

Learn How to Speed Read

Terry Pearce



TERRY PEARCE

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: TERRY PEARCE



In 2005, after a career in learning and development in the NHS and in telecoms, Terry Pearce founded learning design specialists, 360 Learning Design. Since then, he's helped thousands of learners from a variety of well-known and successful organisations (Thames Water, Zurich, Barclays, Imperial College Hospital and YouGov, among others) to improve their communication, their approaches, and their results.

Terry's passion is deconstructing the complex, taking deep or unfamiliar management and personal effectiveness topics and creating practical, engaging learning materials with strong visual and interactive elements. His focus is on everyday practicalities and making a difference in the day-to-day working lives of his learners and readers. His learning materials have won awards from NHS agencies and award schemes and major learning organisations (Reed Learning).

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1 INTRODUCTION

Most people would like to read more quickly. Whether reports, legal documents, articles or just emails, the more you have to read, the more time it takes out of your day. Any increase in reading speed will pay back time with every document, possibly forever. So it's understandable that Speed Reading techniques have been popular since they were first publicised in the 1950s. But Speed Reading has its detractors, who argue that there are physiological limits to reading speed, and that comprehension must suffer.

In this book, we will explore how most people read, what techniques are available to adapt and improve your reading, which tools work, and how they can be used to make real gains. Along the way, we'll test your progress so you can see how the tools work for you.

1.1 CAN I REALLY LEARN TO READ FASTER?

This is a very reasonable question. It probably seems to most people that reading speed is fairly set and 'natural' in some way, like walking speed. You may have some concerns about whether reading faster is really reading, or whether it's just skimming on the detail. You may have read some claims around reading speeds that seem improbable, or you may have read some articles that claim to 'debunk' speed reading.

In fact, the walking analogy is a good one. Could you actually learn to walk faster? Well, unless you've already consciously or unconsciously pushed your walking speed to your physical maximum, the answer is yes. You already probably do walk a little faster when you're late. Could you make this speed, or even a faster one, your new normal walking speed? It would be difficult, because the way you walk has become second nature to you. Your unconscious mind controls it, so that your conscious mind can focus on other things. To change your 'default', unconscious speed, you'd need to unlearn your habits and relearn the new normal, making it unconscious again, which would take time, patience and effort.

Depending how far you pushed it, you might be at risk of tripping or stumbling. You might miss some of the scenery or miss some important detail around you that you'd rather have seen. If you pushed it far enough, you might start to wonder whether you were still walking at all, or whether you were now running.

All these things apply to speeding up your reading. The evidence suggests you can almost certainly improve it (depending where you are right now), but there are costs and difficulties, trade-offs and limits.

1.2 WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS ABOUT SPEED READING

From the 1950s, up until quite recently, speed reading has grown into a highly profitable and widespread industry. Books and courses such as those published by Tony Buzan and Peter Kemp have gained millions of devotees. In these books and courses, famous speed readers were held up as examples of what could be achieved: JFK reading at 1200 words per minute. A lady named Anne Jones reading the final Harry Potter volume in 47 minutes.

As a result, speed reading has gone from strength to strength. Many influential publications such as *Wired* magazine and the *New York Times* have published articles recommending it to readers. But more recently, studies and expert opinion pieces such as the work of Rayner (2004) and Rayner and Schotter (2014) have questioned some of the claims surrounding speed reading, and prompted a flurry of articles with titles like ‘Sorry, you can’t Speed Read’ (*New York Times*) and ‘Sorry, but Speed Reading won’t Help You Read More’ (*Wired*). Many of these cast doubt on some of the more impressive claims of speed reading courses and books, based on new information about how the eye moves, and scientific studies of speed readers in action.

As is often the case, a careful look at the evidence reveals that the truth is somewhere in the middle. The claims of many speed reading books and courses do seem to have been exaggerated. This is hardly surprising when the authors had something to sell. But recent responses have tried to tear down the whole idea of speed reading, claiming that nobody can improve their reading speed significantly, that speed reading isn’t really reading at all, and that it comes with an unacceptable loss in comprehension. This position goes too far, and isn’t supported by the studies in question.

Let’s look at some of the key parts of the argument, with claim, counter-claim, and reality.

Top Speeds

Claim: Speeds of 1,000 wpm plus are achievable by anyone, and speeds considerably higher than this are possible with little if any loss of comprehension.

Counter-Claim: The limitations of how the eye moves across the page mean that there is an effective 'speed limit' (Wired claim this may be as low as 280 wpm for proper reading)

Reality: Claims that most adults can easily boost their reading speed above 1000 words per minute with no significant loss in comprehension are not supported by the evidence, and expert opinions about the science of eye movement do appear to place an upper limit on reading speed (with reasonable comprehension) for most people in most situations.

But Keith Rayner himself (the expert on whose studies many 'debunking' articles are based) says that:

- Adults can push their reading speeds +to 'just over 500 wpm'
- 95% of all college-level readers read at between 200 and 400 wpm

A 1985 study by Ronald Carver that's also much-quoted suggests that 600 wpm with 75% comprehension may be achievable for most people.

Not everybody is a college level reader anyway, but if the gap between the slowest and the fastest readers is anything like 200 versus 500 wpm – the fastest being two-and-a-half times as quick as the slowest even at college level – it follows that, unless you're already comfortably in the top end of this, you can increase your speed significantly. Most people would be happy with reading two and a half times as much material in the time available. And even if you're above average – say you read at 350 wpm – an increase to just over 500 wpm could mean reading almost 50% more material.

'Reading' Versus 'Skimming'

Claim: Very fast reading can come at almost no cost to comprehension, or can even help comprehension.

Counter-Claim: Very fast reading, beyond 400-600 wpm, is really just 'skimming', and not reading at all, and comes with serious consequences to comprehension.

Reality: The studies that have been carried out seem to support the idea that reading at speeds of 400-600 words per minute or more generally leads to markedly worse comprehension.

We can't rule out the idea that trained and decades-practiced speed readers such as Anne Jones have effectively retrained their brains to work differently (although eye movement speed limits would still seem to be difficult if not impossible to overcome).

But reading speeds of 500 wpm+ would be a great tool for many people and well worth learning. On top of that, dismissing faster reading speeds as 'not reading' misses a key point. It carries an assumption that everyone wants the same things from reading, and needs the same level of comprehension or recall. A moment's thought will tell you that this isn't true. So long as the trade-off between comprehension and speed is acknowledged, the skill of reading at higher speeds while understanding or being able to recall as much as possible (which for some speeds won't be everything) is a valuable skill, and one worth learning for many people.

Other myths around speed reading are around, on both sides of the argument. Throughout this book, where a myth about speed reading is persistent and relevant, I'll cover the myth and reality in a box separate to the main text.

1.3 SO, I REALLY CAN LEARN TO READ FASTER?

In short: yes. Most of us learned bad habits when we started to read, or stopped learning new techniques before we'd learned everything there is to know. The extreme claims of some speed reading courses promising thousands of words per minute are probably impossible, or at least unrealistic for most. But unless you're already reading at 500-600 wpm with very good comprehension, you can improve significantly with practice and by using a set of proven tools or techniques, such as the ones in this book.

