



Become a Better/Faster Reader: A Time Management Strategy

Table of Reading Speeds

< 180 words per minute (wpm)	below average
180 - 240 WPM	average
240 - 350	average college level
350 - 500	above average
> 500	superior

240 WPM is reading one word at a time - your eyes need 1/4 second to fixate on a word. How fast do you read? To check your reading speed:

1. Get a book that is not too easy or not too hard, something that is about your average reading level.
2. Using your watch or a timer, read for 3 minutes.
3. Count how many lines you read during that time.
4. Count about how many words are in each line. To do that, count several lines to see how many words are in each line, then take the average.
5. Multiply the number of lines you read by the average number of words in each line.
6. Divide by 3. That's the number of words you read in a minute.

There are also many websites where you can check your reading speed – search for something like “check your reading speed” and pick one.

Tips to Become a Better/Faster Reader

- **Stop Sub-vocalizing.** Vocalizing is reading out loud, even if very quietly or only with your lips. Sub-vocalizing is reading silently but with the voice still in your head. Both can greatly slow your reading speed and reduce comprehension. Stopping is important to improving your reading. If you have a problem with vocalizing, make a conscious effort to keep your mouth closed and your tongue still while you read. Sub-vocalization can be a bit trickier, but calm yourself and practice.
- **Increase your eye span.** Eye movements are not smooth when you read, they are a series of moves and stops. Increase the number of words you read in each stop, learn to read in phrases. One word per stop is 240 words per minute (wpm), two words per stop is 480 wpm - just like that. Practice reading 2 then 3 then more words at a time. Go to this website to try some exercises:
http://www.readingtransformations.com/members_area/WidenEyeSpanEx1.html
- **Do eye exercises.** Your eyes are controlled by muscles, and like the other muscles in your body, you can make them stronger with exercise. Making your eye muscles stronger can contribute to becoming a better, faster reader by reducing muscle fatigue. And, it's fun to do.
 - *Look Thumb-to-Thumb* - Sit straight in your chair, look straight ahead, hold your arms out to your sides, and do ‘thumbs up’. Without turning your head, move your eyes back and forth looking from your left to right thumbs ten times. Eyes are tired, right?
 - *Write with Your Eyes* - Look at the wall on the far side of the room, move your eyes as you would move a pencil as if you were writing. Write in both cursive and printing.
 - *Eye Ball Squeeze* - Inhale and open your eyes and mouth as wide as you can - stretch out all your facial muscles. Exhale, close your eyes, and squeeze all your facial muscles as tightly as you can.

- **Stop Regressing.** Regressing is going forward and backward with your eyes as you read. In other words, reading words over and over. It's good to go back and consciously read over words or phrases that you didn't understand but unconscious regressing is just a bad habit which is slowing down your reading speed and reducing your comprehension. To see if you regress, get a pacer (such as a card, your finger, or the end of a pencil) and use it to pull your eyes moving forward as you read. Can you feel your eyes trying to go back? That means you've been regressing. Now work on breaking that bad habit!
- **Adjust your Reading Style to your Reading Material.** Not everything should be read the same. Just as you don't wear the same pair of shoes for every occasion – you shouldn't read everything the same way.
 - **Skim** – run your eyes over quickly over the material, to get the gist
 - **Scan** – look for a particular piece of information such as a date or place
 - **Extensive reading** - for pleasure and needing global understanding, can be faster, without worrying about memorizing
 - **Intensive reading** – for extracting specific information, requires more thoughtful and accurate reading for detail



Skimming is used to quickly identify the main ideas of a text. Most people skim 3 to 4 times faster than normal reading. People often skim when they have lots of material to read in a limited amount of time.

- Read the first and last paragraphs using headings, summaries and other organizers as you move down the page or screen.
- Read the title, subtitles, subheadings, and illustrations.
- Read the first sentence of each paragraph.

Scanning is a technique you often use when looking for a specific piece of information. You search for key words, phrases, or ideas. In most cases, you know what you're looking for, so you're concentrating on finding a particular answer.

- Move your eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words and phrases.
- Look for the author's use of organizers such as numbers, letters, steps, or the words, first, second, or next.
- Look for words that are bold faced, italics, or in a different font size, style, or color. Sometimes the author will put key ideas in the margin.
- Move your eyes across the page to locate key words or phrases. Beginning in the top left-hand corner of the page, move your eyes from left to right in an 'z' shaped motion. Allow your eyes to focus only on the key words of the text. Filler words like 'the', 'it', 'and' and so on can be ignored.



Pick 3 of the above reading tips that sound like something that would help you. Write them down below along with how and when you will incorporate them into your Becoming a More Successful Student Plan.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING. I can become a better, faster reader by practicing certain key points and thinking about how I read. There are different ways to read different things and paying attention to that will make me a more efficient reader which will make better use of my time. Reading well is key to being a successful student and I am well on my way to becoming a stronger, better reader. I love to read and this is going to make a difference in my success at school.