

## ASHE 2022 / 2023 – READING SKILLS

### SKIMMING & SCANNING

When you have a specific question to answer or information to collect, you need to be able to **SKIM** a page quickly to find the section you need. You can do this by **SCANNING** a text for a **KEYWORD**.

#### SCANNING

Find and circle the following words in this passage from *EMMA* by *JANE AUSTEN*, as quickly as possible.

CLEVER, HOME, UNITE, DISTRESS, MARRIAGE, EARLY.

Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and has lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

She was the youngest of two daughters of a most affectionate, indulgent father, and had, in consequence of her sister's marriage, been mistress of his house from a very early period.

#### SKIMMING

Skim the extract below and write the answer to the following question.

What was the name of Degas's father?

*Degas's background would never have suggested he was to become the revolutionary painter he was. He was born in Paris, on 19 July 1834. His father, Auguste de Gas, was a banker but his mother died before Degas reached his teens.*

Degas's father was called

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#### SKIMMING

You could have read through the whole piece of text until you found the answer. A quicker way would be to find the **keyword** in the question – in this case **'father'** – then run your eyes down the text, flicking them from left to right, until you found the word father in the article.

If all you want is one piece of information, skimming can become a time saving device.

#### SKIMMING AND SCANNING'

Practice skimming and scanning by reading the extract and answering the questions that follow:

*Although poetry was Dante Gabriel Rossetti's first love, as was his sister's Christina Rossetti (who was one of the most remarkable poets of her time) he decided on an artistic career. In*

September 1848, he formed a 'secret society' with other painters called the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB). The group aimed to produce work with both aesthetic and moral values.

1. What was the name of Rossetti's sister?
2. What was the title of Rossetti's society?

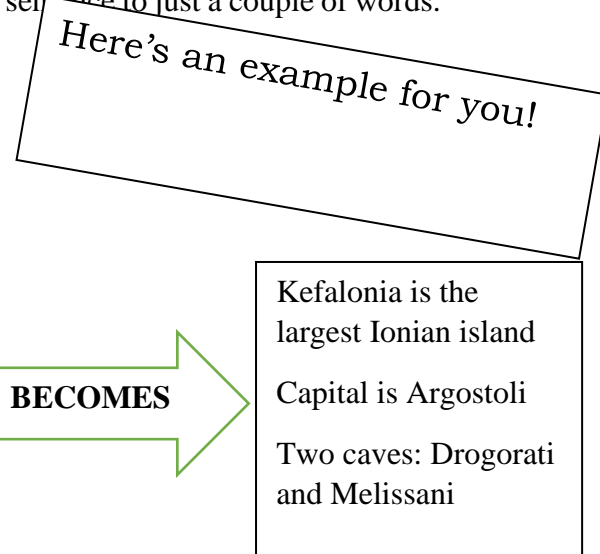
### MAKING NOTES

When you have a specific question to answer, skimming and scanning works well because you know exactly what you are looking for. However, if you are making notes on a topic chosen yourself it is more difficult to select the key information and to write it *in your own words*.

Often you will read lots of information but you don't want to copy it all down. Use **bullet points** to sum up the main points very briefly. Try condensing each sentence to just a couple of words.

### MAKING NOTES

Kefalonia is the largest of the Greek  
Ionian islands and certainly one of  
the most picturesque islands in the world.  
The capital is Argostoli which is on the West coast.  
The island has two beautiful caves: the stalactite –  
Festooned Drogorati and Melissani with its  
Subterranean lake. Both caves attract high numbers  
of tourists at peak season



### TRY CONDENSING THIS INFORMATION YOURSELF:

The Greek Island of Rhodes is the most visited of the islands which caters to the vast  
Tourism the island experiences in the summer months. The capital is Rhodes City, a port on  
the Northern Dodecanese islands. It became part of Greece in 1948. There are lots to see here  
including an archaeological Museum and Mussolini's old holiday home, *The Palace of the  
Grand Masters*

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## **MAKING NOTES**

**You have decided to cook this recipe for lunch. Make notes on all the ingredients you will need to buy.**

### **OMELETTE:**

Cut the potatoes into thin slices, place in a pan and cover with water. Bring to the boil, and cook for 10 minutes. Peel the onions and slice thinly. Beat the eggs with a little milk. Fry the onions slightly in a large frying pan. Drain the potatoes and add them to the frying pan. Pour the beaten eggs and milk over the potatoes and onions. Cover and heat gently for 20 minutes. Melt the cheese on top and serve.

**Reading skills for academic study: Scanning for specific information.**

### **Exercise 1**

Read the following text quickly and fill in the table. What do the numbers given in the table refer to?

1%	
2%	
6%	
13%	
16%	
30%	
3/4	
86%	

### **Spoon-fed feel lost at the **cutting edge****

Before arriving at university students will have been powerfully influenced by their school's approach to learning particular subjects. Yet this is only rarely taken into account by teachers in higher education, according to new research carried out at Nottingham University, which could explain why so many students experience problems making the transition.

