

READING

Skimming & Scanning

Skimming

This is a method of getting a quick overview of an entire selection. The adept skimmer locates and identifies valuable and important parts of a reading selection by moving through the reading from beginning to end, gaining a general idea of the central point and important supporting details.

Look for: titles, headings, topic sentences, visual aids, introductory and concluding paragraphs, and major subdivisions of information in the form of a list of ideas, items, steps, or reasons.

Practice: The following text passage contains a number of kinds of information that might be the object of a research project. Here is a suggestion – run your finger quickly along each line of print, following along with your eyes, stopping only when you detect the details you are seeking.

1. Scan the following passage and highlight or underline dates.

- a. How many dates did you note? _____
 - b. List the dates in the order in which they appear in the text.
-

2. Now, places

- a. How many places did you note? _____
 - b. List the places in the order in which they appear in the text.
-

c. What type of places did you find?

The treaty of Utrecht inaugurated an era of peace and expansion for England's continental colonies. Their population had grown from about 85,000 in 1670 to 360,000 in 1713. By 1734, it had quadrupled again to about 1,500,000. This increase owed much to heavy migration of non-English people – Irish, Scots, French, and German – favored by a liberal naturalization act of the British Parliament in 1740. Only two new colonies, Nova Scotia and Georgia, were founded between 1713 and 1754, but the area of settlement almost tripled. In the North, it spread into the hilly interior of New England, the region west of the lower Hudson River and central Pennsylvania. In the southern colonies, it spread into the Piedmont Plateau area between the fall line of the rivers and the Blue Ridge and Smokey mountains.

Scanning

This is a way of finding a specific bit of information within an entire reading selection. Imagine you are taking notes for a paper you must write, studying for a test, or concentrating on just one element of a piece of writing, such as references to the color red in a novel.

Look for: names, dates, places, key words or phrases, *italicized* or **bold-faced** terms, numbers, or punctuation.

Practice: The following article is similar to the kind you might find during research for a class assignment. Here is a suggestion – move quickly from beginning to end of the article noting the same types of information you need for your argument.

1. Skim the article below and highlight words or phrases related to the distraction caused by cell phones.

2. Now, skim the article again and circle words or phrases related to who might be affected by cell phones in schools.

To the Editor:

"With Ban Nearing End, City Works on How and When to Allow Cell phones at School" (news article, Nov. 1):

Permitting New York City public school students to bring their cellphones to schools will inevitably lead to more distractions in classrooms, more conflicts between students and teachers, more cyberbullying and more competition among students to see who has the latest and greatest device.

When teachers have to spend more time policing and less time teaching, students will be spending less time learning. New York's students cannot afford this. They are under more pressure than ever to excel on the new state-mandated Common Core exams, which only about 30 percent are now passing. The last thing they need is another source of distraction and a loss of instructional time.

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