

Reading Skills

IGCSE English ■ Topic 1

IGCSE English



What we will cover

- 1 Skim then scan
- 2 Answering questions
- 3 Signal words
- 4 Notes & summaries
- 5 Reading between the lines





Skim then scan

- **skim** : read fast for the **gist**
– title & first lines
- **scan** : move your eyes fast to
find **one** fact

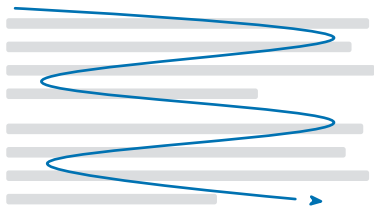
A departure board is scan territory – hunt one flight, not every line.



Scan for one fact among many lines

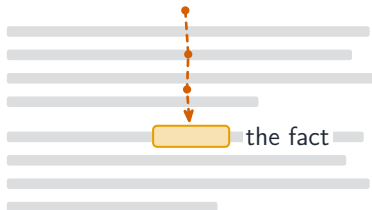
Skim first, then scan

Skim - read fast for the gist



one fast sweep over every part:
“what is this text about?”

Scan - jump to one fact



eyes hop down the page and
stop only at what you need

Skim sweeps over everything for the gist; scan jumps straight to one fact

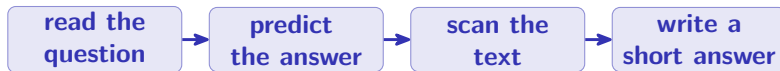
Match the question to the text

- Read the question first. Decide what kind of answer it wants: a name? a number? a reason?
- **Predict** the answer before you look. This helps your eyes find it faster.
- Find the part of the text that talks about the same idea. The answer is usually there.

Connecting ideas across a text

The ideas link to each other, and you must follow how.

Answering questions



Write a word or a **phrase** , not a sentence. Copy the exact word & answer **only** what is asked.

Signal words

addition

also, in addition, as well as

contrast

but, however, although

cause & effect

because, so, as a result

Signal words show how the writer's ideas connect. In **multiple matching**, look for the same **meaning**, not the same words (a **paraphrase**).

Signal words, in detail

addition

idea + idea

one more of
the same kind

also
in addition
as well as

contrast

idea ↔ idea

the ideas pull in
different directions

but
however
although

cause and effect

cause → effect

one thing makes
the other happen

because
so
as a result

The three signal-word families and what they do to ideas

Signals that tell you what is coming

Cause and effect

Cause and effect : *because, so, therefore, as a result, consequently* – the answer to a “why” question sits beside one of these.

Contrast

However, although, on the other hand, whereas – a change of direction, and often where the writer’s real view appears.

Repetition

Repetition of a word or an idea marks what the writer thinks matters – and in a summary question, what must be included.

Multiple-choice

In a **multiple-choice** question, find the words in the text that make one option true; the others usually fail on a single word.

Scan for the signal, then read the sentence around it. That is faster than reading everything, and more accurate.



Notes and summaries

note-making

short notes under headings; leave out examples

summary

the key points in fewer words, in **your own** words

Reading between the lines

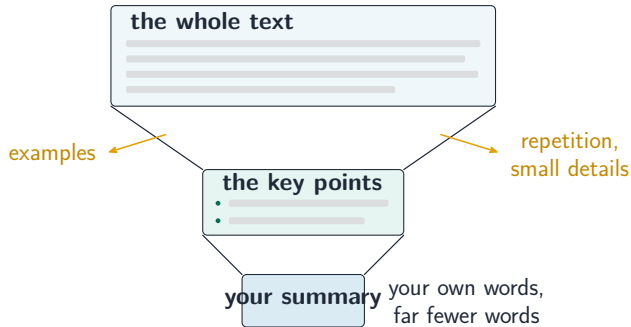
inference

the writer **implies** a meaning
without saying it openly

attitude

found in **word choice** ; guess
new words from **context**

Summary skills



A summary keeps only the key points, in your own words

Exam tips

- Read the question before the text. Underline the key word: a name? a number? a reason?
- Answers usually come in the same order as the text, so do not hunt backwards for question 1.
- Copy the exact word from the text when you can; a changed word can lose the mark.

Exam tips (continued)

- Check how many answers the question wants: “Give TWO reasons” needs two, not one.
- In multiple matching, the text usually does not repeat the question’s words. Hunt for the same idea said differently.
- Never leave an empty line. A guess can win a mark; a blank never can.



Worked example – reading between the lines

“Lin *claimed* she had finished the work, but her desk told a different story.” What does this suggest?

- The writer chose **claimed**, not *said* ⇒ it hints the statement may not be true.
- “Her desk told a different story” is **indirect**: the writer never says she lied.
- Put together: the reader is meant to **doubt** Lin – her desk was still covered in work.
- ⇒ **The writer implies Lin had not really finished.**

For an **inference** question, quote the **exact word** that carries the hint and say what it suggests. Never just copy the sentence out – explain the **implication**.

Topic 1 – key takeaways

1

Skim & scan

skim for the gist, scan for one fact

2

Answers

predict, then write a short exact answer

3

Signal words

show addition, contrast, cause & effect

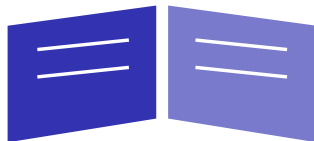
4

Inference

read the implied meaning & attitude

Check yourself

- 1 Which skill finds the gist quickly?
- 2 Which skill finds one exact fact?
- 3 What kind of word is “however”?
- 4 What is it called to work out an unstated meaning?



Answers 1. skimming 2. scanning 3. a contrast signal word 4. inference