1.2B Reading: developing critical approaches

1 Reading methods

Choosing suitable texts

Look at title and sub-title

Survey text features (e.g. abstract, contents, index)

Skim text for gist – is it relevant?	Scan text for information you need (e.g. names)

Read extensively when useful sections are found

Read intensively to make notes on key points
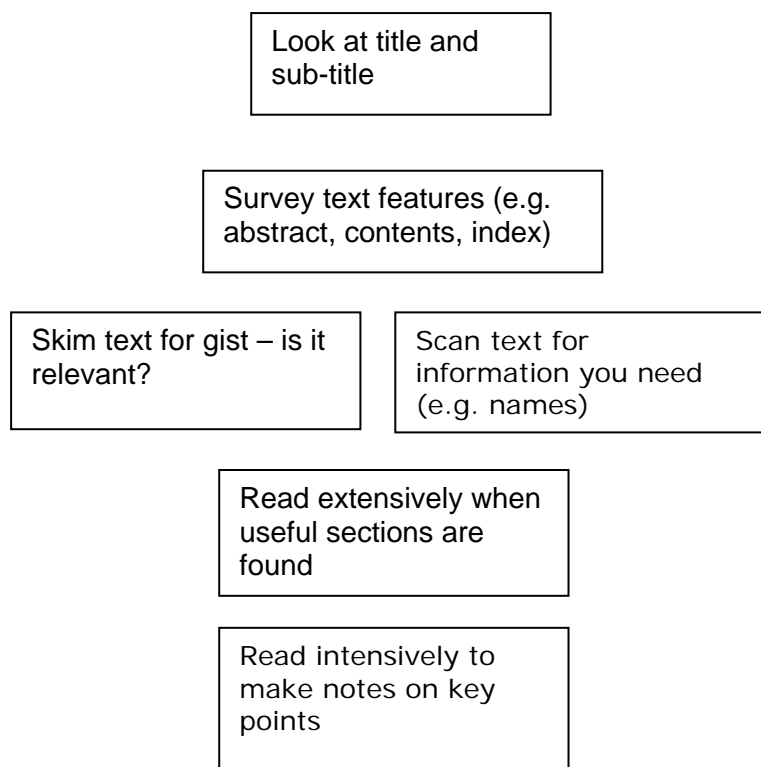
Possible answers:

text genre recognition

dealing with new vocabulary

3 Reading abstracts

(a) Background position – A growing chorus of scholars … American democracy.

(b) Aim and thesis of article – This article questions … engaged citizenship.

(c) Method of research – Using data from … political participation.

(d) Results of research – Rather than the erosion … in America.

4 Fact and opinion

	Fact	**Opinion**
1 Smoking can be dangerous to health	*Fact*	
2 Smoking is addictive	*Fact*	
3 Smoking should be banned		*Opinion*
4 Smoking is dangerous so it should be banned	*Fact*	*Opinion*

	Fact or opinion?	**Facts – true or false?**	**Opinions – agree or disagree?**
1 Britain has the highest crime rate in the world	*Fact*	*False*	
2 In Britain, hundreds of crimes are committed every day	*Fact*	*True*	
3 Many criminals are never caught	*Fact*	*True*	
4 The police are inefficient	*Opinion*		*?*
5 The police should be abolished	*Opinion*		*?*

6 Practice

(a)

1	Probably unreliable. The adjectives used (easily, quickly) and the lack of concrete information suggest that this text is not to be trusted. In addition, commonsense should suggest that you cannot legally earn hundreds of pounds in a few hours.
2	Probably reliable. The advice the writer is giving appears commonsense, although not everyone might agree with all of it (e.g. cooking is fun).

| 3 | Probably reliable. The facts given can be confirmed by students' own experience. |

(b)

Positive aspects: Contains some relevant ideas. The studies mentioned could be followed up using a search engine.

Negative aspects: Rather superficial and informal in style. No citations.

7 Critical thinking

The responses to these questions will vary from student to student, which is the nature of the critical approach.