How to **focus on reading** in a digital world

1. Find the right reading environment for you

- **Find a quiet space** where you can read without distraction.
- **Identify your own reading needs** and prioritise them.
- If available, **utilise accessibility features** like read aloud functions, if these help you digest information effectively.

2. Try to avoid distractions

- Utilise **'do not disturb'** functions on your devices.
- **Schedule time to read** and do your best to stick to this.
- **Set realistic targets** for your reading.

3. Take regular breaks

- **Screen fatigue is real.** Break digital reading down into smaller chunks.
- **Try to summarise** your thinking before you take a break.
- **Use tools** like Pomodoro to help with time management.

4. Be 'active in the text'

- **Plan.** Find relevant resources before you begin reading.
- **Make use of technology's functionality.** Many platforms can help you to search, engage with, and annotate resources. Find the one that works for you.
- **Annotate.** Where possible, make personal notes directly on the text to keep everything in the same place.
- **Discuss with your fellow students.** It's a great way to hear alternative viewpoints.
- **Don't take too many notes.** Be selective to develop the ability to summarise.
- **Sync devices** so that you can access your notes wherever you are.

5. Vary your reading practice

- **Adopt a critical approach to reading.** Consider the voice of the author and the perspectives they are trying to convey.
- **Speak with your tutors** about the key reading skills they'd like you to develop. Every discipline has different practices and requirements.
- **Don't just skim read.** It's a useful skill, but don't forget to dive deeper into the text too.

"I lay out my computer screen in a very specific, sectioned way, dividing it so I can see multiple things at once (dictionary, doc for note taking, browser, pdf viewer). This stops me getting distracted and keeps me focused as I never need to minimise the reading and it stays at the forefront of my mind. I always write comments as I read and set up a timer that blacklists certain websites when I need to stay focused."

(3rd year Classical Studies student, University of Lincoln)

QAA

talis