ONLINE READING COMPREHENSION LAB

http://owl.excelsior.edu/orc

How to Preview a Text

What is Previewing?

Examining the **content** and **organization** of a **text** in order to become familiar with it before reading.

Why should I preview before I read?

Previewing is an excellent way to **save time** and **improve your understanding** of a text.

That means you'll get it... faster!

When you preview, you look for **sign-posts** by doing the following things:

- Scan for titles, headings, and subheadings
- Skim the first paragraph or introduction
- Skim the last paragraph or summary
- Scan the first sentence after each heading
- Skim the abstract (if provided)
- Make a note of graphic aids such as figures, tables, charts, graphs, and images
- Make a note of typographical aids such as bold-faced or highlighted words and phrases
- Scan any supplemental material at the beginning or end of the text, such as chapter outlines, chapter objectives, discussion questions, or vocabulary lists

Advantages of Previewing:

1. First, it helps you **evaluate** a text in order to decide if it is relevant for your purposes. This requires you to think about what your **purpose** is before you read. For instance, if you're doing research on a topic, previewing can help you evaluate if a text provides information you need.

2. Second, it helps you read **faster** by identifying passages that you must read carefully versus those that you can skim or skip. Generally, you want to **slow down and read more carefully** when a passage covers a new topic you know very little about; contains complicated or technical material; is filled with essential visual aids like tables, charts, graphs, and images; contains a lot of new or difficult vocabulary; or requires a lot of visualization or interpretation. On the other hand, you may want to **skim or skip** material when a passage is easy to read, covers material you already know well, or covers material that isn't relevant to your purpose for reading.

3. Finally, it helps you read **better** by helping you identify **questions** you may have about the text.

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