In this book, I'll finish most chapters by summarising the tool or tools that chapter introduced, and I'll end the book by listing all the tools you'll have learned.

Keep in mind, though, that the only way to make gains on a long-term basis is by practising regularly with the tools, not just by reading about them once and then going back to how you've always done things.

1.4 TRACKING YOUR PROGRESS

A good way to see how you're progressing is to test yourself. Many speed reading courses and books provide tests, but some of the testing methods have been criticised. For example, some unscrupulous practitioners make the test texts or comprehension questions get progressively easier. For that reason, I recommend you take the tests I give you in a random order.

First Test

At various points throughout the book, you'll be asked to take a test to check your progress. Here's what you should do:

1. Choose one of the articles listed below at random.
2. Set a stopwatch going on your phone or find one online – hit 'start' and start reading the article; hit 'stop' when you finish.
3. Find your words per second by taking the number of words in the test article and dividing it by the number of seconds (if you took 2 minutes 30 seconds, you took 150 seconds). Then multiply this by sixty to get your words per minute (wpm).
4. Check your comprehension via the test in Appendix I and find your % comprehension score. Each comprehension test is evenly divided between 'detail' questions and 'gist' questions.

For the tests, I've used articles from my blog, because I can rely on them not being changed. You may or may not find them interesting (I hope you will), but the key thing is you should find them all roughly equally interesting and difficult, so the tests should measure progress, especially if you do them in a random order.

Here are the articles:

- A. Five ways to use the power of anchors in learning (917 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/five-ways-to-use-the-power-of-anchors-in-learning/>
- B. Leaping the hot-cold empathy gap to aid learning (785 words)
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- C. Handling behaviour change barriers: Yes, it applies to you (991 words)
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- D. Stephen Covey's 'Seven Habits' in the 21st Century (973 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/covey-in-the-21st-century-seven-habits-now/>
- E. Framing and communication: Choose your words carefully (893 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/framing-it-right/>

So, before we go any further, you should do your first test now, to see where you are before we look into speed reading techniques and tools. Try to do the test in a fairly ‘normal’ way for you – if you usually try to read quite quickly then by all means do so, but if you normally read at a measured pace, do that.

Whatever your score on wpm and comprehension, don’t worry too much about it – it’s just a benchmark – record it so that you can compare it to later results using the tools and ideas we cover.

2 THE RIGHT APPROACH FOR SPEED READING

Most of what we'll cover in this book constitutes a speed-reading toolkit – a range of different techniques that you can use each on their own or in combination to improve your reading speed. Some of them are more or less universal and will help across most kinds of reading. Others are specific to certain reading situations or challenges.

But before you start using specific tools, it's helpful to have the right overall approach, because this will affect which tools you select, and how useful each and every one is. Knowing how to use a spanner or screwdriver isn't much use if you don't know what you're trying to make, or don't care much about the job.

2.1 WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 'READING'?

Most of us make an assumption about what reading is. We follow the lines and read all the words, at a minimum. Some books or articles about speed reading will tell you that reading is only reading if you have good comprehension. But really, reading is **whatever you say it is**, for your given situation. The important thing is to make a conscious choice about what **you** mean by wanting to read this document, in this situation. This is much better than having one approach all the time, or following blindly along with what you think you should do, what you've always done, or what others do.

2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF GOAL FOCUS

Your biggest question—that you should ask with every single thing you read—should be: what do I want to get from reading this? What's my goal?

Your goal could be any of the ones suggested in the table on the following page, in **Figure 2.2**: Reading goals by order of intensity.

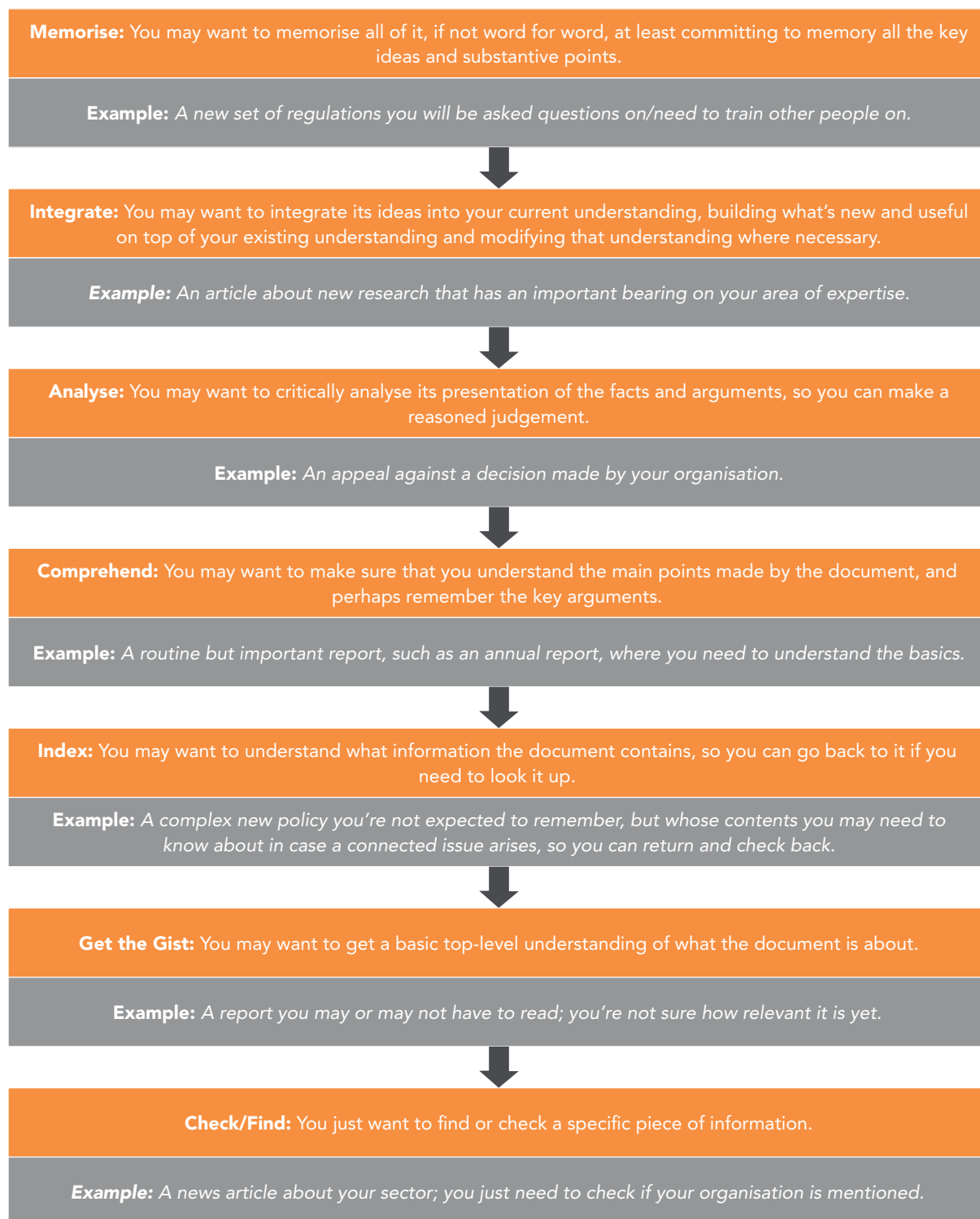


Figure 2.2: Reading goals by order of intensity

The order of intensity, from top to bottom, implies that it takes more time and effort to **memorise**, for example, than to **get the gist**. We could waste a lot of time by being too high up this list. The most important part of reading mindset is being really clear what

you want to get from reading and not reading at a more intensive level, wasting energy to achieve a goal with no value to you.

