

How to read literatures

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There are too many literatures for each subject such that one may hope to grasp useful information for his/her research from this hug literature ocean efficiently. Here I try to list the point about how to read literatures efficiently for bio-related major researchers based on my own experiences and thoughts. I would be happy to hear that if you can benefit from this small how-to. Any suggestion is welcome.

1. Read papers around one topic to establish big picture about that topic.
2. Classify literatures into several types based on their titles and abstracts, e.g. key, important, relevant, just to your interests, and “not interests at all”.
3. Keep a note and write down your own comments for literatures.
4. Read key papers carefully and even their literatures. Try to analyze “the question it tried to solve; materials and approaches, results, conclusions, limitations, things you don't understand”. Contact the authors to have a discussion when necessary.
5. Using some software (e.g. endnote, bibtex) to keep track literatures you need to read.
6. Before reading a paper, it would be better to be clear why you need to read that paper.
7. Read papers with a grain of salts. None publication is perfect, but solve some question conditionally.
8. Know the main groups/labs working on that subject and keep track their publications. Pay also attention to the journals/conferences in your field.