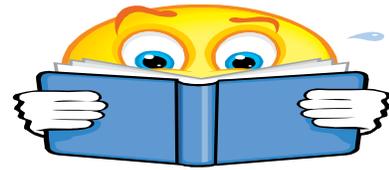




## Reading Rate Improvement



Our reading skills differ from when we were young to how we approach printed material at the college level. At this point, it is inefficient to read word by word and to treat all the material as if it were of equal importance. Some material needs to be read slowly and deliberately and other material can be skimmed or even skipped. Think of it like driving a car – You wouldn't drive in first gear down a highway, nor would you take it through town in fifth gear. You decide HOW to drive depending on the circumstances. The same is true for reading. Having a ***flexible reading rate*** is the goal.

How much you comprehend depends on many factors such as your interest level, past experiences with the topic, how well you use context clues, and whether the predictions you make while you read are confirmed. Developing all these skills affects the rate at which you can read and comprehend. Some additional factors that can interfere with reading include the difficulty level of the materials, the author's writing style, the organization of the material, disabilities, and attitude. Of this list, **attitude** is the only factor you can control so is there an adjustment that needs to be made here?

Prior to reading anything, take a few minutes to look over your materials and think about the following:

- Set a purpose to learn. Preview the material to evaluate what you know and what you still need to learn. The brain will create a readiness.
- Note areas of interest. Anticipate building concepts in these areas.
- Decide if you can skim (read briefly for an idea), scan (read briefly to find an answer) or speed read the material (comprehend a group of words at a glance).

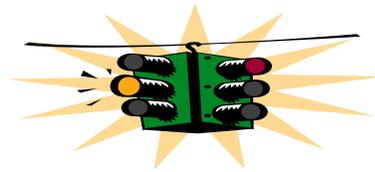
## Exercises for Improving Your Reading Rate



*Assuming* that the requisite reading skills are in place, here are some things you can do to improve your **reading speed** and **increase your flexibility** with printed material:

- **Use a piece of paper or note card as a marker** and put this *below* the line of print you are reading. Move it down the page as you read a little faster than you normally would read. This forces your eyes to move faster. If you have a habit of having your eyes jump back to a previous line, put the marker *above* the line of print your eyes are on and push them down the page a little faster than you would normally read. This will speed up your reading, too. Try both strategies and see which you like better.
- **Put a pencil line down a column in a newspaper article** of interest. Keep your eyes on that line and **have your eyes jump** from one line to another, taking in the words on either side. See if you can get the gist of what the article is about.

- **Read the first and last sentences in a paragraph.** This can give you the main ideas of the material. This technique lends itself to some subjects better than others.
- **Slowly sweep your hand over the page using it as a marker.** Basically, you use your hand as a marker. It doesn't block out the lines as effectively as a note card, but it's convenient! Remember our eyes are [attracted to motion](#).
- **Push yourself to read faster.** [Talk to yourself](#) about reading groups of words and not word by word. Reading too slowly can bore your brain.
- **Prepare for a reduction in comprehension.** This generally happens, but if you [keep practicing](#), comprehension should develop at the quicker speeds.
- **KEEP PRACTICING!** Read something that interests you for 15-20 minutes at an increased speed. [Practice will make a difference!](#)



## \*\* Put on the Brakes!

Remember the goal is to have a **flexible reading rate** so sometimes it makes sense to slow down. Those situations include:

- **Technical or unfamiliar vocabulary.** Try to use context or structural analysis to understand unknown words.
- **Complex writing styles.** Sentence and paragraph structures may be long or involved. Take time to analyze and untangle what is written.
- **New or abstract concepts.** Try to link new concepts to old ones. Higher level thinking skills requires time. Create new applications and examples.

- **Detailed material.** Decide if the details are key points or if they support main ideas. Use note cards, mnemonic devices, and other strategies mentioned in previous weeks to help you move the information into long term memory.

**BE PROACTIVE ABOUT GETTING HELP RATHER THAN REACTIVE AFTER IT  
IS TOO LATE!!!**