

# Reading techniques

In order to read effectively, you need to use different reading techniques for different purposes and texts. You should always read for a clearly defined purpose.

## Skimming

Skimming will help you grasp the general idea or gist of a text. You might quickly read the table of contents, the headings or the abstract. You could also read the first and last paragraphs and the first and last sentence of each paragraph in a relevant section.

## Scanning

Scanning allows you to locate precise information. You might identify a key terms or expressions which will alert you to where your subject is being addressed. You could then run your eyes over a text looking for these.

## Detailed reading

Detailed reading allows you to critically consider aspects of the text. This may involve close reading of the entire text, or of important sections of the text.

## Revision reading

This involves reading rapidly through material with which you are already familiar, in order to confirm knowledge and understanding.

## Stages in reading a text

It is important to break down the reading process into the following stages:

**Before reading** get an overview of the text:

- skim the table of contents, headings and subheadings
- read the introduction and conclusion
- scan the relevant sections to locate where your topic is discussed

**During reading** closely follow the development of the ideas in the text:

- read actively - write in the margins, highlight phrases, take note of important points
- don't forget to examine diagrams and figures as they are information-dense
- read critically - ask yourself questions; for example, Is the argument logical? Is it biased? Is there enough evidence to support the author's conclusions?

**After reading** think over what you have read. Make a **brief** summary of the main ideas and concepts in the text.