

Information Detectives: Mastering the Art of Extraction

Materials Needed

- Access to 2-3 short, distinct informational texts (e.g., a short news article, a set of instructions, and a historical fact sheet). Texts should be 300-500 words each.
- Highlighters (two different colors, if possible).
- Pens/Pencils and note paper or a digital document.
- Timer or stopwatch.
- Worksheet/Template titled "Judgment Builder" (simple template for recording evidence and conclusions).

I. Introduction (10 minutes)

Hook: The Need for Speed and Accuracy

Imagine you have a major presentation due in ten minutes, and you need to know three crucial facts about the life cycle of monarch butterflies *right now*. You can't read the entire 5,000-word book. How do you find those three facts accurately and fast? We live in a world flooded with information. Being an excellent student, researcher, or just a smart decision-maker means knowing how to grab the important facts quickly and use them to make a sound decision.

Learning Objectives (Tell Them What We'll Teach)

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

1. Define "informational text" and understand its purpose.
2. Identify and practice the three crucial reading strategies: skimming, scanning, and detailed reading.
3. Apply these strategies to extract significant and accurate information from a source.
4. Use the gathered evidence to formulate a clear, sound judgment (a conclusion based on facts).

Success Criteria

You will know you are successful if you can:

- Quickly locate three specific facts using the scanning technique within a 60-second limit.
- Summarize the main idea of a short article after only skimming it.
- Write a judgment or conclusion that is supported by at least three direct quotes or references from the text.

II. Body: Content & Practice (40 minutes)

A. I Do: Defining Informational Text (5 minutes)

Teacher/Educator Modeling:

Informational text is writing whose primary purpose is to inform the reader about the natural or social

world. It's non-fiction. It doesn't tell a story for fun; it provides facts, explains how things work, or presents arguments.

- **Examples:** Textbooks, newspaper articles, instruction manuals for a game, biographies, scientific reports, recipes.
- **Key Difference:** Fictional text aims to entertain; Informational text aims to educate.

B. I Do/We Do: The Three Extraction Tools (15 minutes)

We need three different tools, or reading speeds, to tackle informational text effectively. Using the wrong tool wastes time!

Tool 1: Skimming (Getting the Gist)

Definition: Quickly running your eyes over the text to get the main idea or the general overview. You read headings, subheadings, captions, the first sentence of paragraphs, and look for bold words.

When to use it: When you need to decide if an article is even relevant to your research, or when you need the main topic quickly.

Tool 2: Scanning (Finding the Needle)

Definition: Looking only for specific pieces of information (names, dates, numbers, keywords). Your eyes move quickly down the page until you spot the target word or phrase.

When to use it: When you know exactly what fact you need (e.g., "What year did the Eiffel Tower open?" or "How many feet tall is Mount Everest?").

Tool 3: Detailed Reading (True Understanding)

Definition: Reading every word carefully to understand complex ideas, evaluate arguments, and connect different parts of the text.

When to use it: After skimming and scanning have confirmed the text is valuable, you use detailed reading to gather the evidence needed to form your judgment.

Guided Practice: Testing the Tools (We Do)

Activity: Quick Fact Finder

1. **Set Up:** Provide Text A (e.g., an article about ocean pollution).
2. **Skimming Challenge (30 seconds):** "Skim the article. What is the author's main point about ocean pollution?" (Learners articulate or jot down the main idea immediately after the timer stops.)
3. **Scanning Challenge (60 seconds):** "Scan the article. Locate and highlight (or note) the names of three specific animals mentioned in the text." (Start timer. Learners search only for keywords/names. Stop when time is up.)
4. **Discussion:** Did Skimming give you the main idea? Was Scanning faster than trying to read the whole article?

C. You Do: Forming a Sound Judgment (25 minutes)

Now, we combine all three skills to answer a critical research question and form a sound judgment.

Activity: The Great Debate Investigator

Scenario: You are acting as an investigative reporter trying to determine the best approach for saving endangered wildlife. You have been given Text B and Text C (e.g., Text B focuses on habitat restoration; Text C focuses on captive breeding programs).

Instructions:

1. **Skim (3 minutes):** Skim Text B and Text C. Determine the central argument of each author.
2. **Detailed Reading & Extraction (10 minutes):** Read both articles carefully (detailed reading). Use the "Judgment Builder" template. For each text, extract at least three significant, accurate facts that support the author's argument. (Use one color of highlighter for facts from Text B and another color for facts from Text C.)
3. **Formulating Judgment (10 minutes):**
 - Analyze the six facts you have gathered.
 - Answer the question: "Based **only** on the evidence provided in these two texts, which approach (habitat restoration OR captive breeding) appears to be the most reliable long-term solution for saving endangered species?"
 - Write a brief paragraph stating your judgment (your conclusion) and reference the specific facts you used to support it. (A sound judgment must be based on the evidence, not just personal feelings.)

Guidance for Sound Judgment: A sound judgment acknowledges the complexity of the issue but leans toward the solution that has the strongest factual backing (the best evidence) presented in the text.

III. Conclusion (10 minutes)

Closure and Recap (Tell Them What You Taught)

Let's quickly review our tools. Why do we skim? (To get the main idea.) Why do we scan? (To find specific facts quickly.) Why is detailed reading essential? (To truly understand the evidence.)

Being a good information detective means choosing the right tool for the job!

Formative Assessment Check

Quick Poll/Q&A: When would you use scanning instead of detailed reading if you were looking at a Wikipedia page? (Answer: When looking for a specific birth date or city name, not when trying to understand a complex historical event.)

Summative Assessment: Judgment Review

Review the learner's "Judgment Builder" template and the final paragraph.

Criteria Check:

- Did the learner successfully extract accurate facts (scanning/detailed reading)?
- Is the final judgment clearly supported by the extracted facts (sound judgment formation)?
- Is the judgment focused only on the information provided, demonstrating an ability to separate opinion from text evidence?

Differentiation and Extension

Scaffolding (Support for Struggling Learners)

- **Chunking:** Use shorter texts (200 words) and practice the extraction skills on only one text before moving to the second.
- **Visual Aids:** Create a reference card detailing the steps for Skim, Scan, and Detail Read (e.g., Skim = look at bold words only).
- **Pre-Selection:** Provide the exact keywords they should be scanning for to guarantee successful fact location.

Extension (Challenge for Advanced Learners)

- **Media Literacy Challenge:** Provide a fourth, shorter article on the same topic that presents a completely contradictory judgment (perhaps from a less reliable source). The learner must use detailed reading skills to identify the flawed evidence or biased language that leads to the conflicting judgment.
- **Application:** Ask the learner to find a piece of informational text about a topic of their choice and apply all three reading skills, documenting the process and the judgment they formed.