

The background is a collage of four quadrants. The top-left quadrant is purple and shows a stack of books. The top-right quadrant is pink and shows a clock face. The bottom-left quadrant is green and shows a stack of books. The bottom-right quadrant is yellow and shows a clock face. The text is overlaid on these images.

Reading for College

**How to read Faster
AND more effectively**

Reading for college

First, let's talk about reading speed

This is not about trying to read as *FAST* as you can . . .

. . . It is about learning to read as **effectively** as you can



Test your reading speed

- Open your text book at random;
- Put a little mark by one line;
- When I tell you to start reading, read from that mark and keep going until I say stop;
- **Don't** try to speed read. Just read normally so we can find your present reading level;
- When I say stop, stop right away and mark the end of the line where you stopped.



Test your reading speed

Okay, now for some math:

- Count the number of words in ten lines and write that down;
- now divide that number by 10. That is the average number of words per line. Write it down;
- now count the number of lines you read and write it on a piece of paper. Write it down;
- multiply that number by the number of words per line, and you have roughly how many words you read. Write down the number you get
- You read for ten minutes. Divide the total numbers of words you read by 10 and you have your words-per-minute.
- **Write it down.**

Assessing your findings

- 150 wpm Insufficient
- 250 wpm Average general reader
(too slow for college)
- 400 wpm Good general reader
(the minimum for effective college-reading)
- 600 wpm Strong college reader
- 1000 wpm Excellent



Main causes of slower reading

- word-by-word reading;
- slow perceptual reaction time, i.e., slowness of recognition;
- vocalization—habitual or for comprehension;
- Inefficient eye movements;
- Regression;
- faulty habits of attention and concentration;
- lack of practice in reading—especially large amounts;
- fear of losing comprehension;
- habitual slow reading;
- poor evaluation of which aspects are important and which are unimportant;
- the effort to remember everything rather than to remember selectively.



So now what?

- The average college student reads about 350 words per minute. A "good" reading speed is around 500 to 700 words per minute, but some people can read a thousand words per minute.

What makes the difference?

- **There are three main factors involved in improving reading speed:**

- (1) the desire to improve,
- (2) the willingness to try new techniques, and
- (3) the motivation to practice.

- **Most people can double their reading speed while still maintaining equal or even higher comprehension.**
- Warning: In order to learn to read rapidly and well you must have acquired the necessary vocabulary.
 - **When you can understand college-level materials, you are ready to practice reading faster.**

Strategies for effective reading

- **Pre-Read:** Skim the piece looking for sub-headings, images, graphs etc. Try to get a sense of what the reading is about.

You can call this **READING FOR PLOT** (like reading the end of a mystery novel before you get there);

- **Pre-think:** ask yourself some questions that this reading might answer, things on the syllabus perhaps, or from the lecture. Think **BEFORE** you read.

You can call this **CREATIVE THINKING**;

- **Read in blocks:** Read several words at once (a phrase, half a line, or a full line in textbooks with columns);
- Pause **ONLY** at the end of sections. Don't reread, but jot down what you remember at the end of each section. You can go back and reread at the end.

Don't wait for the action replay. Just read!

- **If you find yourself falling asleep--take a nap! DO NOT keep reading. It is a waste of time. Just give it up for a bit.**



A Trip Down Memory Lane

- Remember reading about “Spot” the dog?

SEE

SPOT

RUN

SPOT

LICKS

... No ... LIKES

SPOT LIKES

THE

BALL.

A Trip Down Memory Lane

- Before that you sounded letters.

R - E - M - E - M - B - E - R

okay

RE - MEM - BER

REMEMBER!!!

Tricks for successful reading

- Reading one word at a time in college is like sounding out letters or parts of words.

- It **TAKES TOO LONG**

Instead . . .

- **Read in blocks:** Read several words at once (a phrase, half a line, or a full line in textbooks with columns);

We are going to practice this



Tricks for successful reading

- Think about how much effort it takes for your eyes to focus on **EACH WORD AT A TIME!**

Let's play the focus game for a minute. Focus on something a long way away, now focus on something close up. Now look to your left and focus. Now to your right. Now close up again.

It took time for you to focus, right? That same process is occurring every time you FOCUS on a word if you read word-by-word. See??

- It **TAKES TOO LONG**

- Your eyes get **TIRED**

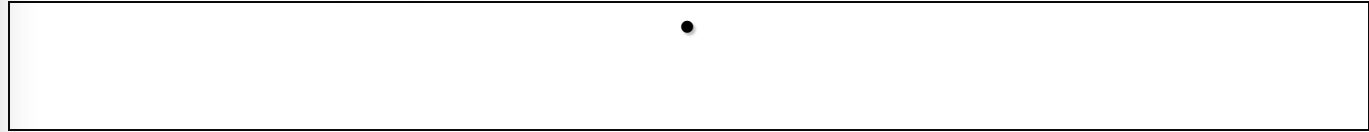
READ IN CLUMPS (clauses, phrases)

- Let your eyes settle on several words at once (a phrase, half a line, or a full line in textbooks with columns). SEE the words, but don't move your eyes or say them.

