Scanning and Skimming

WARNING!! Scanning and skimming are NOT reading. They are to be used only for certain purposes: either when material and purpose permit **OR** time demands.

Scanning is a method of covering pages and paragraphs quickly in search of the answer to one question, i.e., in search of one detail, one fact, one item.
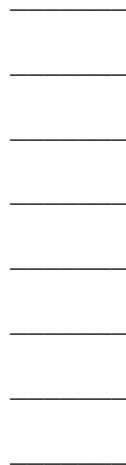
1. **Procedures**
   a. Decide **what** you're looking for and in what form it will most likely appear in print: a name, a statistic, a concept, etc.
   b. **Scan** for appropriate clues: capital letters to locate names, numbers to pinpoint statistics, related words to indicate concepts.
   c. Develop a mental set to scan **only** for what you're seeking; don't be distracted by other words, pictures, etc. Only likely clues should come into sharp focus; the rest should be "hazy."
   d. Use an appropriate scanning pattern: one which will enable you to cover material quickly and thoroughly, yet keep you from becoming involved in the sequence of presentation.
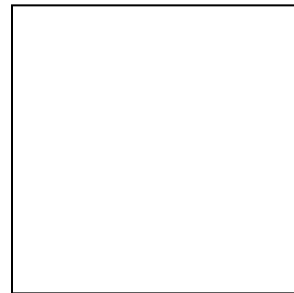
2. **Patterns**
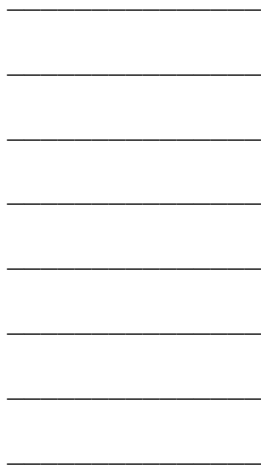
   WIDE COLUMNS   NARROW COLUMNS   WHOLE PAGE

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Scanning and Skimming

Skimming is a method of reading only selected portions of material in order to obtain knowledge of the general ideas and major supporting details. It is **not** a casual, haphazard process in which the reader winds up with only a vague idea about what he has read. It **is** a highly selective process requiring intense concentration and constant analysis and integration of those portions of the material that are read.

1. **Procedures**
    a. The general intent of the skimming process is to eliminate reading everything **except** those key sentences and key words that are most likely to contain the essence of the information.
    b. Read the title, introductory remarks, and Table of Contents.
    c. Read the first paragraph that really introduces the chapter. Don't be distracted by attention-getting anecdotes. Quickly **survey** entire chapter.
    d. Read the first sentence of each paragraph, then **anticipate** what clues it gives you about the rest of the paragraph.
    e. **Scan** (using steps on previous page) to pick up the key words essential to completing the main idea and key details of the paragraph.
    f. Read the last sentence of the paragraph if necessary.
    g. Read the concluding paragraphs.
    h. **Be flexible.** Read a whole paragraph if it really seems to be "meaty;" skip a whole paragraph if it is superfluous, repetitious, or just an anecdote.