Many of us default to **‘integrate’**, **‘analyse’** or **‘comprehend’**, but that’s not always right, as the examples show. And within one document, you may need have different goals for different parts.

Example: I’m reading a book on techniques for interviewers and recruiters. The book contains some chapters on the wider recruitment process (advertising, onboarding, etc.) as well as the actual interviews. But I won’t be handling anything except the interview itself. I’d probably need to **analyse** or **integrate** the most relevant chapters, but maybe only **index** – or maybe even skip entirely – the other chapters. Even within those chapters I’m interested in, if I see that one concerns a technique we don’t use, or one I’m already familiar with, I may want to adjust my goals for that chapter.

This may sound easy, but everyone who hasn’t paid consistent, conscious attention to their goal as an idea over a period of time will sometimes slip to their default goal and read at the wrong level. It’s so easy to do when you’re getting caught up in (or bored by) the content.

Tool #1: Decide your goal up front and keep it in mind

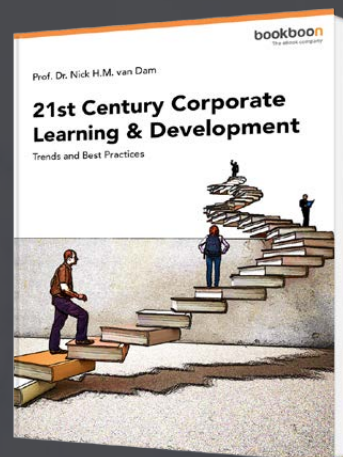
2.3 HOW THE RIGHT MINDSET CAN HELP



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What do you love reading? Imagine yourself reading the thing in the world you love most. How are you sat (or stood)? How do you feel? How do your eyes travel across the page? How much interest can you maintain? For how long? How do your motivation levels affect how much you take in?

Now imagine yourself reading the thing you hate most. The dullest, most boring or annoying thing out there. How are you sat now? How do you feel? What are your eyes doing? What are your interest levels? How much can you take in, for how long?

When we actively engage with writing, several things happen:

- We tend to read at a slightly faster pace
- We tend to make sure we comprehend, rather than just ‘tick-boxing’ the fact that our eyes have passed over each word
- We tend to make better conceptual models of what we’re reading, going beyond just reading the words to linking concepts together and engaging critical faculties, which helps with speed and comprehension (see Chapter 6)
- We tend to have better posture and be able to read for longer before concentration levels drop, and with them speed and comprehension levels (see Chapter 7)

You may object that you don’t always have control over what you read. However, you do always have at least some control over your attitude and mindset towards it.

When I was seventeen, I remember being very disillusioned about my Geography A-Level. I’d thought it would be about far-flung places and exciting cultures. Instead, our study programme was typified by our first-year project, which was about whether Skipton in North Yorkshire should have a new Marks & Spencer or not (apologies to anyone who thinks this sounds exciting—it takes all sorts). When a friend and I used to get together to do our Geography homework (the night before it was due in, because we’d put it off as long as possible), we’d complain endlessly about how boring it all was: about our textbooks, our teachers, our curriculum. We’d ask ourselves why we had to do this, and how much longer it would take.

Of course, it took ages, partly because we were moaning when we could have been getting on with work, but partly because we were giving free rein to our negative mindset about the topic, and this was slowing us down. We found it harder to focus, slower; we slouched and lounged; we lost our places.

There was no magic wand to turn our Geography course sexy, but we could have done something to help our reading speed and comprehension. We could have tried:

- Combating negative self-talk with positive self-talk
- Focusing on goals to get from the texts and how to get them
- Motivating with rewards
- Not dwelling on the difficulty
- Doing the reading when more fresh and alert

Everybody's self-talk and mindset is individual, so the most effective techniques may differ. But everyone can choose to dwell on, accept or even exacerbate demotivating factors, or instead move past them to focus on and bring out positive motivation. Do this, and you'll make a real difference to reading speed and comprehension.

Tool #2: Make an effort to get yourself into a positive mindset about what you're reading

3 CHANGING HOW YOUR EYES WORK THE PAGE

3.1 HOW YOU READ NOW

Try to become aware of how you're reading this text, right now, without changing how you read it. It's more difficult than it sounds; to use the walking analogy again, if you start thinking too hard about how you walk, you may well find yourself walking oddly or having more difficulty than usual. But try to let your eyes read the page as normal while you take some notice of what they're doing. If you're like most people (i.e. unless you're already using some of the techniques of speed reading), you'll probably notice:

- Your eyes move in 'skips' (called **saccades**)
- These saccades are probably quite short, and the 'chunks' of text they take in may be only one word (or even one part of a word) at a time, or may seem fairly random
- Your eyes probably skip backwards and upwards sometimes as well as forwards (known as **backskipping**)
- You may not feel any particular sense of rhythm or pace

Most of these can hamper reading speed, and you can improve by stopping or changing these habits. Shortly, we'll look at how, but I'd like to say a word here about the idea of thinking about how you're reading, while you're reading.

When you read, there are two things going on for your brain: content, and process. Take this excerpt from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*:

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, "and what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"

In terms of **content**, what's going on in your brain as you read this is Alice, getting bored, her sister reading, and some details about the book.

In terms of **process**, what's going on in your conscious brain if you're not focusing on how you're reading it is: nothing at all. Your unconscious brain handles reading, just like it handles walking. But if you start to think about how you're reading, your conscious brain now has to handle information about **how you're reading**, as well as all that stuff about Alice.

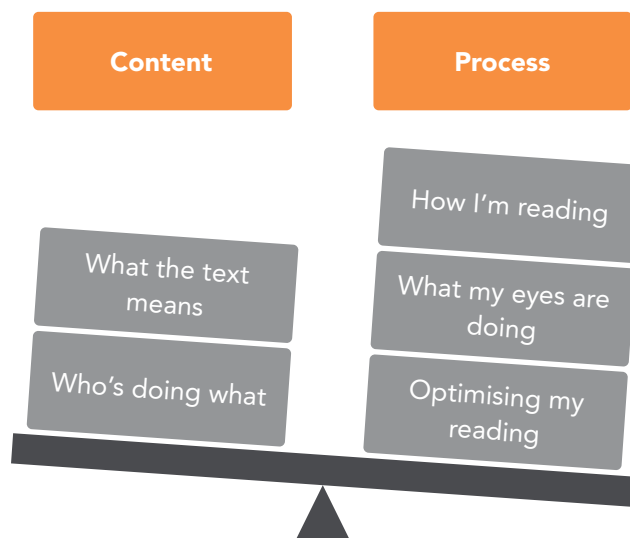


Figure 3.1: Content and process in reading

Why is this important? If you don't take some conscious notice of and effort to change how you're reading, you won't be able to improve very easily. But while you're doing so, you may find things get tougher. Your speed and your comprehension may suffer, because you're asking your brain to do two things at once. But if you keep on unpicking bad habits and learning new ones, the new ones will eventually get handled by your unconscious brain. Just like, if you drive, your unconscious brain learned to handle routine driving, meaning you don't now consciously think about changing gears, checking your mirrors, or indicating.

