

HOW TO SCAN AND SKIM INFORMATION

Scanning and Skimming and other learning skills

Scanning is when you quickly glance at any information - textual, graphic, data etc. Scanning enables you to find particular information quickly and efficiently by moving your eyes through the information and locating specific facts, keywords or phrases which are related to your research topic. Keep the following in mind when scanning

- In a book you can do this by looking at the contents, index or glossary pages.
- Circle the main keywords, phrases in your question and list any synonyms.
- Look for underlining, bold face print, italics, words in capital letters, highlighted or different font coloured words, and, subheadings.

Skimming is when you quick read any selected areas of information - textual, graphic, data etc. Skimming helps you to begin understanding the main ideas and explanations about a topic. When you skim you should read:-

- The first and last paragraphs of any information.
 - Look at the beginning sentences and ending sentences in other paragraphs related to your topic.
 - Note any clues in the presentation of the information e.g. underlining, bold face print, italics, words in capital letters, highlighted or different font coloured words, and, subheadings.
- Skimming allows you to cover large sections of information in a limited time span.

So, the difference between scanning and skimming is

- **When SCANNING you are concentrating on keywords' related to your topic.**
- **When SKIMMING you are concentrating on the actual explanation and quick understanding of your topic.**

Highlighting

On a card write all the keywords, pages and book titles of information sources you have scanned and skimmed for your topic. Highlight all the page numbers, keywords and page numbers that you thought were the most important.

Note taking

Once you have identified your keywords and understood your information and made your cards. Go back to the highlighted list and start making notes in your own words on your topic. Once done you can start to organise your presentation. By doing this you are learning a very important lifelong skill which should help you academically and in working life when dealing with information.