What is skimming?

Skimming is a reading technique that can help you to:

• read more quickly
• decide if the text is interesting and whether you should read it in more detail

Skimming is a fast reading technique. Use it to quickly identify the main ideas in the text.

How is 'skimming' different from 'scanning'?

The term skimming is often confused with scanning. Remember:

**Skimming** is used to obtain the overall sense of a piece of text. Use skimming to get the main idea of a page in a textbook to decide whether it is useful and should therefore be read more slowly and in more detail.

**Scanning** is used to obtain specific information from a piece of text. Use scanning to find a particular number in a telephone directory.

Sometimes you can use both reading methods. After you have skimmed a piece of text to decide whether the text is of interest, you may wish to use scanning techniques to locate specific information.

How do you skim read?

Don't read the whole text word-for-word. Use as many clues as possible to give you some background information. There might be pictures or images related to the topic, or an eye-catching title. Let your eyes skim over the surface of the text and, while thinking about any clues you have found about the subject, look out for key words.

1. Read the title, subtitles and subheading to find out what the text is about.
2. Look at the illustrations to give you further information about the topic.
3. Read the first and last sentence of each paragraph.
4. Don't read every word or every sentence. Let you eyes skim over the text, taking in key words.
5. Continue to think about the meaning of the text.