

How to...

Support skimming and scanning

Skim: to read quickly over a text to get an idea of what the text includes.

'Read to get an initial overview of the subject matter and main ideas of a passage.' (NLS).

Scan: to read quickly over a text to obtain particular pieces of information.

'To look over a text very quickly, trying to locate information by locating a key word.' (NLS).



The role of the Teaching Assistant is to provide the strategies, not the solutions.

Strategies for skimming

Strategy	Can be useful for
Look at the contents page.	Getting an idea of the different areas the book covers.
Look at the index.	Getting an idea of the different topics/people etc. the book covers.
Look at the chapter headings/ main headings.	Getting an idea of what is important in the text.
Look at the sub-headings.	Getting an idea of how detailed the treatment of each topic is and what sort of detail is included.
Look at the first sentence in each paragraph.	Getting an idea of the way the information is presented/the style of writing.

Different strategies apply to different texts in different subjects. You can add to this list as new strategies become clear.

It is essential that you enable pupils to explain how they found a piece of information and give them positive feedback/praise.

Pupils may not realise that there is more than one way to read a text.

They need to develop strategies to enable them to locate information quickly.

The aim should be for pupils to develop a **range of strategies they can use independently**. They should be equipped with strategies that enable them to find the information they need in a range of different contexts in a range of subject areas.

It is very important that pupils realise:

- not all texts they use need to be read *in full*;
- different reading activities in school require very different reading skills.

Examples

	Skim	Scan
Bus/train timetable	To find out where the buses and trains go	To find the time of a particular bus/train on a particular day.
Listings on Teletext/Ceefax etc.	To find out the kinds of films showing at a range of cinemas.	To select a particular time and place for a chosen film.
Sports pages of newspaper	To find out what sports/ games have been covered.	To find the score of your chosen team or who scored.
Information text	To find out what kind of information is included.	To find out a specific piece of information.

Other examples could be discussed.

In each context, it is essential that pupils are helped to develop the strategies for success rather than being led too directly to the answers.

Strategies for scanning

Strategy	Can be useful for
Look for numbers (17 or seventeen).	Finding data/amounts/figures etc. e.g. How many?
Look for percentage sign (%) or words 'per cent', (or fractions/decimals).	Finding proportions/percentages.
Look for capitals at start of word.	Finding names of people or places.
Look for italics.	Finding titles of books etc.
Look for a specific 'string of words' together.	Finding a 'string of words' to explain what you need to find.
Look for a key word.	Finding a key word to explain what you need to find.
Look for inverted commas.	Finding quotations/what someone said.
Look at first sentences of paragraphs (overlaps with skimming).	Narrowing down the search to the part of the text covering the particular detail required.

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You can add to this list as new strategies become clear.

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