



***Enhanced Learning
Educational Services***
“the study skills specialist”

IMPROVING READING SKILLS



Reading is a skill that crosses all subjects. Having strong reading skills will help you save time and be more effective in your work.

- You should read each point and **highlight the key phrases** in that point.
- Discuss with a friend or parent as you read through the handout.
- You may like to work through this over a number of sessions.

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1. SCANNING

A good reader thinks about their purpose for reading before starting and then uses appropriate reading strategies.

*If you are looking for specific information you need to **SCAN** by:*

- Looking for **key words, headings**, and terms in bold or italics that refer to information you need.
- Reading the **first and last sentences** of the paragraphs on the page.
- **Moving your eyes quickly** over the material keeping what you are searching for clear in your mind.



a. Can you think of some instances at school when you might need to SCAN material? Have you used these techniques before?

2. SKIMMING

- *Are you about to start reading something you haven't read before?*
- *Are you reading to see if the information is what you need for an assignment?*
- *Are you reading to get an overview before you start summarising?*
- *Do you have a large amount of material to read in a short period of time?*



SKIMMING is glancing quickly over a text to get a general idea of the topic or to see if the material is useful or to decide if the material should be examined in greater depth.

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SKIMMING means:

- Quickly **looking over the entire page**, focusing on any titles and headings.
- Looking at the illustrations, **diagrams**, and captions. What do they describe?
- Identifying **main ideas** in paragraphs but not worrying about the detail in supporting sentences.
- Focusing on **key words** and ignoring filler words.
- **Skipping** what you already know or material that doesn't apply to you or that seems confusing.



IS THIS THE RIGHT RESOURCE?

If you are skimming resources particularly to see if they have the type of information you need follow these steps:

1. **GENERAL INFO:** Look at author, date of publication, preface and table of contents. Look at the diagrams and pictures.
2. **BEGIN/END CHAPTERS:** Skim read the first and last chapters. Often these are introductory and summary chapters, and may give you all the information you need.
3. **NOW READ THESE:** Then read the first and last chapters and skim the chapters in between. This takes you into the book in greater depth, and allows you to decide which, if any, of the following chapters you should read.
4. **EXTRA STUFF:** Look at the glossary, index, and appendices if needed.



b. Can you think of some instances at school when you might need to SKIM material? Have you used these techniques before?



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