

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



Skim or Scrutinize

The Skim or Scrutinize strategy helps each student choose the most efficient way to approach reading passages and answer as many questions as possible correctly.

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SKIM OR SCRUTINIZE

Summary

Every individual reads in their own way. In the context of test-taking, time is a constant factor. The Skim or Scrutinize strategy helps students identify the best of two approaches to reading passages, so they can make the most efficient use of their limited time.

Procedure

1. Print enough copies of a reading passage for your students.
2. Explain the following reading strategies to the students, comparing the two—scanning and deep reading—and when to use them.
 - **Skim:** Introduce students to the First/Last Read strategy, in which students skim information by reading the first and last sentence of each paragraph and, if there is time, the entire last paragraph of the passage, generating short summary annotations as they read.
 - **Scrutinize:** Introduce students to the Deep Read strategy, in which students read each passage in its entirety in under 4 minutes, generating short summary annotations as they read.
3. Emphasize to the students that one strategy is not better than the other, but to choose the strategy that works best for them, depending on the amount of time they have, the type of reading passage, and how they typically read. Explain that they will use both reading strategies throughout their schooling.
4. Field any questions students have, then distribute the reading passage.
5. **Self-test:** Set a 4-minute timer and ask students to read through the entire passage. If it takes them less than 4 minutes, they should choose to scrutinize. If it takes them longer, they should choose to skim.
6. **Discussion:** To ensure comprehension, lead a class discussion on the differences between the two strategies and how to determine which strategy to use when.

Adapted from Academic Tutoring and Test Prep. (2022). The lightning prep guide for ACT success: Skills and strategies for mastering the ACT. Academic Tutoring and Test Prep.