



## Four Column Reading – A Technique to Excerpt Literature

You can use four column reading for excerpting important quotes and definitions from texts, while also allowing you to note down your own thoughts regarding the quotes.

### Instructions

In the first two columns, you should put the quote and the corresponding page number, for example. In the third column, you can include your own comments. In the fourth column, you can make notes on which section of your work the chosen passage/quote/paraphrase should be used in (cf. Leibniz Universität Hannover, Zentrale Einrichtung für Qualitätsentwicklung in Studium und Lehre (ZQS) p. 9).

The following table is based on the booklet “Starthilfe Schreiben” of Leibniz University Hannover (cf. *ibid.*)

Table 1: Four Column Reading

Author:

Exact source:

Original text	Page no.	My comments	In my work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>paraphrase</li> <li>quotation</li> </ul>	xy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>my questions regarding the text</li> <li>critical comments, if necessary</li> <li>What is striking or particular?</li> <li>Are there any contradictions to what you have read so far?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fits aspect x,y,z</li> <li>Fits in bullet point x,y,z</li> <li>Fits in the introduction</li> <li>Fits in the conclusion</li> </ul>

Table 2: Example of Four Column Reading

**Author:** Iwan-M. D'Aprile, Winfried Siebers

**Exact source:** *Das 18. Jahrhundert. Zeitalter der Aufklärung.* De Gruyter, 2010.

Original text	Page no.	My comments	In my work
"The distinctive feature of the development in the Enlightenment epoch, however, was the close connection between science and the public, which led to a 'cultural triumph of the natural sciences in the 18th century' (Hochadel 2003, p. 23)."	73	In the 17th century, a scientific revolution took place in which individual scientific subjects emerged. In addition, scientific content now became accessible to the educated middle classes outside of court.	Fits into the introduction to illustrate that comet research was of interest to non-aristocrats in the 18th century also.
"During the Enlightenment, dialogue became a widely used textual genre because it fulfilled three basic communicative requirements of Enlightenment literary practice."	134, 135	Matches with one of the texts I want to analyze: text about comets written in dialogue form	Belongs in the main part; check which of the basic communicative requirements are fulfilled by the text I have analyzed.

Source: Leibniz Universität Hannover. Zentrale Einrichtung für Qualitätsentwicklung in Studium und Lehre (ZQS), publisher. *Starthilfe Schreiben. Tipps zum Planen und Verfassen wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten.* n.d., [Starthilfe Schreiben](#).

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