Tool #3: Review your existing reading process consciously to identify how to improve

Tool #4: Practice good techniques until they become unconscious

3.2 USING BIGGER CHUNKS TO READ FASTER

Your 'skips' or **saccades** move between 'chunks' of text, and the size of these chunks is important. If you can skip between bigger chunks, you will save time and speed up. There is a limit to how big these chunks can be, because the focal area of your eye is smaller than you might think. Sharp focus is about the width of your thumb held an arm's length away, but the less sharp focus area around this can still be used for reading, particularly if you have an idea what words might be there (more on this in Chapter 6). For now, the key thing is to make sure your chunks are not too small. If your chunks are only one word long, or less with longer words, you're not making best use of your saccades.

In **Figure 3.2** you'll find some words and phrases. Start with the column on the left, with the word 'today'. Focus your eyes on the centre of the word, and don't move them to either side. Take in the whole word and its meaning without moving your eyes. Then move down (not across) the column, doing the same with each word or phrase. When you get to the bottom, start at the top of the next column.

As you reach longer phrases you'll be tempted to move your eyes, but try to take in every phrase by just focusing on the centre. If you have normal vision and a reasonable understanding of English, you should be able to do most or all of the phrases, if not at the first try, after a little practice.

today	how was it?	recruitment process
whale	I don't care	taking it too seriously
sunset	easy does it	a number of options
follow	estate agent	the tallest skyscraper
armband	piece of cake	different languages
manhunt	broken ankle	please leave me alone
takeover	hard to handle	it was the best of times
objected	new information	where did you find him?
lifeguard	tired and hungry	does this look big on me?
shipwreck	over the rainbow	what's the weather like?
easy to use	how many times?	until the fat lady sings
up and over	watching and waiting	are we finished yet?

Figure 3.2: Practice material for working with bigger chunks of text

Congratulations, you're developing a key speed reading skill.

However, studies by Rayner (2004 & 2016) and Kuperman & Van Dyke (2011) suggest that the size of your chunk in practice is hard to control in any sense of word or letter length or centimetres, but will instead be dictated by the length of text that creates some kind of meaning.

the tallest skyscraper

...is plausible in one saccade, but:

set protract justifying

...(three unconnected words with the same lengths) may not easily be. That's fine – we'll work on that in Chapter 6. For now, and as you read on in this book and anywhere else, try not to limit your chunks to individual words or partial words.

Tool #5: Take in bigger chunks with each eye movement, whenever you can

3.3 AVOIDING BACKSKIPPING TO IMPROVE READING SPEED

Whenever our eyes make a saccade to somewhere we've already read rather than the next chunk, we're backskipping. Sometimes backskipping is necessary; we didn't fully understand something first time, so we're reviewing, or linking new ideas to previous ones. But sometimes it's a comfort blanket, and is unnecessary and wasteful.

The big thing that makes the difference is (as we looked at in Chapter 2.2): what are your reading goals? For the more intense reading goals such as **memorise**, **integrate** or **analyse**, some backskipping may well be useful. But for less intense ones such as **index** or **get the gist**, it's usually overdoing things. And even for some of the more intense goals, we should make sure we're only doing it when we need to for comprehension.

However, backskipping can be involuntary and habitual, so it's probably worth spending some time training yourself how to read without. You can do this by using a card, a piece of paper, your finger or a pen, to cover up what you've already read. Try this out regularly or on all your reading (including this book) for a while and see how it works. You may be surprised by how little it affects comprehension. Once you've made it something you can do relatively easily, you should find you continue to do it less (or not at all) even when you stop using the card.

Again though, in practice, if your reading goals are at the more intense end of the scale and you feel you need to backskip, go for it.

Tool #6: Avoid backskipping unless you need to – use a card to train yourself how

3.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

It's time to see how you're doing using the tools we've covered so far. Those tools are:

Tool #1: Decide your goal up front and keep it in mind

Tool #2: Make an effort to get yourself into a positive mindset about what you're reading

Tool #3: At first, review your reading 'process' or technique consciously to identify how to improve

Tool #4: Practice good techniques until they become unconscious

Tool #5: Take in bigger chunks with each eye movement, whenever you can

Tool #6: Avoid backskipping unless you need to – use a card to train yourself how

That may seem like a lot, but Tool #3 and Tool #4 are more general pointers for improvement over the early stages of learning to speed read. It's mainly Tool #5 and Tool #6 that I'd recommend you focus on when you do the next test.

If you want to also use Tools #1 and #2, your goal (Tool #1) should probably be to 'comprehend' the text (understand the main points made by the document, and perhaps remember the key arguments), because that's what you'll be tested on, and I hope you can get into a positive mindset (Tool #2) for your first try with your new tools.

Second Test

You will find it helpful to prepare for the test by practising with the tools you're going to try, on the text you've already read in this book, or the article from the list below you've already read, or in fact any piece of text.

When you're ready, here's what to do.

1. Choose one of the articles listed below at random (a different one to last time).
2. Set a stopwatch going on your phone or find one online – hit 'start' and start reading the article; hit 'stop' when you finish.
3. Find your words per second by taking the number of words in the test article and dividing it by the number of seconds (if you took 2 minutes 30 seconds, you took 150 seconds). Then multiply this by sixty to get your words per minute (wpm).
4. Check your comprehension via the test in Appendix I and find your % comprehension score. Each comprehension test is evenly divided between 'detail' questions and 'gist' questions.

