

Scanning and Skimming

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WARNING!! Scanning and skimming are NOT reading. They are to be used only for certain purposes: either when material and purpose permit **OR** time demands.

Scanning is a method of covering pages and paragraphs quickly in search of the answer to one question, i.e., in search of one detail, one fact, one item.

1. Procedures

- a. Decide **what** you're looking for and in what form it will most likely appear in print: a name, a statistic, a concept, etc.
- b. **Scan** for appropriate clues: capital letters to locate names, numbers to pinpoint statistics, related words to indicate concepts.
- c. Develop a mental set to scan **only** for what you're seeking; don't be distracted by other words, pictures, etc. Only likely clues should come into sharp focus; the rest should be "hazy."
- d. Use an appropriate scanning pattern: one which will enable you to cover material quickly and thoroughly, yet keep you from becoming involved in the sequence of presentation.

2. Patterns

WIDE COLUMNS

NARROW COLUMNS

WHOLE PAGE



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Skimming is a method of reading only selected portions of material in order to obtain knowledge of the general ideas and major supporting details. It is **not** a casual, haphazard process in which the reader winds up with only a vague idea about what he has read. It **is** a highly selective process requiring intense concentration and constant analysis and integration of those portions of the material that are read.

1. Procedures

- a. The general intent of the skimming process is to eliminate reading everything **except** those key sentences and key words that are most likely to contain the essence of the information.
- b. Read the title, introductory remarks, and Table of Contents.
- c. Read the first paragraph that really introduces the chapter. Don't be distracted by attention-getting anecdotes. Quickly **survey** entire chapter.
- d. Read the first sentence of each paragraph, then **anticipate** what clues it gives you about the rest of the paragraph.
- e. **Scan** (using steps on previous page) to pick up the key words essential to completing the main idea and key details of the paragraph.
- f. Read the last sentence of the paragraph if necessary.
- g. Read the concluding paragraphs.
- h. **Be flexible.** Read a whole paragraph if it really seems to be "meaty;" skip a whole paragraph if it is superfluous, repetitious, or just an anecdote.