

Surveying, Skimming, Scanning

SURVEYING

Purpose - to get broad, overall picture of essentials in article, chapter, or book.

How do you do it?

1. read title
2. read first paragraph
3. read all headings, italicized words, graphs and tables
4. read last paragraph and/or
5. read summary

How will surveying help me?

1. facilitates reading — increases subsequent reading speed
2. improves comprehension
3. gives you ideas about whether to skip material, skim, read, study — helps you to be selective

SKIMMING

Purpose - concentrates your attention on the essentials of a paragraph or series of paragraphs

How do you do it?

1. read first sentence of paragraph
2. read last sentence of paragraph
3. read key words in between

Two skimming patterns:

1. for formal style typical of most text books (with long involved sentences and long paragraphs: read using 3 steps outlined above)
2. for informal style (shorter sentences and paragraphs) read using first two steps only

How will skimming help me?

1. after surveying article, you may feel it doesn't merit reading, but is too important to discard
2. use to review material (previously studied) just before a test
3. will help you get through material faster

SCANNING

Purpose - to help you find one specific bit of information within a relatively large body of information

How do you do it?

1. visualize thing to be spotted — get clear mental picture of the words
2. use all available clues — capital letters, hyphens, italics, synonyms, key words
3. use paragraph topical clues, such as words in boldface or italics
4. use systematic scanning patterns
 - a) run eyes rapidly down middle of column using a zig-zag motion
 - b) use wider side-by-side movement for solid pages of print

How can scanning help me?

1. uncovers relevant information
2. accelerates reading speed and flexibility (can scan ten times your present reading rate)
3. two situations where scanning is helpful:
 - a) you know material has information you want, but can't remember specifically what it is or where it is in the chapter
 - b) you are looking for something unknown — you won't know exactly until you find it (i.e., processing large amounts of information as part of your job)