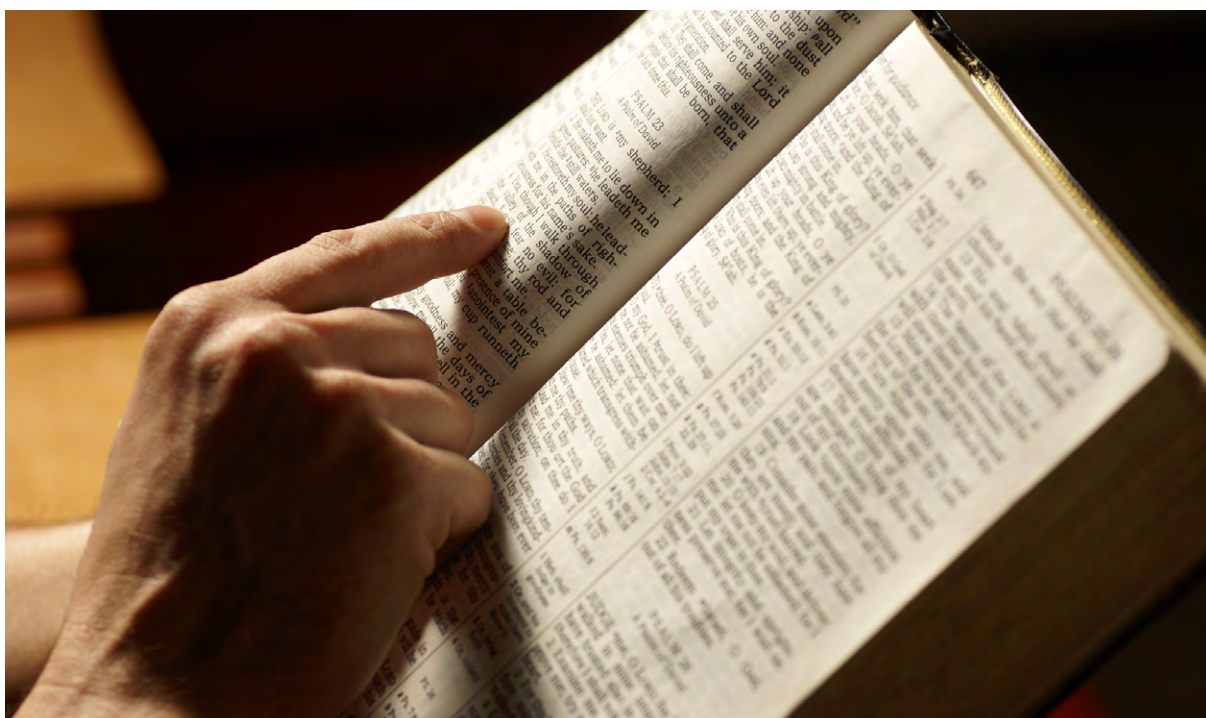
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<http://360learningdesign.com/framing-it-right/>

How did you do? Don't worry if you didn't see an improvement; as we discussed earlier, when using new techniques you can get slowed down by the fact your brain is spending power on the process of reading. If you improved your speed but at a cost in comprehension, that's also perfectly normal at this point for the same reasons. Keep practising, and as the tools become second nature, comprehension should rise again. If you improved on both, well done.

Whatever the case, keep hold of your scores so you can compare them to your score on the next test, after we've introduced some more tools.

4 CONTROLLING THE PATH YOUR EYES TAKE

4.1 USING A GUIDE TO MODERATE READING SPEED AND FOCUS



When we learn to read as a child, we keep our place with our finger. When we gain confidence, we see this as childish and take our finger away. But there is evidence to suggest that using a guide (not necessarily a finger) can help us with better reading practices. When we don't use a guide, we:

- Lack control over our pace
- Lack control over where we want to focus, and for how long
- Lose where we were easily, especially when we move to the next line
- Slip into backskipping more easily

Whereas some kind of guide on the page can help us:

- Control and push our pace
- Control our focus, for example the size of our 'chunks' and longer or shorter focus on more or less important parts
- Save valuable seconds by keeping our place, particularly when we move to the next line of text
- Avoid backskipping

Some people find that a guide helps more at the early stages of learning to read faster, and they may later stop using it as the habits become unconscious. But it's definitely worth practising with for a while to help you get into good habits and exert some control. You could use:

- A pen
- Your finger
- The edge or corner of a card or bookmark

Some people like to use the guide to move along the line and control pace and focus in a precise way, others just like to move it down the left hand side to control pace more generally and keep track of the next line to move down to. Try it out in different ways and see what works best for you. And remember, don't give up if it seems odd or even seems to slow you down or confuse you at first – it will seem more natural as it becomes less conscious.

Tool #7: Use a guide to control where you focus and where and when your eyes move



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4.2 SETTING RHYTHM AND PACE WHEN READING

Your pace can vary for all kinds of reasons, good and bad.

Good	Bad
You want to slow down because a particular part is harder going or ultra-important	Your motivation or energy is slipping or you're getting distracted
You want to speed up because a particular part is easier going, unimportant or repetitive	Your mind is wandering
	Essentially random variations or variations for no reason

Figure 4.2: Good and bad reasons for varying your pace.

We'll talk more about how to vary things deliberately for good reasons, but setting a rhythm is about minimising variations for bad reasons. A sense of rhythm can help us maintain a good pace over a period of time, like runners do. Practice it now – as you read on, with your guide, try to maintain a steady rhythm and a good, quick pace.

A guide helps us do this on its own. But some people try to increase their pace with a metronome (you can easily find free ones online), changing the timing of the metronome so that one beat is about as long as it takes to read a line, and then over time increasing the speed on the metronome and trying to keep pace with it. This can be useful for practice, but if you increase it too much you will be trading some comprehension for your speed gains.

Tool #8: Try to set a steady, rhythmic pace, and push that pace a little

4.3 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

It's time to see how you're doing using the tools we've covered so far. As well as the tools we covered before your last test:

Tool #1: Decide your goal up front and keep it in mind

Tool #2: Make an effort to get yourself into a positive mindset about what you're reading

Tool #3: At first, review your reading 'process' or technique consciously to identify how to improve

Tool #4: Practice good techniques until they become unconscious

Tool #5: Take in bigger chunks with each eye movement, whenever you can

Tool #6: Avoid backskipping unless you need to – use a card to train yourself how

...we've also covered two more:

Tool #7: Use a guide to control where you focus and where and when your eyes move

Tool #8: Try to set a steady, rhythmic pace, and push that pace a little

You should be able to use both of these in the next test, as well as continuing to use one or two of the tools (particularly #5 and #6) from before. If that seems like too many, just focus on the one or ones you feel could work best for you, for now.

Third Test

I'd strongly recommend preparing for the test by practising: on the text you've already read in this book, or the articles from the list below you've already read, or in fact any piece of text. If you go straight from reading about the tools to trying them in the test without practising in between, you won't do as well.

In case you've forgotten, here's what to do.

1. Choose one of the articles listed below at random (a different one to last time).
2. Set a stopwatch going on your phone or find one online – hit 'start' and start reading the article; hit 'stop' when you finish.
3. Find your words per second by taking the number of words in the test article and dividing it by the number of seconds (if you took 2 minutes 30 seconds, you took 150 seconds). Then multiply this by sixty to get your words per minute (wpm).
4. Check your comprehension via the test in Appendix I and find your % comprehension score. Each comprehension test is evenly divided between 'detail' questions and 'gist' questions.

- A. Five ways to use the power of anchors in learning (917 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/five-ways-to-use-the-power-of-anchors-in-learning/>
- B. Leaping the hot-cold empathy gap to aid learning (785 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/leaping-the-hot-cold-empathy-gap-to-aid-learning/>
- C. Handling behaviour change barriers: Yes, it applies to you (991 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/yes-it-applies-to-you/>
- D. Stephen Covey's 'Seven Habits' in the 21st Century (973 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/covey-in-the-21st-century-seven-habits-now/>
- E. Framing and communication: Choose your words carefully (893 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/framing-it-right/>

How did you do? Don't worry if you didn't see an improvement; as we discussed earlier, when using new techniques you can get slowed down by the fact your brain is spending power on the process of reading. If you improved your speed but at a cost in comprehension, that's also perfectly normal at this point for the same reasons. Keep practising, and as the tools become second nature, comprehension should rise again. If you improved on both, well done.

