EPC1 Note on Scanning & Skimming

Scanning: Scanning refers to the ability to locate specific information or facts as quickly as possible. While trying to look for the meaning of a word in a dictionary or looking for a telephone number in the telephone directory, we scan and try to look for specific information. Scanning is an important rapid reading technique. It may serve many purposes, which include looking for :

a) a specific point or fact in a text ,

b) a formulae in a text,

c) a word in a dictionary,

d) train or television schedules,

e) any reference or bibliographical list,

f) examination results, or

g) any notes/ questions/ remarks at the end of the text.

We may know how to scan a newspaper or dictionary but may do it slowly with less accuracy. What is important is to increase scanning speed with accuracy.

The following suggestions will help increase proficiency at scanning:

1.Do not read everything

The first step would be to fix clearly in mind what one is looking for. The purpose of scanning should be determined and the reader should not be confused about the information that he/ she requires. The second step is to plan how the required information can be obtained. For example, if one is looking for a name or place, capital letter can provide clues.

2. Use guides and aids

Every reading material contains certain guides and aids, which should be used to find what the reader wants.

3. Know the association of the material to be read

The reader needs to know the connection of the reading material to scan it with speed and accuracy. Practise scanning different types of reading material, such as newspaper listings, dictionaries, telephone directories, and analyse the way information is structured in these materials.

4. Concentrate while scanning

The reader needs to concentrate while scanning a reading material. One must have the

urge to read and scan the material. This will improve his visual perception and help him identify the

required information quickly.

Skimming

Skimming is a more sophisticated skill than scanning. It refers to the process of reading a text or passage in order to get rough idea of what the text or passage is all about. It is a rapid reading technique that prepares the reader for detailed reading. As the main objective of skimming is to understand the central idea and the main points of the text, the reader needs to use a reading strategy that involves fast reading and quick analysis. Skimming also involves discovering the purpose and association of a text. O ne of the most important purposes of reading for academic and professional purposes is obtaining relevant information for various purposes. This involves not only the ability to recognize the main ideas and supporting details but also the ability to identify different writing patterns used to develop these ideas. Authors use variety

of discourse patterns in scientific writing. Skimming is essential for better understanding of a text.

Skimming should answer the following questions about the text:

1. What is the overall purpose of the text?

2. What is the central idea or theme?

3. What does the author intent to do? (describe, instruct, report, narrate, explain, argue, persuade,

illustrate and so on)

4. What are the main points of the text?

Identifying the Central Idea: The first step of skimming is to identify the central idea. Every essay, article, passage, or textbook

chapter deals with a theme or central idea. All the other ideas, points, examples, illustrations in the

text support and expand the central idea.

In order to understand the central idea of a text, the reader should carefully read the

following:

The title or the main heading

The sub-headings

The opening paragraph

The last paragraph

The title or the main heading of a text can give a clue to the content. Similarly, the sub-headings can also help in identifying the central idea. The opening and the last paragraphs generally sum up the subject and the author's point of view. The reader should also

glance over the beginning of the text to identify its logical association. Identify the discourse technique used in the text, i.e., definition, description, explanation, comparison and contrast, narration, classification and so on. Both skimming and scanning are specific reading techniques necessary for quick and efficient reading. When skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it organized, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer. When scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even follow the linearity of the passage to do so. We simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it be name, a date, or a less specific piece of information. Skimming is therefore a more thorough activity which requires an overall view of the text and implies a definite reading competence. Scanning on the contrary, is far more limited since it only means retrieving what information is relevant to our purpose. Yet it is usual to make use of these two activities together when reading a given text. For instance, we may well skim through an article first just to know whether it is worth reading, then read it through more carefully because we have decided that it is of interest. It is also possible afterwards to scan the same article in order to note down a figure or a name which we particularly want to remember.

Thanks.

#References:
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NCERT (2006); Position Paper, National Focus Group on Teaching of English; National
Curriculum Framework 2005; National Council for Educational Research and Training
#Suggestion for further reading**:** This reading material is directly extracted from the below given original source of the study material and that is only to help the students. If you want to go through more reading then please go and follow the original source of this study material i.e. given below. I personally thank to the original source. You may follow.
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