

What to read at university [Fact sheet]

At university, you are expected to read various types of texts. Knowing the differences between them will make it easier for you to read effectively.

Text book

A textbook contains the theories and information that are considered important in a particular subject. Textbooks are normally written using the ideas of various different writers and do not contain new research.

Important - Textbooks may not go into great detail on any topic, so you will be expected to read other sources too.

Edited book

An edited book is about a specific subject and has chapters written by different authors.

Important - The editor is responsible for bringing the collection together but is not the writer of each chapter. This is important to remember when it comes to referencing your

Academic journal article

Academic journals are academic magazines which focus on specific subject areas. They contain journal articles written by researchers in that field. The information in a journal article is typically a detailed report of research carried out by the writers.

Important - Your tutors will expect you to read journal articles to show that you have understood the important details of theories and research.

Websites

Websites can be about any subject, credible and valid ones can be used for academic work.

Important - most tutors will tell you that wikipedia is not a valid website for academic work because anyone can change the content of a wikipedia webpage. You should always be careful when selecting websites for academic work.

Other text types

There may be some other types of text that only exist within your subject areas. You will find out more about those once you begin your studies.