

# Information Detectives: Mastering Skimming, Scanning, and Extraction

## Materials Needed

- Three different types of informational text (e.g., a news article, a short encyclopedia entry, a technical instructions manual).
- Highlighter pens or colored pencils (minimum two colors).
- Stopwatch or Timer.
- Pre-made Graphic Organizer (a simple table or T-chart) labeled "Skimming Results (Main Idea)" and "Scanning Results (Specific Facts)."

## Learning Objectives (KSA)

By the end of this lesson, the learner will be able to:

### Knowledge (K)

Define the specific purposes of skimming (finding the gist) and scanning (finding specific details).

### Skills (S)

Accurately skim a provided text in a timed challenge to identify the main idea and scan a text to locate three predetermined facts, using highlighting to extract the significant information.

### Attitude (A)

Appreciate the efficiency and time-saving necessity of using strategic reading techniques when conducting research or navigating large amounts of data.

## Success Criteria

You know you have succeeded when:

1. You can explain the difference between skimming and scanning without looking at your notes.
2. You can find the central theme of a paragraph in under 30 seconds.
3. You can locate and accurately highlight at least 80% of the required target facts in the final challenge.

## Lesson Procedure

### Part 1: Introduction (Tell Them What You'll Teach) - 10 Minutes

#### Hook: The Information Overload Scenario

**Educator Prompt:** Imagine you are building a complex model, and the instructions manual is 50 pages long. You only need to know one thing: *How much glue do you use?* Do you read all 50 pages carefully, or is there a faster, smarter way? Today, we are training to become 'Information Detectives' who can cut through the noise to find the important details fast.

#### Relevance and Objectives Review

We are learning three core skills—skimming, scanning, and extracting (highlighting)—which are crucial

not just for school, but for reading technical manuals, navigating websites, and researching efficiently. Review the KSA objectives and Success Criteria.

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## Part 2: Body (Teach It) - 35 Minutes

### Activity 1: The Tools of the Detective (I Do - Modeling)

#### Content Delivery: Skimming vs. Scanning

- **Skimming Defined:** Used to get the overall flavor or main idea (the gist). You look at titles, headings, subheadings, the first and last sentences of paragraphs, and any bolded words. It's like walking through a store without stopping to buy anything—just seeing what departments they have.
- **Scanning Defined:** Used to find specific, known pieces of information (names, dates, numbers, keywords). Your eyes move quickly over the text looking only for that target word or fact. It's like looking for one specific brand of cereal on the shelf.

#### Modeling (I Do):

The educator takes the first text (e.g., short encyclopedia entry) and demonstrates both techniques, narrating the process aloud.

1. **Skimming Model:** "I'm going to skim this in 30 seconds. My eyes are moving down the center. I see the main heading is 'The Great Barrier Reef.' I'm reading the first sentence... Okay, I know this text is about the ecology and threats facing the Reef. Done." (Record 'Gist' on the graphic organizer.)
2. **Scanning Model:** "Now I need to find the specific keyword 'coral bleaching.' My eyes are moving quickly, looking only for those two words..." (The educator points to the text, finds the phrase, and highlights it.)

### Activity 2: Guided Practice Race (We Do - Guided Practice)

**Instructions:** Use the second text (e.g., news article). The student and educator work together, following strict time limits.

1. **Skimming Challenge:** Set the timer for 45 seconds. Both parties skim the text. Discuss the results. What did you both identify as the main topic? (Formative Assessment Check: Do their identified topics align?)
2. **Scanning & Highlighting Challenge:** The educator provides three specific, high-contrast items to find (e.g., a specific year, a person's last name, and a dollar amount). Set the timer for 60 seconds. The student scans the text and highlights the requested items.
3. **Extraction Practice:** Transfer the three highlighted facts onto the graphic organizer in the "Scanning Results" section.

### Activity 3: The Extraction Assignment (You Do - Independent Practice)

**Instructions:** Use the third text (e.g., technical instructions manual or long article). The learner works independently to demonstrate mastery of all three skills. Success Criteria are explicit.

#### The Mission:

1. **Task A (Skimming):** Skim the text for 60 seconds and write the overall purpose or main idea on the graphic organizer.
  2. **Task B (Scanning & Highlighting):** Scan the entire text to find the following five targets. Use the highlighter to mark them clearly in the text.
    - The name of the company/organization who wrote the text.
    - Any number greater than 1,000.
    - The word "caution" or "warning."
    - A specific time of day (e.g., 3:00 PM).
    - A complete sentence detailing the most important takeaway.
  3. **Task C (Extraction):** Transfer these five highlighted facts onto the graphic organizer.
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## Part 3: Conclusion (Tell Them What You Taught) - 15 Minutes

### Recap and Reflection

**Educator Prompt:** Look at your graphic organizer. We just pulled out eight significant pieces of information without reading every single word of two articles. When we are overwhelmed with information, these techniques save us time and energy.

### Quick Fire Q&A (Formative Check):

- If you want to know if a book is worth reading, which strategy do you use? (Skimming)
- If you are looking up a phone number in a directory, which strategy do you use? (Scanning)

### Summative Assessment

Review the student's completed graphic organizer and the highlighted third text from the "You Do" activity against a pre-determined answer key. Check for accuracy and adherence to the time limits if applicable.

**Goal Alignment Check:** Did the student successfully identify 4 out of the 5 targeted facts (80% success rate)?

### Next Steps and Transfer

Discuss how these skills can be applied immediately to their current reading (e.g., homework, an online research project, reading product labels).

## Differentiation and Adaptability

### Scaffolding (For Struggling Learners)

- **Shorter Texts:** Use texts that are visually less dense or broken up with more headings and white space.
  - **Color Coding:** Assign different colored highlighters for different types of information (e.g., blue for names, yellow for dates).
  - **Pre-Reading Hints:** For the scanning challenge, explicitly state which paragraph the information can be found in.
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## Extension (For Advanced Learners)

- **Application to Research:** Provide a complex research prompt (e.g., "Find three arguments for and three arguments against sustainable fishing methods") and require the learner to apply skimming and scanning across five different online sources within a set time limit, ranking the sources by relevance before extracting.
- **Creation Task:** Ask the learner to write a short, highly dense article (200 words) and create a scanning challenge list of 5 facts, then swap with a peer or the educator to test the difficulty of the challenge.