Skimming, scanning & detailed reading

Teachers:

Share with parents or learners as a quick help-sheet.

Parents:

Print this help-sheet out as a reminder for your child.

Share your home-learning!

Use the hashtag #DYThomelearning to share your child's work.

Many learners, particularly those with literacy difficulties, can feel intense anxiety when faced with large blocks of text. Introducing them to different ways of reading can help them navigate the text more efficiently.

This help-sheet outlines how and when learners should utilise skimming, scanning and detailed reading.

DYT

driver youth trust

for literacy

Skimming

- Look at the piece of text and note how long it is.
- Read the headings and subheadings; what do they tell you?
- Read the first and final paragraphs carefully and pick out key points.
- Look out for any figures or quotes, or sections in bold or italics.
- Write down a summary of the text. If you have skimmed it correctly you should have a rough understanding of what it says.

When to use it:

When summarising

When you only need the main facts

Before answering comprehension questions

Scanning

- Think of what you're looking for (e.g. what your essay question is asking) and figure out where in the text it might be.
- Keep in mind which key words or vocabulary you need to look out for.
- Find quotes and figures or dates.
- When you have found the correct section, switch to 'detailed reading' (below) to gain a wider understanding.

When to use it:

When searching for something specific

For summarising

Finding quotes

For answering detailed comprehension questions

Detailed reading

- Allow time for yourself to read the text more than once. This gives you a better chance of retaining the information.
- When you can, use highlighters or make notes on the text. This helps you identify key information and make sense of it in your mind.
- Have a sense of purpose before you start to read. How will this help with your overall understanding of a subject or topic?

When to use it:

To analyse a piece of text

When reading poetry

For both comprehension and inference questions