

## 5.2 Interrogating the Text: Burns and Sinfield Grid

Once you have narrowed down your reading list, and are confident that you are looking at useful sources, you can read your remaining selected texts more analytically. Active reading – or interrogating the text – will help you stay engaged with what you are reading, and help you remember what you’ve read.

Below are some questions, adapted from Burns and Sinfield (2008), that will help you interrogate any social science text. They are divided into four main parts: ‘overview’, ‘arguments’, ‘evidence’ and ‘summary thoughts’, but you might want to focus on, for instance, ‘case studies’ or ‘philosophical underpinnings’. The main point is to use active processes to get the most out of each text.

<b>Reference:</b>	
<b>Overview:</b>	
What is the main idea?	
<b>Arguments:</b>	
What is/are the author’s main argument/s?	
What is the author’s philosophical position (where are they coming from?)	

Left/right/postcolonialist/feminist?)	
Have I encountered this argument before? (List possible sources.)	
Have I encountered any counter-arguments? (List possible sources.)	
<b>Evidence:</b>	
What evidence is being offered? (Qualitative? Quantitative? Case studies? Primary data?)	
Is the evidence valid? (Why do I think that it is/is not valid?)	
<b>Summary thoughts/notes:</b>	
What is the author's final point?	
What do I think? (To what extent do you agree?)	
How does this change what I have already read/heard?	

*Adapted from:* T. Burns and S. Sinfield (2008) *Essential Study Skills*, London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 160–1.