

Worksheet for How to Read a Paper

Pass 0: Identify the following for this paper

Title: _____

Author(s): _____

Author Affiliations: _____

Source (journal, etc.): _____

Length (pages): _____ Are there pictures or figures? YES NO

If so, what kind and how many? _____

How many references are there? _____

How long do you estimate it will take to read this paper? _____

Pass 1: Abstract

Read the abstract and answer the following:

How long did it take you to read the abstract? _____

Is this relevant to what I'm trying to learn or do? _____

What "jargon" is used in the abstract – meaning any words you don't understand.

Now, rewrite the abstract in your own words in the simplest possible language, making sure to include 1) what questions does this paper answer, and 2) what claim or claims does the paper make?

Based on the abstract, is the article going to be useful to you? _____

Pass 2: Introduction

Read the introduction. How long did it take to read? _____

What additional “jargon” is used in the introduction – meaning any words you don’t understand.

Are you prepared to get what you need from this article? Can you understand enough about it?

Pass 3: Conclusion/Discussion

Read the conclusion/discussion. How long does it take to read? _____

What was the author trying to prove in this paper? _____

What did they do to prove it? _____

Did they prove it? _____

What additional “jargon” is used in the introduction – meaning any words you don’t understand.

Write in your own words what the author(s) thinks they proved in this paper.

Does it seem believable? Rate it as:

1. Totally obvious
2. Feels right, but nice to have proof
3. I hadn’t thought about it, but don’t see any reason to believe otherwise
4. Counterintuitive
5. Seems impossible

How long did it take to read all sections of the paper? _____

How close is that to your estimate? _____