Welcome to the presentation on Academic Reading. This presentation will address among others types of academic texts, their characteristics, different sections and their functions. In the university, you are expected to read widely and critically. Many students complain that they are unable to manage their reading load. To overcome this, you need to read selectively and efficiently.

You will be expected to read different types of academic texts and use the information to produce your assignments. Some of the texts that you will be reading are textbooks, periodicals, journals, reports, policy documents, web documents, manuals and guides. You may have to read different texts in order to find information for different sections of your assignment.

Academic texts are different from everyday reading materials. The language used in these texts is formal. The message is communicated in an objective manner and usually in third person. It is common to see the terminology of your discipline. So if you are studying an education degree, you will see words such as pedagogy, curriculum and learning theories. If you are studying social work, you will come across words such as client and intervention. The text content and organisation is controlled by the author. The discussion is usually evidenced with other research findings. There is usually a reference list to indicate the source of the information. The text is organised in a predictable format. For example, if it is a journal article, you will have the title, abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, etc.

Generally, you will not be able to read from cover to cover and every section of your text and still keep on top of all your reading. In order to manage your reading load you need to read selectively. For example, if you are studying in the School of Communication, you may need to read a journal article titled ‘How Muslim Women Navigate through Media Representations of Hijab/Burqa’ in order to complete an assignment. You may have to read the title so that you would be able to identify the content through the key words. It would also be a good idea to read the abstract as it provides a brief overview of the investigation. If you are reading a report, the abstract is called the Executive Summary. You then would have to read the introduction as it provides the background, identifies the
problem or gap in the area of research, states the aim of the discussion and outlines the structure of
the argument. Reading all of these sections will help you decide if you could use the information to
produce your assignment.

**Slide 6: Different Sections and their Functions**
The body of the text presents the framework of the argument. In a journal article the body is divided
into the literature review, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion. You usually do not need
to read the methodology and results sections unless you want to replicate the study. The conclusion
restates the thesis statement and recaps main points identified in the body. In a report the
conclusion is usually followed by recommendations. Reading the conclusion section helps the reader
refocus on the argument or discussion raised in the text. You do not need to read the reference list
unless you are looking for similar themed texts. The author’s biography provides information about
the author and their expertise. Additional information that could not be presented in the text is
appended as the appendix. You do not have to read this unless you want to.

**Slide 7: Strategies for Academic Reading**
In order to manage your reading load, do selective reading. Begin by scanning the text to look for
particular words or phrases. You would usually scan the title, the abstract, the introduction, etc.
Once you have found the words or phrases you were looking for, you would read quickly to get the
meaning. This is called skimming. You would only do detailed reading when you have found the
information you were looking for. Remember to go beyond reading the text superficially. Try to read
the text critically so that you evaluate the text to identify the purpose, evidence used, assumptions
made, etc. You will also synthesise information from different sources. You must also try to identify
the implicit and explicit meaning conveyed by the author as well as evidence of bias. The context for
which you are reading will determine what you read.