SKIMMING AND SCANNING TEXT
MINI-LESSON #1 – SKIMMING

Rationale: Students need to be able to skim in order to get an overall picture or idea of what a text is about.

Lesson: Whole or Small Group (15 minutes)
Technique adapted from “Whisper Skim and Scan” in Super 6 Comprehension Strategies by Lori Oczkus, Christopher C. Gordon Publishers, 2004

Materials:
Teachers
• “Animal Ears” article (located at the end of the lesson)
• Document camera

Students:
• Sample passage, “Stingrays” (located at the end of lesson)
• “Turn and Talk” partners

Warm Up/Introduction:
Display “Animal Ears” on a Document Camera. When we read, we often need to take a quick look at text to try to get an idea of what it will be about. This is called skimming. We might do such things as:
• read the title
• look at the introduction in the first paragraph
• read headings and sub-headings
• notice pictures, graphs, and charts
• notice words and phrases that are bold print or italics
• read the last paragraph

Point to corresponding area(s) on text when naming bulleted items.
I am sure that you recognize many of these items as text features, which we already know can help us to better understand what we are reading. Most of the time, we skim through a book or piece of text before we read it. And when we are taking a test, we might also skim through the text in order to find the section where we want to take a closer look for the answer.”

Lesson/Activity:
Using “Animal Ears” article, model skimming by using your index fingers placed on each side of the text (left and right sides) and quickly move your fingers simultaneously down the page, verbally noting any areas that might help give a general picture of what the text is about.
Continue to model your thinking by giving a prediction of what you think the article will be about based on skimming. I think that this article will describe how animals’ ears are different according to their environments.

Try it Out:

Distribute a copy of *Stingrays* to each student. Using the same technique I modeled for you, notice the areas that might help you get a general picture of what the passage is about. When you have finished, work with your “turn and talk” partner about what you noticed while skimming the passage. Make a prediction of what you think the article is about.

Have students read the article to compare actual contents with their predictions. Method of reading may vary (shared reading, partner reading, individual reading, teacher read-aloud, etc.)

Wrap-Up/Link to Independence:

Before you read a passage on FCAT, it would be a good idea to skim it first. This will help you get a general idea of what the passage is going to be about. It will help you get your mind ready to read it and, therefore, help with your understanding while you are reading.
Animal Ears: Adaptations for Hearing

Big Ears

The fennec fox is the smallest member of the fox family, but it has the biggest ears. It lives in the hot desert and usually hunts at night, when it is cooler. In the dark, the fox relies on its super sharp hearing to find beetles and crickets crawling across the sand.

African elephants have the biggest ears on Earth—and some of the best. They can hear low, rumbly sounds from miles away. But an elephant’s ears aren’t just good for hearing. The elephant waves its large, thin ears to cool the blood inside them. The cooled blood travels to the rest of the elephant’s body to help cool it down too.

A rabbit’s large ears catch even the most quiet sounds. The little rabbit doesn’t need to turn its head. It turns its long ears to find out where the sound is coming from. Then it quickly hops in the opposite direction.
**Underwater Ears**

Large, floppy ears could freeze in icy water. That's why a polar bear has small ears covered with thick fur. When a polar bear goes swimming, it closes its ears so water won't trickle in.

A fish doesn't need an outer ear to collect sounds. Sound vibrations easily pass right through the fish's body and are picked up inside its head.

You can tell sea lions from seals by their ears. Sea lions have little flaps for ears. Seals just have tiny ear holes that close when they dive. Both seals and sea lions have excellent hearing in and out of the water.

*Adapted from an article by Melissa Stewart*
Read the article “Stingrays” before answering Numbers 8 through 15.

Stingrays
By Claire Miller

Fishy “Pancakes”
Stingrays are pancake-shaped fish, and—you’d never guess it—they’re close cousins of sharks. The smallest species (kinds) are about the size of a dinner plate. But some 14-foot (4.2-m) stingrays live in the waters near Australia. They might be too big to fit on a bedroom floor. Now that’s a big pancake!

What’s Up?
A stingray’s eyes are on top of its flat body. A special eyelid closes over the top part of each eye in bright light. Next to each eye is a hole. Water flows into the holes and passes over gills, where oxygen is taken from it.

Where Are They?
About 170 different species of stingrays live in the oceans around the world. And some live in freshwater too. In South America, a few species swim in the Amazon and other rivers that flow into the Atlantic. One ocean species, the Atlantic stingray, also lives in the St. Johns River in Florida.
**The Flip Side**

A stingray has a mouth and nostrils on the bottom of its body. These nostrils are for smelling, not for breathing.

**How It Hunts**

When water flows into a stingray’s nostrils, the ray may pick up the smells of creatures it wants to eat. It can also find prey by sensing the tiny amount of electricity that animals give off.

Slowly, slowly the ray hunts by moving along the ocean or river bottom. When it senses a worm, clam, shrimp, or other creature, it flaps its fins until the prey is uncovered. Then the ray plops down over the prey, sucks it in, and crunches it with its small teeth.

**Sneaky Sand Snugglers**

A stingray’s flat shape helps it hide. It stirs up a cloud of sand by flapping its big, flat fins. When the sand settles down over the ray, everything is covered but its eyes, breathing holes, and sometimes its tail. Even the blue-spotted stingray—one of the few rays with bright colors—can hide from enemies that way.

**Watch That Tail!**

Its tail gave the “sting” to a stingray’s name. When a stingray is attacked by an enemy, it whips its tail around. Then a sharp stinger releases a powerful poison into the enemy.

When stingrays are on the ocean bottom, it’s easy for a diver to step on one by mistake. Then the ray usually stings the person in the ankle. The poison is very painful, and the wound may hurt for a day or two. Worse yet, pieces of the stinger can break off and infect the ankle. But stingrays don’t chase after prey or people to sting them. In fact, divers can swim among “flocks” of friendly rays without getting hurt.

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