Historian Alan Booth says there is a growing feeling on both sides of the Atlantic that the shift from school to university-style learning could be vastly improved. But little consensus exists about who or what is at fault when the students cannot cope. "School teachers commonly blame the poor quality of university teaching, citing factors such as large first-year lectures, the widespread use of inexperienced postgraduate tutors and the general lack of concern for students in an environment where research is dominant in career progression," Dr Booth said.

Many university tutors on the other hand claim that the school system is failing to prepare students for what will be expected of them at university. A-level history in particular is seen to be teacher-dominated, creating a passive dependency culture.

But while both sides are bent on attacking each other, little is heard during such exchanges from the students themselves, according to Dr Booth, who has devised a questionnaire to test the views of more than 200 first-year history students at Nottingham over a three-year period. The students were asked about their experience of how history is taught at the outset of their degree programme. It quickly became clear that teaching methods in school were pretty staid.

About 30 per cent of respondents claimed to have made significant use of primary sources (few felt very confident in handling them) and this had mostly been in connection with project work. Only 16 per cent had used video/audio; 2 per cent had experienced field trips and less than 1 per cent had engaged in role-play.

Dr Booth found students and teachers were frequently restricted by the assessment style which remains dominated by exams. These put obstacles in the way of more adventurous teaching and active learning, he said. Of the students in the survey just 13 per cent felt their A-level course had prepared them very well for work at university. Three-quarters felt it had prepared them fairly well.

One typical comment sums up the contrasting approach: "At A-level we tended to be spoon-fed with dictated notes and if we were told to do any background reading (which was rare) we were told exactly which pages to read out of the book".

To test this further the students were asked how well they were prepared in specific skills central to degree level history study. The answers reveal that the students felt most confident at taking notes from lectures and organizing their notes. They were least able to give an oral presentation and there was no great confidence in contributing to seminars, knowing how much to read, using primary sources and searching for texts. Even reading and taking notes from a book were often problematic. Just 6 per cent of the sample said they felt competent at writing essays, the staple A level assessment activity.

The personal influence of the teacher was paramount. In fact, individual teachers were the center of students' learning at A level with some 86 per cent of respondents reporting that their teachers had been more influential in their development as historians than the students' own reading and thinking.

The ideal teacher turned out to be someone who was enthusiastic about the subject; a good clear communicator who encouraged discussion. The ideal teacher was able to develop students involvement and independence. He or she was approachable and willing to help. The bad teacher, according to the survey, dictates notes and allows no room for discussion. He or she makes students learn strings of facts; appears uninterested in the subject and fails to listen to other points of view.

No matter how poor the students judged their preparedness for degree-level study, however, there was a fairly widespread optimism that the experience would change them significantly, particularly in terms of their open mindedness and ability to cope with people.

But it was clear, Dr Booth said, that the importance attached by many departments to third-year teaching could be misplaced. "Very often tutors regard the third year as the crucial time, allowing postgraduates to do a lot of the earlier teaching. But I am coming to the conclusion that the first year at university is the critical point of intervention".

#### **FOR THE CLASS IN THE LAB.**

1. Go to the link below and try out this scanning exercise:

<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/570/pulp/hemp1.htm>

2. Peep into the box below. Scan it and circle the words starting with w. You have only 3 minutes.

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#### **NEW:**

1. <https://www.liveworksheets.com/ny1554457nu>  
Scanning practice – apartments and houses
2. <https://www.eslteacher365.com/reading-strategies/>  
Reading strategy - skimmig

Skimming is one of the tools you can use to read more in less time. **Skimming** refers to **looking only for the general or main ideas**, and **works** best with non-fiction (or factual) material. With skimming, your overall understanding is reduced because you **don't read everything**. You **read only what is important** to your purpose. Skimming takes place while reading and allows you to look for details in addition to the main ideas.

How to skim.? Many people think that skimming is **a haphazard process** placing the eyes where ever they fall. However, to skim effectively, there has to be a structure but you don't read everything. *What you read is more important than what you leave out*. So what material do you read and what material do you leave out?

Let's say you are doing research on a long chapter or a web site. By reading the first few paragraphs in detail, you will get a good idea of what information will be discussed. Once you know where the reading is headed, you can begin to **read only the first sentence of each paragraph**. Also called *topic sentences*, they give you the main idea of the paragraph. If you do not get the main idea in the topic sentence or if the paragraph greatly interests you, then you may want to skim more.

At the end of each topic sentence, your eyes should drop down through the rest of the paragraph, looking for important pieces of information, such as names, dates, or events. Continue to read only topic sentences, dropping down through the rest of the paragraphs, until you are near the end. Since the last few paragraphs may contain a conclusion or summary, you should stop skimming there and read in detail. Remember that your overall comprehension will be lower than if you read in detail. If while skimming, you feel you are grasping the main ideas, then you are skimming correctly.

When to skim. Because skimming is done at a fast speed with less-than-normal comprehension, you shouldn't skim all the time. There are many times, however, when skimming is very useful.

Suppose you are taking a presentation skills class and have to deliver an oral report in a few days about the first computers ever made. You locate six books and four newspaper articles about this topic. Because you must be ready soon, you do not have time to read each word, but you need a large quantity of solid information.