



## Skimming and scanning

When you're reading you don't have to read everything with the same amount of care and attention. Sometimes you need to be able to **read a text very quickly**.

For example, to look up the word 'valuable' in the dictionary you wouldn't start at the letter **A** and read every word. The most efficient way is to turn to the letter **V** and then find the words beginning with **va-**.

This is called **scanning** through the dictionary. Scanning is one type of fast reading.

**Skimming** is another type of fast reading. You might use skimming to look through a text quickly to get the gist (the general idea). So, if you want to know what's going on in the news, you might skim through a newspaper or a news website. You wouldn't have much detail but you would find out the main points.

Skimming and scanning are both quick reading techniques but they have different purposes.

You might use scanning to:

- look up a word in a dictionary or index
- find an address or a phone number in a directory
- check what time your programme is on television
- look up details or prices in a catalogue
- pick out the website you want from options on a Google search

You might use **skimming** to:

- see what's in the news in a paper or on a website
- browse through a book to see if you want to read it
- look through the television guide to see what's on one evening
- flick through a catalogue to see what's on offer
- look through the options given on a Google search to see what sites it suggests