

Reading Skills

❖ Introduction

Average college student- read 150-200 words/min. Fast readers-250-400 words/ min.

Reading is one of the most important activities any successful student does in any course of study. It is important to note that reading is an *active* process; you need to apply strategies that will enable you make sense of what you read.

❖ Techniques for good comprehension skills:

A good way of getting started on developing your reading skills is to think about how you read a text or passage. There are several techniques that you can use.

1. Scanning

The technique of scanning is a useful one to use if you want to get an overview of the text you are reading as a whole – its shape, the focus of each section, the topics or key issues that are dealt with, and so on. In order to scan a piece of text you might look for subheadings or identify key words and phrases which give you clues about its focus. Another useful method is to read the first sentence or two of each paragraph in order to get the general gist of the discussion and the way that it progresses.

Examples of Scanning

- The "What's on TV" section of your newspaper.
- A telephone number in the directory
- A horoscope guide

2. Skimming

Skimming is used to quickly gather the most important information, or 'gist'. Run your eyes over the text, noting important information. Use skimming to quickly get up to speed on a current business situation. It's not essential to understand each word when skimming. Skimming is covering the chapter

to get some of the main ideas and a general overview of the material. It is what you do first when reading a chapter assignment. You don't read for details at this point.

Here is how you skim a chapter:

- Read the first paragraph of the chapter line by line.
- Next, read all the bold print headings starting at the beginning.
- Read the first sentence of every paragraph.
- Study any pictures, graphs, charts, and maps.
- Finally, read the last paragraph of the chapter.

As you skim, you could write down the main ideas and develop a chapter outline.

Examples of Skimming:

- The Newspaper (quickly to get the general news of the day)
- Magazines (quickly to discover which articles you would like to read in more detail)
- Business and Travel Brochures (quickly to get informed)

3. Non-verbal signals

The meaning of the text is not only conveyed by means of words. All text also contains non-verbal signs. Non verbal signs may include certain style features such as bold font, CAPITAL FONTS, italics, etc. these words are used to high light, emphasize, point out something.

4. Structure of the text

Most text starts with a title or sub title. After that comes the introduction and the body, followed by a conclusion or summery. An important aspect of reading is prediction. The better you can predict what you are going to read, the faster and more effective you will read. It also includes structure of paragraphs which includes opening segment of a paragraph, middle and ending part of the paragraph. In many well written texts a reader can easily get full idea about the paragraphs by just reading opening or topic sentence of the paragraph.

5. Punctuation

Punctuation is partly based on grammar. For example, commas are often used to separate clauses. Punctuation marks also indicate how the author wants you to interpret a piece of text.