Whatever the case, keep hold of your scores so you can compare them to your score on the fourth test, after we've introduced some more tools.

5 SCANNING AND SKIMMING

So far, the tools and techniques we've talked about have been based on the idea of trying to read all the words – skills that generally suit the more intense end of the reading goal scale, where you want to get a lot of information from the text.

Two techniques that can be more suited to lower-intensity goals like **indexing**, **getting the gist**, or **check/find**, are scanning and skimming.

5.1 SCANNING TEXTS FOR KEY INFORMATION

We defined the **check/find** reading goal as 'you just want to find a specific piece of information'. Sounds easy, right? What could go wrong?

What goes wrong for most people is that they get caught up – whether or not they find the text interesting – in reading word after word and sentence after sentence. It's such a habit to read this way that it's really easy to slip back into it. So there is a skill to scanning, which is the art of discarding everything but what you're looking for. It's a skill in three parts:

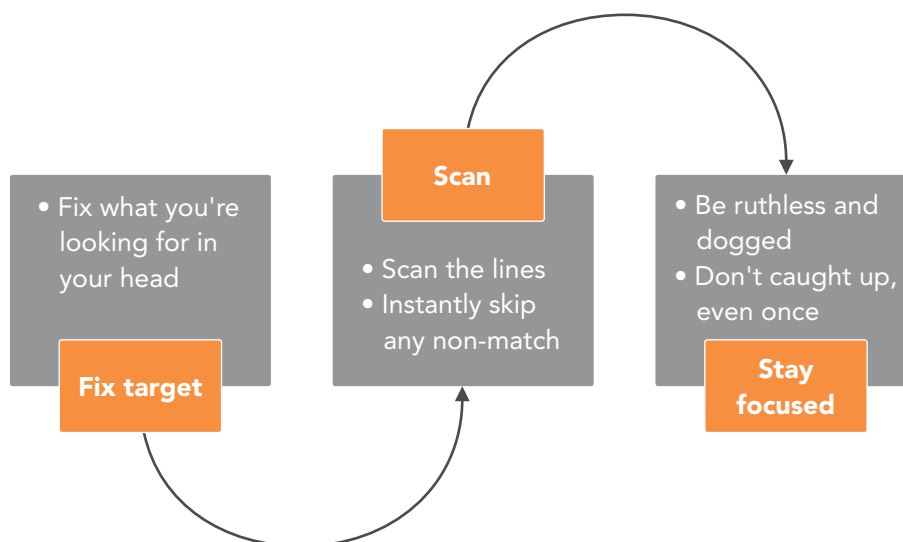


Figure 5.1: Three steps for effective scanning

Do some practice now. For each article linked below, scan for the relevant piece of information.

<http://360learningdesign.com/babies-and-bathwater-and-bad-interview-questions/>

Scan for: the author's opinion on how to test for 'handling pressure' skills at interview

<http://360learningdesign.com/making-better-estimates-the-planning-fallacy/>

Scan for: the amount the Scottish Parliament exceeded budget by

<http://360learningdesign.com/whats-in-a-name-getting-the-right-title/>

Scan for: the author's preferred title for Stress Management courses

On this last one, you might have discovered a shortcut: when subheadings are used, we may be able to scan those first to see where our information is most likely to be. We can do the same with the first sentence of each paragraph, if the piece is well-written.

Tool #9: Scan by fixing your target in your head and being ruthless about discarding all else

5.2 SKIMMING TEXTS FOR AN OVERVIEW

If our reading goal is:

- **get the gist** (get a basic top-level understanding)
- **index** (understand what the document contains, so you can go back to it)
- **comprehend** (understand the main points and perhaps remember the key arguments)

...then we may need to skim some or all of the text. Skimming is when we miss or only vaguely take in (‘skim’ over) words, chunks, or even sentences, paragraphs or whole sections. But how do you know which parts to skim over?

There's no exact science to this. You are looking to quickly reckon the importance or usefulness of parts of the text, and make very quick decisions about whether to read that part in a little more depth or not. Some general tips include:

- Read the first line of paragraphs and decide whether to read or skip the rest
- Check headings of any kind and decide whether to read or skip that section
- With any part, ask: how packed with vital meaning is this?
- Skip anything that seems redundant or repetitive
- Look out for summaries, indexes and diagrams (you may be able to read them instead of whole sections—for example many of the diagrams in this book would give a fairly good idea if read instead of the section in which they appear)
- With large blocks of text that you decide not to read more fully, let your eyes ‘flow’ over it without reading word for word; look for key or repeated words or themes

It's a set of techniques that improve with practice. The more you practice this the easier it gets. A useful idea here is that anything can always be summarised in more or less detail. As an example, there's a famous Woody Allen joke about speed reading:

'I took a speed reading course, and was able to read 'War and Peace' in twenty minutes. It's about Russia.'

This is often used to criticise speed reading, but actually, if Woody Allen had no idea what War and Peace was about before reading it, this would be a good post-skimming summary of one short line. Or, if he skim-read it in a tiny bit more detail, he could probably get a slightly more detailed summary.

- It's about Russia
- It's about the French invasion of Russia
- It's about the French invasion of Russia and the impact of the Napoleonic era on Tsarist society through the stories of five Russian aristocratic families

Obviously, the reason Woody Allen chose War and Peace is that very short summaries of a 1200-page novel will necessarily seem a bit ridiculous, but we could keep this list going with longer and longer summaries. Which is 'best' or 'right'? It depends how much of a 'gist' you want. Again, skimming is not an exact science.

You will probably be skimming much shorter texts, which will lend themselves to shorter summaries that seem more reasonable. But it could still be useful to think in these ways. Do you want an 'it's about Russia' level summary? Or do you want this level broken down into a little more detail as the second or third examples above? Or further?

Also extremely useful for skim reading is the separate and wider skill of previewing, which we look at in the next chapter.

Tool #10: Skim for the gist by picking out key parts to read closer, and looking for key words

Note: Because scanning and skimming are quite different to more in-depth reading, we won't use Tool #9 or Tool #10 in a test in the same way as other speed reading tools we've covered, as they're designed to do different things, and comparisons would be difficult. However, I strongly recommend you practice these skills to keep them fresh. Practice them any opportunity you get, including when you're just reading for pleasure.

6 GETTING SMARTER WITH HOW YOU PROCESS IDEAS



In a way, the tools so far have just been the starter. Your eye movement, guides, and other such tools are largely about the technical aspects of reading – how you use the physical resources available to you. But the biggest gains of all – especially when we are concerned about the speed/comprehension trade-off – can be made in how we process ideas. If we can process more of the ideas the text gives us, more quickly, using fewer mental resources, we can speed up without losing too much comprehension.

For example, read the following two sentences:

- A. He went to the shops and bought broccoli, kitchen roll, apples, rice, bleach, sponge scourers, three cans of beans and a sourdough loaf.
- B. She went to the shops and bought some groceries (leeks, oranges, pasta, three cans of soup and some brown bread) and some toiletries (toilet roll, soap and toothbrushes).

