

Skimming and Scanning

Skimming and scanning are two essential reading techniques used to quickly gather information from a text. Though both involve rapid reading, they serve different purposes.

Skimming is used to get a general idea or overview of the content. Readers glance through the text to understand the main ideas without focusing on every detail. It is useful when previewing a chapter, checking if a source is relevant, or reviewing material before a test. Common strategies for skimming include reading titles, headings, subheadings, and the first and last sentences of paragraphs. The goal is to grasp the central theme or structure of the text in a short amount of time.

Scanning, on the other hand, is used to locate specific information quickly. Readers move their eyes rapidly over the text to find particular words, numbers, dates, or facts without reading the entire passage. Scanning is helpful when looking for answers in a textbook, finding a name in a list, or searching for key data in an article.

Both techniques are time-saving and improve reading efficiency. While skimming helps with overall understanding, scanning helps with finding precise details. Mastering these skills enhances academic, professional, and everyday reading tasks.