What is Previewing?

Previewing a text means to get an idea of what we are going to find in a particular text or in other words it is a skill of learning about a text before reading it. It saves time, gets a sense of what the text is about and gives us a kind of overview. This simple skill includes seeing what we can learn from the head notes or other introductory material, skimming to get an idea of the content and taking a look at how the text is organized. It saves a lot of time for us as after previewing a text, we can set a purpose or evaluate whether the text meets our purpose or not.

In our daily life we use the skill of previewing while reading many materials. Let’s take an example, when we receive a letter, we normally look first at the return address or the stamp to find out where it came from and who sent it. This is previewing. Then we use to make some guesses about what it will be about. When we read a newspaper or a magazine, we normally look at the headlines and the pictures to get some idea of what the articles are about in order to decide which ones are according to our interests or which ones we will read.

We can preview all kinds of texts, pleasure reading books, different articles from magazines, tests or textbook assignments.

How to Preview?

Whatever your purpose is for reading a particular piece of writing, you should have three objectives to meet as you read: to identify the author’s most important points, to recognize how they fit together, and to note how you respond to them. There are some suggestions;

✓ Consider your purpose.

- Are you looking for information, main ideas, complete comprehension, or detailed analysis?
- How will you use this text?
✓ Get an overview of the context, purpose, and content of the reading.

• What does the title mean?
• What can you discover about the "when," "where," and "for whom" of the written text?
• What does background or summary information provided by the author or editor predict the text will do?
• What chapter or unit does the text fit into?

✓ Scan the text.

• Does there seem to be a clear introduction and conclusion? Where?
• Are the body sections marked? What does each seem to be about? What claims does the author make at the beginnings and endings of sections?
• Are there key words that are repeated or put in bold or italics?
• What kinds of development and detail do you notice? Does the text include statistics, tables, and pictures or is it primarily prose? Do names of authors or characters get repeated frequently?

(Now is the time to solve the exercises given in the text book)