

Reading Comprehension Strategies

Merrimack College Writing Center

Goals

- Understand the limited role of skimming in reading comprehension.
- Develop strategies in reading comprehension (SQ3R, Paragraph Construction, and Transitional Words).



Reading vs. Skimming

When you skim, what do you do?

Reading	Skimming
Work to understand meaning	Quickly glance at material
 Look for ideas (thesis, topic sentences) 	Look for what stands out (bold, italics)
Look for structure (organization)	Look for visuals
Look for transitions (ideas, words)	Maybe look at headings and subheadings
 Look for all the things you looked for when "skimming" 	



Survey

- Thesis
- Topic sentences (first and last sentences of each paragraph)
- Headings
- Subheadings
- Bold or italicized words
- Images & charts

Look for problems & solutions, comparisons & contrasts, cause & effect, process, illustration, classification.

- Survey
- Question
 - Turn every heading and subheading into a question

Create open-ended questions; emphasize "why" and "how".

Write them in the margin, or above the original heading, or in your notebook, with some space in between to write in answers.

This step allows you to set up expectations in your reading.



- Survey
- Question
- Read
 - Read to answer the questions (active vs. passive reading)

Reading with a goal better engages your brain, and helps you see whether or not the work meets your expectations.

- Survey
- Question
- Read
- Recite
 - Talk about what you read
 - Discuss what you understood
 - Try to clarify what you didn't understand

Discussion helps internalize the knowledge, and will help you retain it when you need or want to recall it.



- Survey
- Question
- Read
- Recite
- Review
 - Compare what you thought and discussed to what was in the text. How much did you retain? Were your questions answered?

Structure of an Academic Paragraph

 Claim: the topic sentence or main point of the paragraph

2. Evidence: proof (the author's or a source's) that helps support the claim

3. Discussion: the way the author connects evidence to claim to thesis.

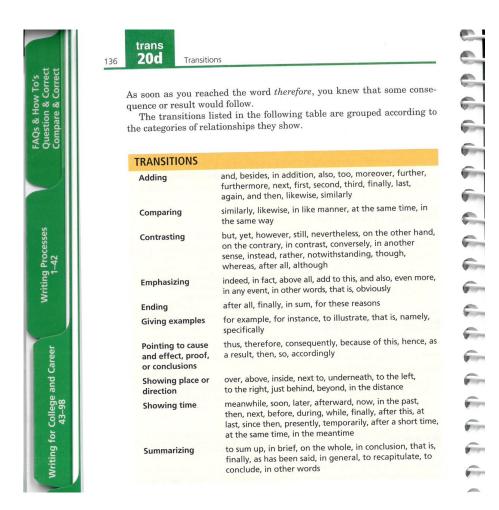


Transitional Words

- Coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet)
- Conjunctive adverbs (however, therefore, thus, hence, nevertheless, etc.)
- Dependent clause markers (when, because, if, after, while, although, etc.)
- Transitions that show the patterns of organization (Harris Prentice Hall Reference Guide handout)



Transitions Show Relationships



Harris, M. & Kunka, J. (2015). *Prentice hall reference guide* (9th ed.). New York: Prentice Hall



Information for Documentation & Citation

Author: Robert T. Koch Jr. & Rachel Silsbee Title: Reading Comprehension Strategies Website: Merrimack College Writing Center

Year: 2017

URL: https://www.merrimack.edu/academics/academic_support/academic_success_center/writing

_center/resources/



