

What is DEEP READING?

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Deep reading is a way to approach a text that focuses on *understanding*, and not just *knowledge*. What is the difference? Basically, knowledge is about facts and figures—it is about things you can Google. Notice that knowledge is a yes or no thing: you either know something or you don't. If you don't know the answer to a question I can give you the information now you know it. You have gained in knowledge. If, for example, I ask you "Who sang "These Boots were Made for Walking"?" you either know it or you don't. If you don't know, you can look it up (Go ahead, Google it). When you have read the answer you have now gained in knowledge!

Understanding starts with facts, but it deals with the meaning of facts, and so it is a little less straightforward. The first thing to notice is that understanding is **not** either/or – sometimes you understand a little, and sometimes you understand a lot. Just because you get an answer to a question, it does not mean that you will understand. Back to the song "These Boots Were Made for Walking," suppose I tell you "I think this song deserves to be a feminist anthem!" If you have watched the video, you might say "I don't understand how you can think that this is a feminist song!" You might start by not understanding why I would think that, and you might ask more questions, and I would explain what I think feminism is, and then I would provide examples from the song (and the video) that I think prove it is really feminist! Gradually, you might start to understand why I think this song should be a feminist anthem. Note that you don't have to agree with what I am saying in order to understand it (but you should understand before you disagree).

Knowledge and understanding don't always go together: sometimes we know things we don't understand, sometime we understand something, but we are wrong about what we know. The goal of deep reading is to bring the two together – in the case of reading, learning what the text says (knowledge) and then understanding what the text means. Knowledge is something a teacher can provide, but understanding is not something that can be taught (although we will provide some tools to help).

INSTRUCTIONS for Deep Reading

Start by skimming this reading—this means going through quickly to get a broad understanding of what this is about. This can help you understand the parts. As you go through the passage try not to worry if you don't understand something, just mark the passage as confusing, and then move on. This helps you start to identify the parts that you *do* understand. Once you have skimmed the text the first time. Write out answers to question 1 and 2 below.

Now that you have a general sense of this text, start to look at it a little more closely. Go through it again, and in addition to marking passages that are confusing, make a quick note of key concepts and terms, even if you don't quite know what they mean, because these will be important for understanding the text. (Note that a key term is not just something that you don't understand, it is a concept or term that is important to the author). You should also note anything that you find especially interesting, or that you really agree with or disagree with. Once you have done that, use these notes and comments to help fill in the rest of the worksheet below. Please don't worry about being right, because you can change your answers as we go along. Remember, the goal is not to be right, it is to increase our understanding of what Arendt is talking about, and this worksheet just gives us a place to start.

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Deep Reading Worksheet

1. Write a short summary of what this passage is about. This should just be a sentence or two. (Imagine a friend asked you what this passage is about, what would you tell them)? (Try not to use your notes for this part, this is just your first impression and you may change your mind as we think about it more).

2. In this passage, what is the problem that Hannah Arendt wants to address? (Start with what Arendt says in the text, then try to come up with some examples from real life).

3. Important Terms and Concepts
(List the Concept; explain what it means, and why it is relevant).
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

4. Were there passages or quotes that were memorable – you found them interesting, they made you made, whatever. List the passage, and then note WHY you found it interesting.
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

5. Were there passages or quotes that you found confusing?
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

6. Thinking back to question #2, how do you think Arendt tried to solve this problem? Do you think she was successful? Why or why not? (You might need to wait to work on this one, but go ahead and give it a try!).