

How To Scan

Ask someone to read this with you if you need to.

If you want just one piece of information from a text (e.g. name, an address, the time of a TV programme or a word you want to spell) you need to scan for it. This means looking through very quickly without really reading the words. All you have to do is find the word(s) you want.

Look at the list below. Tick the things you would use scanning for:

reading instructions	
finding a telephone number	
finding out who a letter is from	
reading a book	
finding a street on a map	
looking up the time of a bus	
finding a plumber in yellow pages	
finding a word in the dictionary	
studying an agreement	
checking that a cheque has been signed	

Steps for Scanning

Think about what you are scanning for.

Write it down and try to get a picture of it in your mind.

Keep thinking about what you are looking for and let your eye run over the page.

Don't read the words. Don't read the sentences. Just look.

If you don't find it first time, try again.

Keep thinking about the words you want and keep your eyes moving quickly.

If you don't do it quickly then you are not really scanning, you're stopping to read the other words.

You might need a lot of practice before you can scan well, but it will save you time in the end. It's very useful for looking up all sorts of things.

If you are not good at reading yet, you can still scan. Try finding words you know well, like Liverpool or your own name, in a page of writing.

Now try some of the scanning exercises.

SCANNING EXERCISE

Before you start, read the 'How to Scan Sheet' sheet.



Have a quick look through the advert below, then answer the questions on the next page.



KINGSWAY PARK
ST. ANNE STREET
LIVERPOOL L3 3JA
Tel. 0151-207 3898

FOR 3 WEEKS

EARN 100's of £££'s
with

Argos

VOUCHERS

OVER 100 GOOD REASONS FOR SHOPPING WITH US
NEW CUSTOMERS
REGISTERED ON THE SPOT

BESTWAY CATERING

No.1
WHERE IT MATTERS

continued



QUESTIONS

1 What can you save from shopping at this place?

.....

2 How many good reasons are there for shopping there?

.....

3 What is the telephone number?

.....

4 What can you earn with Argos?

.....

5 What are the names of the catering firm?

.....

6 How long does the offer last?

.....

Now check your answers below.

Discuss your work with a teacher/friend and decide what you need to work on next.



Answers

1 pounds
2 over a hundred
3 0151 207 3898
4 hundreds of pounds
5 Bestway Catering, Best-in Catering
6 for 3 weeks

2. Scanning a short text for specific information

You may often need to check whether a text is relevant to your reading purposes or to find specific information in a text. A common reason for scanning short texts is during electronic searches of academic journals in databases to which you may have access through your library. One efficient way to check is through keyword searches of the titles and abstracts of articles, since they should give a summary of the content of any article. If the keyword search brings up a title and abstract that look highly relevant, then you can download the full article. Often, however, a keyword search produces a large number of articles that are may be pertinent to your study. If you are faced with hundreds of potentially useful articles it helps if you can quickly scan the titles and abstracts for the sort of information that will confirm whether to invest more time downloading and reading an article intensively.

Here is a quick scanning exercise. Below are the title, abstract and other reference details of an academic journal article. Suppose you are interested in the management issue of retaining valued employees. You want to know about why employees might wish to leave, whether the main reasons are the same in all sectors, and what might be done to retain valued employees.

How relevant is this article likely to be to this management issue? Scan the text to answer these questions:

- 1. What is the focus of the article?*
- 2. Which sector does the study cover and which group of employees are involved?*
- 3. What were the main reasons why some employees considered leaving?*
- 4. How much evidence is offered?*
- 5. what are managers doing to retain nurses?*

Now let's scan for the info we selected.

In recent years, evidence has been collected which suggests that the proportion of British children and teenagers who are unhappy is higher than in many other developed countries around the world. For example, a recently published report set out to measure 'well-being' among young people in nineteen European countries, found that the United Kingdom came bottom. The report was based on statistics and surveys in which young people answered questions on a wide range of subject. The United Kingdom is a relatively unequal country with a relatively high proportion of young people living in households. With less than half the national average income. This seems to have a negative effect on how they feel about themselves.

How many European countries are in the first report?

3. Scanning: Say True or False

- a. Look only for specific words or phrases.
- b. Look at every word in the text.
- c. Try not to think of the meaning in the text.
- d. Underline the word when you find it.
- e. Think of the meaning of the word you are looking for.