

You may need to scan at any stage of the research process: early on as you gather background information as well as later as you write your essay. Although you may be thorough in your note taking, often it is not until you write your first draft that the details of your argument come together. At that stage it is not unusual to realize that some of the information you most need you have read somewhere but not noted down. In order to retrieve this information, you will need to scan.

## Intensive reading

In many cases, you will have to read texts thoroughly in order to understand the content sufficiently well to include it in your essay. If the text is very dense and/or complex, you will probably need to slow down and use intensive reading strategies to help you make sense of the information. When texts are difficult to read it is often for one or more of the following reasons: the concepts are new, the vocabulary is unfamiliar, or the sentences are long and complex. Trying to deal with all of these challenges at the same time may be unrealistic.

**Tip** ✓ If a text is difficult to read, read the passage several times, each time focussing on one particular difficulty.

Tip



### Exercise 4

Read the extract below. Indicate how difficult it is for you by giving it a number from 1 (=not at all difficult) to 5 (=extremely difficult). Identify which of the reasons listed above poses the greatest challenge for you in relation to the passage.

‘When making judgments or forming impressions about others, one common attribution error is the correspondence bias; that is, the tendency to assume that others’ actions and words reflect their personality or stable personal disposition, rather than being affected by situational factors. When seeing others’ happy pictures posted on Facebook, users might conclude that others are happy, while ignoring the circumstances or situations that made others happy. The correspondence bias is more likely to happen when Facebook users make attributions about people whom they have never met before. They assume that happiness is a stable characteristic of their temperaments and that they are constantly enjoying good lives. For those they do know personally, however, their past interactions with them help Facebook users avoid the trap of correspondence bias and recognize the external factors at work: it is the occasions that make their friends happy.’

Source: Chou, H. G. & Edge, N. (2012). ‘They Are Happier and Having Better Lives than I Am’: The Impact of Using Facebook on Perceptions of Others’ Lives. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 15(2), 117–121.