READING DIFFICULT / AUTHENTIC ARTICLES IN ENGLISH

Before reading: Read related articles in English first.
Reading an academic article on nuclear proliferation? Find English-language materials about the key issues. Make notes of new vocabulary and new concepts, using only English. Then, use this guide to read more difficult material (book chapters, journal articles etc).

1) SKIM
First get the "big picture" by reading the title, key words and abstract carefully; this will tell you the major findings and why they matter.

- Quickly scan the article without taking notes; focus on headings and subheadings.
- Note the publishing date; for many areas, current research is more relevant.
- Note any terms and parts you don’t understand for further reading.

2) RE-READ
Read the article again, asking yourself questions such as;

- What problem is the study trying to solve?
- Are the findings well supported by evidence?
- Are the findings unique and supported by other work in the field?
- What was the sample size? Is it representative of the larger population?
- Is the study repeatable?
- What factors might affect the results?

If you are unfamiliar with key concepts, look for them or the literature.

3) INTERPRET
- Examine graphs and tables carefully.
- Try to interpret data first before looking at captions.
- When reading the discussion and results, look for key issues and new findings.
- Make sure you have distinguished the main points. If not, go over the text again.

4) SUMMARIZE
- Take notes; it improves reading comprehension and helps you remember key points.
- If you have a printed version, highlight key points and write on the article. If it’s on screen, make use of markers and comments.