

Academic Reading

When to be a Dolphin, a Shark or a Whale



Skim Reading—Dolphin

This is where you use rapid reading techniques to get the meaning, or idea of what something is about. Move rapidly over the article, use a pen or pointer to guide your eyes. This stops them getting so tired. Try and take in more than one word at a time. Often, we can just force ourselves to speed up. When the words get more relevant, then maybe slow down and start to make notes.



Scanning—Shark

This is about using clues the format of the text has given you. Look at headings, key words, tables, charts, indexes and images to work out which bits are helpful for you to read. Start with the abstract or summary—this is a quick account of all the major aspects of the work. Then look at any headings, sections, table headings. Look at charts, graphs, images and look at the legends (the title and explanations underneath).



In-depth Reading—Whale

This is when you really need to engage with the text in detail. There might be very precise information or wording that you need to read, You might need to carefully examine somebody's argument, evidence, ideas or conclusions. You'll need to take notes and reflect on what they say

