and solutions to ongoing problems and issues.

How this is accomplished:

-Synthesizing what is known about the problem, both in terms of competing perspectives (schools of thought) and data (statistics, comparisons, history, and case studies).

-Organizing that information and applying it to the problem/issue at hand. This is usually done through these steps:

-Creating a general hypothesis that speaks to the nature of the issue, and a series of testable hypotheses for the specific problem/case at hand.

-Identifying a series of variables that help to explain the parameters of the data, including any variation in it.

-Creating a logical framework around those variables for analyzing new data, or existing data in a new way.

-Developing a clear methodology that works with that framework to help you interpret the results of the analysis in a way that leads to concrete conclusions.

The results of the analysis are:

-Reflected back upon the general debate around the issue.

-Acknowledged as limited based on your assumptions, data, and framework.

-Thought of as a step forward, anticipating the next steps needed.

-Applied to offer lessons and recommendations for the problem.