



Rapid Reading

The overriding goal of any rapid reading training should be to gain greater control over the rate at which one reads. The chart below presents realistic rate goals that vary according to the reader's purpose.

| <u>DEPTH</u> | <u>EXAMPLE</u> | <u>PURPOSE</u> | <u>SPEED RANGE</u> | <u>COMP. GOALS</u> |
|--|---|--|--------------------|----------------------|
| Deepest: complex or dense | Technical text, poetry, legal brief, problem solutions | Thorough mastery. No background in subject. | to 300 wpm | 90% + |
| Normal: expository, supplemental | Textbook, novel, monograph | Basic general comprehension and recall | 300-600 wpm | 70% |
| Light: general interest | Newspapers, catalogues | Enjoyment | 500 + wpm | None |
| No depth: skimming | Optional course text, library references | Overview, alternate perspective, preview | 600 + wpm | Selective, to 50% |
| No depth: scanning | Index, telephone book | Locating information | Fastest | Specifics to 100% |

How fast you read should depend upon your comprehension goal. The *less detail* you need to remember, the *faster* you should read. Conversely, the *more detail* you need to remember, the *slower* you should read.

Increasing Your Reading Speed: **Alarm Clock Reading**

Choose an easy, interesting, relatively familiar subject matter for this exercise. You do not want to be fighting your own boredom at the same time that you are trying to increase your reading speed. The simpler paperback novels based on a theme in which you are intensely interested and written in a fast-moving style lend themselves well to the development of rapid reading skills.

1. Select a novel or book of easy non-fiction. Keep the book for this purpose only.
2. Set an alarm clock or timer to go off after 15 minutes of reading.
3. Read the book as rapidly as possible until the alarm rings. Try to get the same feeling of speed you have when under class time-pressure.
4. When the alarm rings, note the number of pages you have read. For example, 5 1/4, 7 1/2, etc. Do not count the words. Now close the book.
5. Paraphrase out loud the material you have read. You will be much more conscious of the fact that you did not remember very well if you paraphrase out loud. Remember, speed without recall of what you read is useless.
6. At the next reading, strive for more rapid reading. In order to break the habit of slow, plodding reading on easy material, you must press yourself into reading at an "uncomfortable rate" at the outset. As long as comfortable rates are maintained, no gain in speed is achieved.
7. Allow your eyes to sweep rapidly along each line of print, but do not pause to reflect until a whole section has been completed.
8. Do this exercise every day. Sporadic and infrequent exercises will have little value. Keep your record up to date so you can see your progress. Try to read a few more lines each time.