

SURVEYING - SKIMMING - SCANNING

SURVEYING

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

How do I do it?

- read title
- read first paragraph
- read all headings, italicized words, graphs and tables
- read last paragraph and/or
- read summary

How will surveying help me?

- facilitates reading--increases subsequent reading speed
- improves comprehension
- gives you ideas about whether to skip material, skim, read, study--helps you to be selective

SKIMMING

Purpose: to concentrate your attention on the essentials of a paragraph or series of paragraphs

How do I do it?

- read first sentence of paragraph
- read last sentence of paragraph
- read key words in between

Use all 3 steps above for the formal writing style typical of most text books with long involved sentences and long paragraphs. Use the first two steps only for informal writing styles with shorter sentences and paragraphs.

How will skimming help me?

- It may help you decide that you don't really need to read the article you've skimmed: that it's either material you already know or that it's not directly relevant to your project.
- You can use it to review material (previously studied) just before a test.
- It will help you get through material faster.

SCANNING

Purpose: to help you find one specific bit of information within a relatively long reading.

How do you do it?

- visualize thing to be spotted – get clear mental picture of the words
- use all available clues--capital letters, hyphens, italics, synonyms, key words

- use paragraph topical clues, such as words in boldface or italics
- use systematic scanning patterns
 - run eyes rapidly down middle of column using a zig-zag motion
 - use wider side-by-side movement for solid pages of print

How can scanning help me?

- It uncovers relevant information.
- It accelerates your reading speed and flexibility, because you can scan at ten times your present reading rate
- It can help you find information that you know is in the reading even if you can't remember specifically what it is or where it is in the chapter.
- It can help you find something unknown – something you can't describe exactly until you find it (i.e., processing large amounts of information as part of your job)