Even though B is slightly longer, you probably found it easier to read and understand, and I'd be willing to bet you'd remember more of it. That's because the ideas in it were ordered and meaningful, rather than just being one thing after another. But the ideas in each of the two are actually the same (five grocery items and three toiletry items).

You can't choose how ordered the author makes things, but you can train yourself to pick up on order and meaning more easily and quickly. Doing so is like the difference between the first sentence, where we have to pick our way through from word to word with no guidance, and the second sentence, where we can group and digest things more quickly and remember them more easily because we see the ideas, or units of meaning.

Reading is the process of taking in information with our eyes. Whether we're reading at an intense level, trying to take in every piece of meaning, or a less intense level, trying to identify the important parts and ignore the rest, we'll be able to do it faster if we can identify the ideas behind words, phrases and sentences more quickly.

Part of this is language familiarity. If you read in two languages, you almost certainly read quicker in your first than your second, and if you have a very good vocabulary and read a lot, you probably identify more words more quickly than somebody with a smaller vocabulary and less reading practice. But there are also techniques we can use to read smarter, training our brain to look for and recognise meaning more quickly, and therefore move on faster.

6.1 PREVIEWING

Imagine how it would feel being given directions for a car journey one turn at a time, without knowing where we're going, or any of the main sub-parts of the trip. It would make it very hard to do anything other than follow instructions. You'd remember less of the route. And it might well make the instructions harder to understand and follow, because you're not able to fit them into any overall scheme. That's similar to what happens when we read starting with line one, then line two and so on.

Instead, we can preview the text. Previewing is getting a basic idea of the structure and what's included, before going deeper or taking in more detail. As an example, we could study the index page or look at headings. It might seem like this is a waste of time if we're then going to read the text anyway, but in fact by previewing first, we can:

- Make better decisions about where to focus attention
- Fill in gaps better when we skim or read very quickly
- Understand concepts faster, and so move on to the next more quickly
- Anticipate better what words, phrases or ideas will come next, meaning we may not have to read them as fully or rest our eyes on them for so long
- Increase comprehension because we're fitting ideas into an overall scheme (like the groceries and toiletries at the start of this chapter), which in turn increases speed

We can preview by looking quickly over:

- Titles, headings and subheadings
- Any index or contents page
- The first sentence of each paragraph
- Any bolded or highlighted ideas
- Any marked summaries
- Any available synopsis of the text, including those on book jackets or even on websites like Amazon or Goodreads
- Any introduction, preface, abstract or executive summary
- Any conclusion or summing-up at the end

In so doing, we're looking for the structure and contents, and key ideas – not even so much as the 'gist' we suggested when we discussed 'skimming'. In fact, previewing can be thought of as the least intensive kind of 'reading', followed by skimming, followed by more line-by-line approaches.

Previewing can be helpful as a prelude to skimming, or as a prelude to any other kind of reading. It's tougher when texts don't have many of the above sections or structural elements,

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but it's often worth the short amount of time it takes, for reading for any of the reading goals discussed.

Tool #11: Preview texts for an idea of their structure, to help speed and comprehension

6.2 DEVELOPING YOUR EXPECTATIONS AROUND STRUCTURE

If you're a fan of a certain genre of books or films, you probably know what to expect much of the time. In James Bond films we know that the first thing we'll encounter is Bond in the middle of a death-defying crisis involving some eye-popping stunts. Soon afterwards, he'll probably be in M's office being briefed and flirting with Miss Money Penny on the way out. At some point he'll probably have a pointed conversation with a villain who's pretending to be respectable, and later the villain will capture Bond and explain his devious plan.

These expectations make it very easy watching. We rarely have to question things too deeply. In the scene where he's captured we don't have to ask 'but why is Bond tied to a table?' – we know. If we snooze off because of an excess of Christmas turkey, we'll probably be able to fill in the gaps when we wake up.

Our expectations help us process what we see, easily and quickly. Even if some of the films buck those expectations occasionally, things are still easier for us than if we had no expectations. Contrast Bond films with – for example – the famous Stanley Kubrick Film 2001, which has a very non-standard structure, and is therefore much harder to follow. Even those who don't take a nap half-way through it have a hard time piecing together what's going on later in the film.

Expectations in reading work the same way. If we have no expectations of the structure and content of what we're reading, we have to work hard to wrap our brains around each new idea – what is it? Where does it fit? If we have structural expectations, we can quickly and easily process each new idea in the context of those expectations.

How do we get those expectations? One way is previewing, covered above. Another is to take a moment to think about the type of text you're reading and what to expect from it. **Figure 6.1** gives some ideas for common types of text.

News	Emails/Letters	Nonfiction books, e.g. from BookBoon	Reports	Articles, blogs and opinion pieces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually structured in strictly prioritised order • Headline summarises the whole piece • First paragraph gives a more broken-down or detailed version, • Next paragraph some less important details, etc. • Online news often has a more mysterious 'click-bait' headline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First paragraph should set out the topic • Final paragraph should wrap up and conclude. • Sometimes a pleasantry such as 'I hope you're well' is used instead of a meaningful first paragraph • First sentence of second paragraph often key • Subject line should help in emails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First chapter usually sets out the point and main arguments of the book, as well as how it will approach the topic • Each later chapter usually devoted to one section or element, each being introduced and supported • Final chapters often summarise, with actions and key takeaways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional reports have a strict structure towards the beginning and end • Executive Summary sets out the content and structure in reduced form • Many modern reports differ, but more than most texts, should be well divided into sections with clear headings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often begin with a style-over-content paragraph or two to tantalise, raise questions and draw readers in • After that, the first 'getting down to business' paragraph often sets things out very clearly • Successive paragraphs develop the arguments, and a final paragraph summing up

Figure 6.1: Key features to expect from different types of text

Obviously, there are many writers of varying intents and skill levels, so the above can only ever be a very general guide. However, you can build up your own set of expectations. You could build up a set of expectations around any:

- Writer
- Publication
- Report type
- Organisation
- Industry sector
- Type of letter/email

These expectations could include:

- General structure
- Most useful/information-dense sections
- Which kind of paragraphs are used in which parts of the text (for more on types of paragraphs, see the next section)
- Kinds of language/phrases used
- Amount of repetition
- Use of sections/headings
- Style and sentence structure

For some of these you may well be able to piece together quite specific expectations, like:

- ‘This website always has a summary paragraph at the end of each article’

For others, it may be that you gain a more unconscious set of expectations. Familiarity with the sentence style of a particular author may be difficult to put into words, but you may find that you read them quicker because you get used to their rhythms and language. This can create unconscious expectations as you read, which allow you to more quickly identify new words, phrases and ideas.

As an example, look at how the authors of a 2016 paper critiquing Speed Reading turned to trying to explain the purported feat of Anne Jones in reading *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* in 47 minutes and being able to give a reasonably detailed synopsis afterwards. They speculated that her knowledge of the previous books in the series “probably allowed her to capitalise on a large amount of background knowledge about such things as characters, plot structure, and writing style”.

