**Slide 1: Reading and note-taking**

This is a presentation on reading and note-taking. You will be reading a significant amount of material for your essay. In order to manage your reading load, it is advisable to practise efficient reading. You can be efficient by employing active reading strategies, taking notes while you read, practising critical reading and drawing up an annotated bibliography. The following sections discuss this in detail.

**Slide 2: Copyright notice**

**Slide 3: Processes involved**

Before you begin your essay you need to understand what the task requires. \*Begin by reading the question and interpreting the task. It is a good idea to identify key words and phrases in the topic. If you are not clear about the topic, do consult your tutor. Once you know what the requirements are, you need to obtain a general understanding about the topic. This is so that you are familiar with the debates associated with the question. Once you do this, you will be aware of the issues that are being raised and discussed. \*Next read about the issues widely and critically. Look at different sources and identify what is being said about the issues. Remember you need to write a lengthy argument about the topic, so you need substantial evidence from your reading to do that. \*Based on how much of evidence you have located from your reading, you can now agree or disagree with the statement. You need to be clear about your stand or proposition.

\*Then identify the evidence that will support your stand. \*Rather than superficially discussing ten issues, it would be a good idea to choose four to five issues and do an in-depth critical discussion of them. This is what your tutors would prefer. \*Remember to find at least two or three references to support each of the issues you are discussing. \*When you find information that will support your arguments, remember to paraphrase and summarise. In appropriate instances, you can also quote. Do not forget to record the bibliographic details of the source. Reading for your essay does not begin and end at the start. Sometimes you may have to read some more while you are writing your essay as you may realise that you do not have enough evidence to support your arguments.

**Slide 4: Read to understand: Practise active reading**

In order to gain maximum benefit from your reading, you need to practise active reading. Otherwise, you will not remember what you have read and find it difficult to locate the information you need to support your arguments when you write the essay. \*One strategy you can employ is to underline key points or main ideas. You have to be careful not to overdo this or your text will be filled with lines that do not distinguish between main points and examples. \*You can also highlight the key points. Once again, you have to be selective and not highlight everything you read. \*One strategy that forces you to comprehend what you read and paraphrase is, using the margin of your text to record the key points in two or three words. This is a very good technique because when you need to justify your arguments in the essay, all you need to do is look at these words or phrases and restate them in your own words.

\*Another active reading strategy that you can use is to summarise the key points. For example, when you read a paragraph that you think could be used to support your discussion, first identify the key points. Then put the text away and try to restate the arguments in your own words. Check your summary against the original and remember to record the source.

**Slide 5: Taking notes while reading**

It is important to take notes while you read for the essay. \*Notes can be taken in text or visual form. When taking notes of key points, you can write word for word. This might be important when you want to use a quote to support your argument. You can also note key words. This form of note-taking will be useful for paraphrasing or summarising evidence in your essay. Alternatively, you can also use abbreviations.

Besides text form, \*you can also use visuals such as flow charts, mind maps or diagrams as a form of note-taking. \*Here are some examples as to how notes can be recorded with visuals. You can devise your own form of note-taking, one that works for you and makes sense to you. Taking notes while reading will help you to not only record important information that will support your arguments, but also help you organise your line of thought. Remember, notes must always be followed by the bibliographic details of the source so that you can reference the information correctly.

**Slide 6: Some resources to help you with your note-taking**

If you require some more information about note-taking, do click on the links provided on the slide which will take you to some resources that you may find useful. Otherwise, continue to the next slide.

**Slide 7: Practise critical reading**

You will have to read widely in order to write a good essay. There will be a lot of information that you will come across about the topic you choose. You need to practise critical reading so that you only select pertinent information that supports your argument. Ask yourself the ‘WH’ questions: what, why, who, when, where and how, when you read. \*It is important evaluate the reliability of the information. Be critical about aspects such as who the author is, the date of publication, where the information was published, evidence used and bias. It is a good idea to read information from reputable sources.

Do also distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. It is important to be very clear about your line of argument and the issues you are going to discuss. An essay plan or an outline will come in handy here. If you are clear about this then you can select information that will support the discussion. You also need to compare and contrast ideas, concepts and theories that are being debated so as to derive an objective assessment of the topic.

\*You will not find information that directly spells out the evidence that you are looking for. You need to read and make appropriate generalisations from your readings. Furthermore, you need to recognise contradictions and if appropriate highlight this in your essay. You also have to be critical about the ideas, concepts and theories that you are reading. Consider how these apply in your context, practice and discipline and how they relate to the essay topic. Do also try to be critical about assumptions made in the literature and evaluate them. Explore implications and consequences of a particular action. Remember, by practising critical reading, you would save yourself a lot of time when you write the essay as you would have all the relevant information that would help you write an in-depth, critical and high quality essay.

**Slide 8: Continuous Assessment 3: Critical Reading and note-taking activity**

Now that you are familiar with reading and note-taking activities, \*choose one journal article from the six scholarly sources that you found in the literature search. Apply the reading and note-taking strategies that have been introduced in this I.Spring while you read the article. Write a 400 word critical summary of your chosen article. Begin by providing details about the article such as the title, name of the author, when and where it was published. Next, discuss the key ideas that were raised in the article. Remember to be critical and not just describe the article. Refer to Slide 7 for information on how to be critical. You are required to submit this assessment for grades. Refer to your course outline for the due date.

If you do require more information on strategies for efficient and critical reading, do click on the links provided on the slide which will take you to resources that you may find useful. Otherwise, you can begin on your reading activity for the completion of the task.