



Skimming text

Skimming is a reading technique that can help you:

- read more quickly
- decide if the text is interesting and whether you should read it in more detail

You can use the skimming technique when you want to identify the main ideas in the text.

How is skimming different to scanning?

The term skimming is often confused with scanning.

- You skim a text to obtain the **gist** - the overall sense - of a piece of writing. This can help you decide whether to read it more slowly and in more detail.
- You scan a text to obtain specific information. For example, to find a particular number in a telephone directory.

Sometimes you can use **both** reading methods. After you've skimmed a piece of text to decide whether it's of interest, you might then use scanning techniques to find specific information.

How do you skim read?

When you use the skimming technique you don't read the whole text word for word. You should use as many clues as possible to give you some background information. There might be **pictures** or images related to the topic, or an eye-catching **title**. Let your eyes skim over the surface of the text and look out for **key words** while thinking about any clues you've found about the subject.

- Read the title, subtitles and subheadings to find out what the text is about.
- Look at the illustrations to give you more information about the topic.
- Read the first and last sentence of each paragraph.
- Don't read every word or every sentence. Let your eyes skim over the text and look out for key words.
- Continue to think about the meaning of the text.