We are going to practice this

Tricks for successful reading

- Take a sheet of paper and fold it in half
- Place it under a line of text
- If the text is in columns, put a dot on the piece of paper in the middle of the line



- **As you read,**
 - move the piece of paper down the page so it is always under the line you are reading.
- **Look at the DOT**
 - and SEE the words,
 - but do not SAY them

We are going to practice this

As you read this passage quietly to yourself, certain parts of your brain are working to try to make sense of different aspects of the information contained in this text. We can actually take a picture of the activity in the brain as its owner engages in certain behaviors (using either a PET or an MRI), and the picture tells us what the brain is most active during that behavior. The outer surface of the brain (called the Neocortex) is functionally divided into lobes—the frontal lobe at the front of the head, the occipital lobe at the back of the head, the temporal lobe on the side, and the parietal lobe on the top.

Right now, as you read this passage of text, your occipital cortex is very active, processing all of the visual information you are encountering—the words, the letters, and the features of the letters. The frontal lobe of your neocortex is engaged in processing the meaning of the text you're reading—the meanings of the words, the sentences, and the big picture, and it is working to relate what you are reading with what you already know. Surprisingly, your temporal lobe (particularly

The Brain and Reading

Sebastian Wren, Ph.D.

on the left side of your brain if you're right handed) is also active right now, processing

Your brain is very structured in the way it processes information. Complex tasks such as reading a passage of text are broken down into easier tasks, and the easier tasks are distributed to the areas of the brain that

specialize in those tasks. While it is impossible at this point to describe what is happening at the cellular level in the brain, at the gross level, what seems to be happening is that the brain is analyzing text at three major levels—the visual features of the words and letters, the phonological representation of those words, and the meanings of the words and sentences. There are other parts of your

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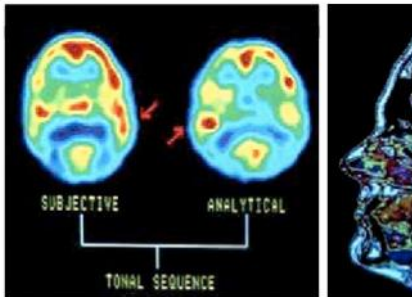
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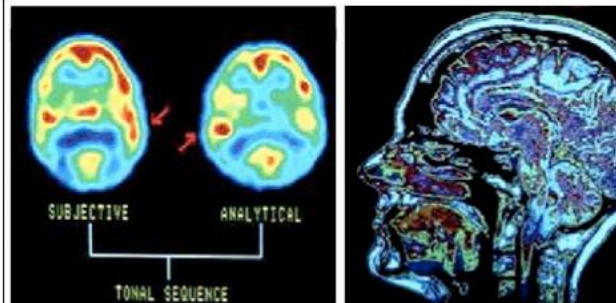
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different tasks. With an MRI (above right), magnetic fields are generated that cause the nuclei of the neurons to line up, making it possible to take a different kind of picture of the brain's activity.



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Using the eye-guide

- Move the eye-guide down the page as you read.
- One line at a time.
- Focus on the dot, and just see the words

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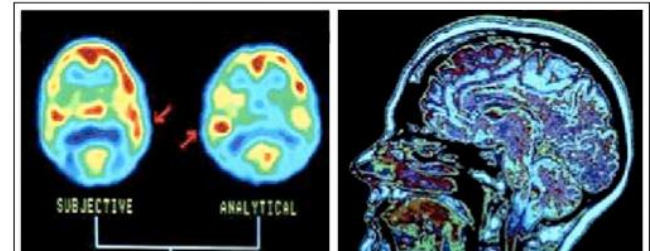
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Here are the *other* tricks

- **Vocabulary** - Wait until you've finished reading to look up unfamiliar words. (If you stop, you'll reduce your level of comprehension.)
- **Comprehension** - to improve comprehension, repeat the main points of the chapter after closing the book. See how many specific details you can recall. The more you interact with your text, the more you'll recall. Recollection and comprehension require a vigorous approach.
- **Practice 1: Skimming & Scanning** - find an interesting newspaper column or magazine article. Rapidly read the article, sampling just the first sentence or two of each paragraph and a few key words. Jot down all the facts you can remember. Then reread the article slowly, giving yourself a point for every item you can recall.

Now YOU need to practice...

The Basic Program:

- **Two or three times a day**, read something you enjoy for 15 to 20 minutes without stopping. Time yourself to within 30 seconds.
- **Record your reading rate** and chart your progress. Recording and charting are essential if you wish to make real progress.
- **Push yourself gently** as you read. If your mind wanders, get it back on track.
- **Set reading-rate goals** for yourself. Aim for a 10% increase in your reading rate over the previous record.
- **Practice skimming & scanning** by finding an interesting newspaper column or magazine article and rapidly reading the article, sampling just the first sentence or two of each paragraph and a few key words. Jot down all the facts you can remember. Then reread the article slowly, giving yourself a point for every item you can recall.
- **READ YOUR TEXTBOOKS ACTIVELY!**

REVIEW: TO ACTIVE READ YOU:

- Ask general beginning questions;
- Set a purpose by pre-viewing a chapter, and deciding what you hope to learn;
- Guide yourself through the reading by skimming first, looking at its length, sub-headings (*the plot*), images, charts and graphs, etc.;
- Make notes, highlight, and summarize AFTER the reading is done!
- **AND BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE!!!**



Okay, let's try this

- Go back to the same piece you read at the beginning.
- Take the piece of paper (***your eye guide***) and put it under the first line.
- Reread this piece,
- **Move your eye guide down the page looking at the dot and just seeing the words.**
- *I'll stop you after ten minutes.*



Okay, let's try this

- Put a mark next to the line where you stopped.
- Did you read more than the first time?

Now PRACTICE

Good luck!!!