

The technique *scanning* or *looking for specific information* is very useful when you know exactly what you are looking for in a text. Since you have a very specific goal in mind, when you read, you only read the relevant part(s) and ignore the irrelevant.

Very much similar to reading for main points (R5), you could start by making a list of points you would like to locate in a text. The list will help you find the relevant points in the text. Now, before you do some practice, read the tips in the following section. You could use the list as an exercise for scanning. To do this, please follow the steps below:

1. Predict one or two tips that you think are relevant to scanning. You could either write them down or remember them.
2. Read and see if the following list contains your prediction.
3. Read the tip(s) that you have predicted correctly, and ignore the rest.
4. If you have done all of the above steps in 30 seconds, congratulations! You should be quite skillful in scanning and need not read on.

Tips on locating specific information

- Keep in mind what you want to locate in a text.
- Jot down on a piece of paper a few key words that are related to the topic you want to explore in a text. When you read, look for those key words. Slow down when you see them. After some practice, you could perform this ‘anticipation-confirmation of anticipation’ process mentally instead of actually writing the key words.
- DON’T read every word.
- Make use of headings. If you read a book, use the contents page or the index. If you read an article, make use of the headings and sub-headings to help you locate the information you want.
- Set a time limit for yourself. If you cannot find anything relevant after the set time, the text probably does not provide what you want.
- DON’T use a dictionary unless you are very sure the word in doubt is related to the information you are looking for.

What materials can I use for practicing?

Inside the Language Commons:

- “Study skills in English” pp 27-28.
- “Authentic reading” units 4, 7, 10 & 18.
- “Effective reading” units 1, 6, 7, 10, 17, 18, 21 & 26.
- “Study reading” Units 1 & 10.

Outside the Language Commons, try to use authentic materials as much as possible.

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Lecture notes
- Course readings
- Advertisements
- Newsletters
- E-mail
- Restaurant menus
- Travel guide books
- Telephone directories
- Library catalogues
- Any readings you come across in your daily life

And now...

If you would like any help or advice, or just a chat about your progress, please get in touch - **we are here to support your independent learning!** To contact us:

- make an appointment to see an **adviser**. For details of advisers and their availability, please go to <https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-adviser-timetable/>.
- e-mail your questions to **iLANG** (lcilang@ust.hk).
- ask at the reception counter of the Language Commons — if the receptionist cannot help you directly, s/he will pass your query on to one of the advisers.

What else can you do?

- browse the many physical (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-commons/#resources>) and online materials (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/resources-reading/>) for Reading.
- join a Reading activity or short course (<http://ilang.cle.ust.hk/reading/>).

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