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Department of English  
Course Title: READING  
Level: First Year-LMD  
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## SKIMMING

**Objective:** The students will be able to skim the text and determine its gist or main idea.

In academic contexts, you will have much to read, and you will need to use various reading skills to help you read quickly and effectively. **Skimming** is one example of such a skill. This lecture explains what skimming is and what parts of the text are needed.

### 1. What is Skimming ?

Skimming is a strategy that can be taught to students to help them identify the main ideas in text. It is important to correlate “skimming” to reading, making it clear that it is not word-by-word reading. Rather it is three to four times faster than normal reading. Generally, skimming is used to get through text very quickly. Consequently, skimming is used when students have a lot of reading material to get through, or have been assigned a task in an activity that requires some quick reading first, prior to completing the task. Skimming has also been used as a strategy in research when the student wants to determine if a text/article is a resource than can be used.

## **2. Steps in Skimming**

**a.**Read the title

**b.**Read the first paragraph attentively to get an idea of what will be discussed in the text.

**c.**Read the first (and sometimes the second) sentence of each paragraph - they give the main idea of the paragraph.

**d.**After you have read the first sentences, your eyes should drop down to the end of the paragraph, looking for important pieces of information, such as dates and names.

**e.**Read the last paragraph attentively as it may contain the summary.

Here's an example that illustrates the skimming process:

### **The School Uniform Question**

Individualism is a fundamental value in the United States. All Americans believe in the right to express their own opinion without fear of punishment. This value, however, is coming under fire in an unlikely place-the public school classroom. The issue is school uniforms. Should public school students be allowed to make individual decisions about clothing, or should all students be required to wear a uniform? I believe that school uniforms are the better choice for two reasons.

For one thing, wearing school uniforms would help make students' lives simpler. They would no longer have to decide what to wear every morning. Trying on outfit after outfit in an effort to choose can be very tiring. If this action was timed, it would probably take a person at least twenty minutes to try on just two outfits. A person could use this time for more important things such as reviewing the contents of a new chapter or going over important revision questions. Moreover, uniforms would not only save time, but they would also eliminate the stress often associated with this chore. It is a well known fact that people do not only have one piece of clothing in their closets. They have many things to choose from; ranging from T-shirts to shoes. Therefore, imagine every morning having to decide on a specific combination of items to put together to wear that is different from the one that was worn the day before. It is a very stressful activity for any normal human being.

Another thing, school uniforms influence students to act responsibly in groups and as individuals. Uniforms can create a feeling of unity among students. For example, when students do something as a group, such as attend meetings in the auditorium or eat lunch in the cafeteria, the fact that they all wear the same uniform would create a sense of community. This togetherness felt by students can increase their pride of belonging to their educational institution which in turn can lead to a school that is united. Even more important, statistics show the positive effects that school uniforms have on violence and truancy. According to a recent survey in

Hillsborough County, Florida, incidents of school violence dropped by fifty percent, attendance and test scores improved, and student suspensions declined approximately thirty percent after school uniforms were introduced. This evidence clearly proves proof that uniforms are better.

Opponents of mandatory uniforms say that students who wear school uniforms cannot express their individuality. This point has some merit on the surface. However, as stated previously, school is a place to learn, not to flaunt wealth and fashion. Society must decide if individual expression through clothing is more valuable than improved educational performance. It is important to remember that school uniforms would be worn only during school hours. Students can express their individuality in the way they dress outside of the classroom.

In conclusion, there are many benefits to implementing mandatory school uniforms for students; documented and observed benefits. I believe that students will learn better and act more responsibly when they wear uniforms. It is in my opinion that public schools should require uniforms in order to benefit both the students and society as a whole.

Good skimmers do not skim everything at the same rate or give equal attention to everything. While skimming is always faster than your normal reading speed, you should slow down in the following situations:

- When you skim introductory and concluding paragraphs
- When you skim topic sentences
- When you find an unfamiliar word
- When the material is very complicated

**Practice:** *Skim the following essay quickly and write its main idea in a sentence. You have 5 minutes.*

### **Native American Influences on Modern U.S.Culture**

When the first Europeans came to the North American continent, they encountered the completely new cultures of the Native American peoples of North America. Native Americans, who had highly developed cultures in many respects, must have been as curious about the strange European manners and customs as the Europeans were curious about them. As always happens when two or more cultures come into contact, there was a cultural exchange. Native Americans adopted some of the Europeans' ways, and the Europeans adopted some of their ways. As a result, Native Americans have made many valuable contributions to modern U.S. culture, particularly in the areas of language, art, food, and government.

First of all, Native Americans left a permanent mark on the English language. The early English-speaking settlers borrowed from

several different Native American languages words for places in this new land. All across the country are cities, towns, rivers, and states with Native American names. For example, the states of Delaware, Iowa, Illinois, and Alabama are named after Native American tribes, as are the cities of Chicago, Miami, and Spokane. In addition to place names, English adopted from various Native American languages the words for animals and plants food in the Americas. Chipmunk, moose, racoon, shunk, tobacco, and squash are just a few examples.

Although the vocabulary of English is the area that shows the most Native American influence, it is not the only area of us culture that has been shaped by contact with Native Americans. Art is another area of important American contributions. Wool rugs woven by women of the Navajo tribe in Arizona and New Mexico are highly valued works of art in the United States. Native American jewelry made from silver and turquoise is also very popular and very expensive. Especially in the western and southwestern regions of the United States, native crafts such as pottery, leather products, and beadwork can be found in many homes. Indeed, native art and handicrafts are a treasured part of us culture.

In addition to language and art, agriculture is another area in which Native Americans had a great and lasting influence on the peoples who arrived here from Europe, Africa, and Asia. Being skilled farmers, the Native Americans of North America taught the newcomers many things about farming techniques and crops. Every U.S. schoolchild has heard the story of how Native Americans taught the first settlers to place a dead fish in a planting hole to provide fertilizer for the growing plant. Furthermore, they taught the settlers irrigation methods and crop rotation. Many of the foods people in the United States eat today were introduced to the Europeans by Native Americans. For example, corn and chocolate were unknown in Europe. Now they are staples in the U.S. diet.

Finally, it may surprise some people to learn that citizens of the United States are also indebted to the native people for our form of government. The Iroquois, who were an extremely large tribe with many branches called 'nations', had developed a highly sophisticated system of government to settle disputes that arose between the various branches. Five of the nations had joined together in a confederation called 'the League of the Iroquois'. Under the league, each nation was

autonomous in running its own internal affairs, but the nations acted as a unit when dealing with outsiders. The league kept the Iroquois from fighting among themselves and was also valuable in diplomatic relations with other tribes. When the 13 colonies were considering what kind of government to establish after they had won their independence from Britain, someone suggested that they use a system similar to that of the league of the Iroquois. Under this system, each colony or future state would be autonomous in managing its own affairs but would join forces with the other states to deal with matters that concerned them all. This is exactly what happened. As a result, the present form of government of the United States can be traced directly back to a Native American model.

In conclusion, we can easily see from these few examples the extent of Native American influence on our language, our art forms, our eating habits, and our government. The people of the United States are deeply indebted to Native Americans for their contributions to U.S. culture.



**The main idea :** .....  
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**References:**

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