

Scanning vs. Skimming

Reading your textbooks can be overwhelming! Thorough textbook reading will help you do better in a course and have a better understanding of the information. Sometimes it is appropriate to skim or scan the chapter. See below to see how they compare/contrast to actual reading!

Scanning is looking through material for specific information.

- Think of scanning as "seek and find!"
- Examples include looking through the chapter for a specific answer when doing homework or a practice quiz.
- This can be effective if you have already read the material but time-consuming if you are looking at the information for the first time.

Skimming is "light reading" & can be done in different ways.

- The warm-up: Prepare your brain for absorbing information by skimming the chapters before reading.
- The refresher: Keep ideas & concepts fresh by skimming a few days after your initial reading.
- The review: Get ready for your exam by skimming your chapters 1-2 days before the exam.

Sometimes, skimming or scanning is not the answer...

- The cram: Reading the chapter(s) right before the exam but never reading the chapter(s) ahead of time.
 - Doing this will cause you to miss key concepts & important details.

Ask yourself these questions before scanning or skimming

1. Am I scanning or skimming instead of actually reading?
2. When am I scanning or skimming?
3. Why am I scanning or skimming?
4. What information will I get from scanning or skimming