



Improve your reading speed

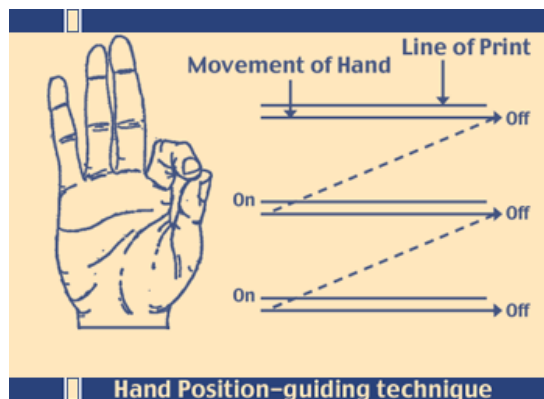
How fast do you read? Do you know how many words per minute you read? If you know how fast you read, and work on improving your speed, then you can measure your progress.

- On the back you will find a passage with numbers beside each line. Read for a minute. Look at the number beside the line you are on when the minute ends and you will see the number of words per minute you have read.

How can I improve my reading speed? Your eyes and brain are amazing. By pushing your eyes to move faster your brain will begin to work harder. Your brain does not have to see each word individually to comprehend the meaning. Consequently, you can read much faster if you train your eyes to read only the important words. It takes practice, but it is a great skill to develop.

Try it

- This section shows you how to break your slow reading habits by using your hand as a pacer. Follow through the steps and then try the technique with the passage provided either on screen or by downloading and printing a hard copy.



- **Step 1.** Hold your hand as in the diagram above, turn it over and smoothly move your hand across the page so that your three outstretched fingers are sliding just below the line of text you are reading.
- **Step 2.** Once you have mastered this movement in a relaxed and comfortable way, gradually speed up until you are going too fast to understand anything and then slow down to a normal reading speed again. Repeat this exercise a number of times.
- **Step 3.** Now try scanning two lines at a time and increasing your speed and field of vision. You can also try pacing yourself with a pen rather than your hand or experimenting with different scanning patterns.

<http://www.jcu.edu.au/studying/services/studyskills/effreading/index.html>



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| Before reading a book for detail, it is important to look at the information that can be gathered from a study of the book's cover, preface, index and table of contents | 15 31 |
| Look at the cover. Who is the author? What are the author's qualifications? | 44 |
| When and where was the book published? Is it a recent publication? Was it published in another country and so perhaps the ideas are not relevant? A book on child abuse in Britain published in England may not be relevant for an essay on child abuse in Australia. Look at the preface if there is one. The preface will outline the author's purpose. Are the ideas, as outlined in the preface, relevant to your requirements? Look at the table of contents. What are the chapter headings? Does the book contain chapters which will be of use to you? Look at the index. Are there words which look interesting and relevant? | 58 72 87 103 118 129 142 152 |
| Anderson, Durston and Poole (1969, p. 28) say that "Pre-reading is a technique that can assist you to grasp the essential points of a written passage, an article or a book, after a quick appraisal. It provides you with a systematic approach for gaining the most from your reading in the shortest amount of time." | 165 180 194 207 |
| Pre-reading will help you to become acquainted with the book's main ideas and general layout. This information will assist you in deciding whether you should begin reading in more detail. | 220 232 237 |
| Once you have decided that a piece of material is appropriate, the next step is to skim the parts you think are the most appropriate. Skimming is defined by Spache and Berg (1984, P. 39) as "the technique of allowing your eyes to travel over a page very quickly, stopping only here and there to gain an idea". Spache and Berg go on to say that when skimming you should "Read a few words in each paragraph: read the first sentence; scan the paragraph for clue words that may tell you who, what, when, where, how many, or how much; and then, perhaps, the last sentence". In particular you should be looking for the author's main arguments and any evidence used to support these arguments. | 253 266 283 299 314 329 343 358 363 |
| Scanning is the technique of "looking very quickly over a piece of reading matter to find the answer to a specific question". (Spache and Berg 1984, p. 58). Strano, Mohan and McGregor (1989, p. 129) say that scanning "is slightly more positive and specific than skimming. Scanning involves searching for particular pieces of information, facts and examples". When you are scanning you let your eye run down a page looking for a specific idea or piece of information. | 378 393 407 418 434 441 |
| Once you have selected a text or piece of material as relevant for your requirements you then need to settle down to reading, thoroughly and in detail, those chapters or sections which are most relevant to you. Underline the main points as you read so that you can quickly refer back to them. Perhaps indicate supporting evidence -in another way - red underline for main argument, blue underline for supporting arguments. Don't get carried away with your markings. They should serve as reminders when you come back to the material and allow you to make quick comparisons with other pieces of material. | 456 471 487 500 512 526 541 543 |
| You could also take notes of the most important points but keep them brief. Don't rewrite the book. Again your notes should serve as reminders for when you are developing your ideas and arguments. | 558 572 577 |

- This passage on reading is from a handout called "Improving Your Reading" by Mary Cannon, Dennis Farrugia and Terry Ryan, Diploma of Tertiary Studies, Deakin University, Australia.
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