

## READING SKILLS

### Ways of reading

A good reader reads in different ways.

Sometimes you read **slowly and carefully** (*intensive reading/study reading*).

At other times you read **quickly for the general idea** (*skimming*) or **for information** (*scanning*).

### REMEMBER

**Skimming** is reading very quickly to get the general idea from a text (a book, an article, a chapter, or just a paragraph).

**Scanning** is reading quickly to find information. One way to scan for information is to use headings of paragraphs, sections, and chapters.

### WHAT CAN HELP YOU?

**Predicting content** – before you read, look at the pictures, headings in a text. They can help you predict the content. They can tell you what the text is about and help you understand it.

Before you read the whole text, read the title and the first few sentences.

Make predictions about the content of the text.

- the topic (What is it about?)
- information (What information will it give?)
- vocabulary (What words will you find?)

Predicting will help you read. It will also tell you if the text is useful before you read it.

### Meaning from context

Texts often contain words we don't know. Looking up every word takes time and slows down your reading.

To help you guess the meaning from the context:

- look at the words and sentences around the unknown word.
- identify the part of speech.
- use your knowledge of the world (what you already know about the situation)
- think about whether the word has a generally negative or positive meaning.
- replace the unknown word with another word with a similar meaning and check that it makes sense in the sentence.

**Making notes** is an important skill. Use it for study or intensive reading. Read slowly and carefully when you make notes.

Note-making help you:

- understand what you read
- remember the important points
- write about the topic
- revise later for exams

There are many ways of making notes.

**Revise what you read and learnt in the text below.**

7 Read the handout for new students about reading. Answer the questions.

- 1 Which two ways of reading are the quickest?
- 2 Which way would you read for enjoyment?
- 3 Which way of reading is the slowest?

### Effective Reading

During your course, you will do a lot of reading. It is essential that you learn how to be an effective and efficient reader in order to make the best of your study time. Learning to be a good reader takes practice. You need to develop different strategies or methods of reading.

#### Skimming

Sometimes you will read just to get a general idea of a text. This is skim reading. First, identify your reason for reading, for example, to decide whether an article meets your needs, or perhaps to understand a writer's attitude. To do this, read the text very quickly. Don't worry about reading and understanding everything. Instead, look particularly at the first and last paragraphs, and the first and last sentences of paragraphs. These often summarize the main points.

#### Scanning

Sometimes you will read quickly to find particular pieces of information, for example, a statistic, a date, a person's name, or the name of a place. Again, you do not need to read every word to find this information. Instead, scan the text using a finger or a pencil to move quickly through the words. You could time yourself to see how long it takes you to find the information. Always try to improve your speed.

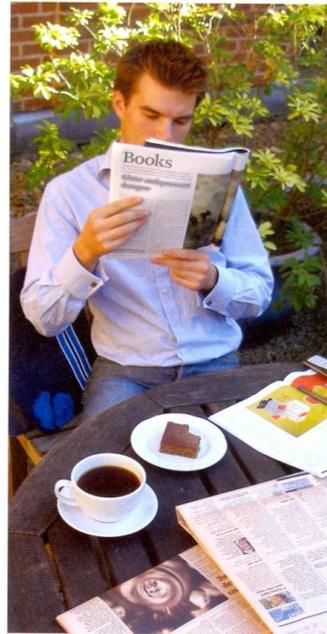
#### Intensive reading

Sometimes you read for every detail, for example, a description of a process, the results of a scientific study, or a set literature text. To do this, take your time. Stop and think about what you are reading. Have you understood the text? You may need to read the text more than once, in order to make notes or highlight important points for future reference. This is called intensive reading or study reading.

#### Extensive reading

Sometimes you will read for pleasure – perhaps as extra research, or purely for interest. You may concentrate, but you don't have to worry about detail. This is extensive reading.

We do not always read the same kinds of texts in the same way, and we often use more than one method of reading for a single text. Your reason for reading will help you decide how to read.



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8 Choose five examples of reading materials from exercise 5 on page 5. *Why* and *how* do you read?

text book	Why?	to find a relevant chapter to take notes
	How?	scan contents page read intensively

9 Look back at exercises 2 and 4 on pages 4 and 5. In which exercise did you 'skim' and in which did you 'scan'? **Read Study Skill**

### STUDY SKILL Reading methods

You usually have a reason for reading something. That reason changes the way you read, and the time you spend on a text.

Think about what you want from the text, and decide the best way to get it. For example:

- Skim a journal to find an article of interest.
- Scan an article for specific information.
- Read relevant parts of an article intensively to make notes.

Taken and adapted from:

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