Most Effective Speed Reading Techniques

Written by Jessica Moore
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Reading can be a slow process, and so many people avoid reading if at all possible and use other sources of entertainment. However, reading is unavoidable in daily life and is especially important in the work place and in school environments. There are methods out there that can allow you to increase your reading speed while still maintaining comprehension of the material. This is one of the most important things to keep in mind. In the pursuit of quicker reading, one should not lose the ability comprehend what they are reading. What's the point in reading quickly if you can't recall important facts from the reading or retain the information?

The art of speed reading has been fairly researched and various software and programs have been created for the purpose of teaching people to speed read. They have varying success rates, but all have one common factor: comprehension rates will decrease as the pace of reading increases. This is usually not a huge problem, unless comprehension drops to the level that you are unable to understand the reading thoroughly. Also, it is important to keep in mind that reading speed will vary depending on the on the material you are reading itself. Complex, technical manuals will require close, focused reading in order to understand each part. Obviously, the speed will decrease as a result. However, when reading novels for pleasure, it is often possible to skip over particularly verbose sections if you can determine whether or not it is integral to your understanding and enjoyment of the book. Being able to recognize which words and phrases to skip is a skill that will come with time and practice, which is the most important advice about speed reading. The methods utilized most by speed readers include skimming, meta guiding and grouping.

Skimming is the most frequently used method by speed readers, though it seems to be a natural ability as opposed to a learned ability. It is used simply by skimming over words that are unnecessary like conjunctions while allowing the eye to glance over the important words in the sentence. By glancing at the important words, the reader can pick up on the meaning and then understand the sentence. It’s obvious how this might impact comprehension but its effects don’t seem too detrimental.

Meta guiding is the usage of an object like a pen or a finger to guide one’s eyes over words. As the eyes follow the object, they also see the words on the page and allow you to pick up on the meaning. This is an easy way to try and increase reading speed. Simply by increasing the pace with which you move the object, you can increase the speed your eyes see the words and increase your reading speed.

Grouping is similar to skimming in that it requires the reader to ignore less important words and to focus on the important words. As the eyes look at a sentence, a skilled reader will quickly group together a set of words, understand what it means, then move onto another group of words. By doing this quickly in repetition, a reader can speed through large pieces of text while still maintaining comprehension. This is a difficult skill to master, and the most important thing is to practice as much as possible.

It’s evident that speed reading is a helpful skill to learn. However, it is imperative that readers ensure they do not lose comprehension for the sake of speed. The most crucial piece of advice
is to practice continually. Push yourself to read passages as fast as possible then go back and read it to see if you actually understood the content. Do this over and over, and you'll be speed reading in no time.