Tool #12: Work out what to expect from the text beforehand, to process ideas quicker

6.3 WORKING WITH DIFFERENT PARAGRAPH TYPES

Not all paragraphs are equal. There are some distinct types of paragraphs that hold specific kinds of information. If you learn to recognise these paragraph types, you can use them in two ways:

- To help build an expectation with a specific writer or kind of text, as detailed in the previous chapter
- To quickly recognise the paragraph types that are more or less useful for your reading purpose, focusing your attention more on those that are more useful

The second of these can be done ‘on the fly’, even with no previewing or expectation, but when done in conjunction with an expectation of the text, can be particularly powerful. Take a look at the function and features of the five key paragraph types in **Figure 6.2**.

Type	Function	Features
What	Tells or informs you about what something is	Usually starts with a topic sentence – for skimming this can be read and the rest of the paragraph skipped or skimmed over. What paragraphs are usually more important, and dense with useful information; they should often be focused on.
How	Describes how something looks, feels or seems	May still start with a topic sentence, but may describe the topic from the previous paragraph instead. Usually less important than what paragraphs, can often be skipped or skimmed entirely for some levels of reading.
Story	Gives a sequence of events	Usually follows chronological order – can often be read at a fast speed because not all events need to be understood, just key ones. Often the most important sentence is the final one because it concludes the story.
Argument	Tries to persuade	Either starts or ends with what it wants to persuade you of; the rest of the paragraph builds a case with different pieces of evidence, usually starting with the most important. The first or last sentence is usually most important.
Intro / Summary	Sets out what the text will cover / summarises what the text covered	In both, the first and/or last sentences often give the gist. If you aren't reading the whole article, any intro or summary paragraphs (which can come at the start or end of sections too) can often give the gist of the whole text.

Figure 6.2: Key paragraph types and their function and features.

These ideas are generalised. For any given writer or context, you may be able to build a more specific picture of the types of paragraphs used, what kind of info they contain, and how important they are.

You can practice recognising and handling these types by reading any piece of text, although you will probably find it easier if it is well-written and professional.

Tool #13: Familiarise yourself with different types of paragraph and focus accordingly

6.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

It's time to see how you're doing using the tools we've covered so far. The main tools you may want to keep using from previous tests are:

Tool #5: Take in bigger chunks with each eye movement, whenever you can

Tool #6: Avoid backskipping unless you need to – use a card to train yourself how.

Tool #7: Use a guide to control where you focus and where and when your eyes move

Tool #8: Try to set a steady, rhythmic pace, and push that pace a little

You now also have three new tools:

Tool #11: Preview texts for an idea of their structure, to help speed and comprehension

Tool #12: Work out what to expect from the text beforehand, to process ideas quicker

Tool #13: Familiarise yourself with different types of paragraph and focus accordingly

You should be able to use all or any of these in the next test, as well as continuing to use some of the tools from last time. If that seems like too many, just focus on the one or ones you feel could work best for you, for now. You could try using Tool #12 by looking back at the structure of the articles you already tested on. The author is the same – can you pick up anything in terms of what to expect?

Fourth Test

I'd strongly recommend preparing for the test by practising: on the text you've already read in this book, or the articles from the list below you've already read, or in fact any piece of text. If you go straight from reading about the tools to trying them in the test without practising in between, you won't do as well.

In case you've forgotten, here's what to do.

1. Choose one of the articles listed below at random (a different one to last time).
2. Set a stopwatch going on your phone or find one online – hit 'start' and start reading the article; hit 'stop' when you finish.
3. Find your words per minute (wpm) by taking the number of words in the test article and dividing it by the number of seconds (if you took 2 minutes 30 seconds, you took 150 seconds). Then multiply this by sixty.
4. Check your comprehension via the test in Appendix I and find your % comprehension score. Each comprehension test is evenly divided between 'detail' questions and 'gist' questions.

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- D. Stephen Covey's 'Seven Habits' in the 21st Century (973 words)
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- E. Framing and communication: Choose your words carefully (893 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/framing-it-right/>

How did you do? As before, don't worry if you didn't see an improvement; as we discussed earlier, you may be trying to use too many new techniques at once for your brain to process well. If you improved your speed but at a cost in comprehension, that's also fine. Keep practising, and as the tools become second nature, comprehension should rise again. If you improved on both, well done.

Whatever the case, keep hold of your scores so you can compare them to your score on the final test, after we've introduced the last of the tools.

6.5 USING IDEA-BASED WORD GROUPS

One limitation on reading speed is what neurologists call working memory. Your working memory is where you store ideas that you're working with, trying to make sense of them before committing them to long-term memory. You can only usefully hold between five and seven pieces of information in your working memory. In theory, this could mean that any sentence longer than five words would take extra time and effort. In practice, you can deal with more than five words because you group words into **ideas**, and it is ideas that you can work with five to seven of at a time, not words. So, when you read the sentence:

New joiners will be given ID passes within two weeks

...you probably group it into something like:

New joiners / will be given / ID passes / within two weeks

It's not an exact science – groupings can be different because the concept of an idea is fluid. 'two weeks' definitely qualifies as an idea, but so does 'within two weeks'. But the fewer ideas you are able to digest the sentence in, the less working memory you are using, and

the quicker you will likely read it. So, four would work quite well here, certainly better than versions with more groups, like:

New / joiners / will be / given ID passes / within / two weeks

New joiners / will be / given / ID passes / within two weeks

Although you may be able to take it in in even fewer, for example:

New joiners / will be given ID passes / within two weeks

To do this well, you need to build up both your conscious and unconscious ability to quickly recognise useful groupings of words as ideas. You probably do this unconsciously even if you don't know much about grammar – because it's not very efficient, very few people try:

New / joiners will / be given ID / passes within two / weeks

But even if you do it to some extent right now, if you work at your understanding in this area, you can improve your ability and your speed. We'll give you some help on this in the next section.

Tool #14: Try to read in bigger chunks that are self-contained ideas or units of meaning

Myth: 'Because the area of your vision in sharp focus is limited to the width of your thumb when held at arm's length, only six characters can be read at a time'.

Reality: Your brain and visual system routinely fill in the gaps of less sharp focus in what you see when you look around you. If you're seeing a scene filled with relatively familiar sights like trees, roads and faces, your eyes fix sharply on only a few points within your whole field of vision. By combining what you fix sharply on with your less focused picture from peripheral vision and – crucially – your expectations, you build a complete picture in your brain so that you rarely notice anything is out of focus.

In the same way, when reading, when we focus on the centre of a 'chunk' or phrase that is a unit of meaning, we can often infer, or guess the words at the edges even when they're not in sharp focus. If you focus on the chunk 'will be given ID passes', the edges may be slightly blurry. But because – especially in context – it is a clear idea or unit of meaning which is easy to 'guess' at or infer parts of, your brain can easily 'fill in' any blurry parts at the edges.

This would be much harder to do with a phrase of similar shape that wasn't an obvious unit of meaning or an idea in its own right, like the nonsense 'won't be fired QQ wizard' or 'mess to gavel XS jargon', which have the same form as 'will be given ID passes' but don't meet any expectations.

6.6 USING GRAMMAR TO RECOGNISE IDEA-BASED WORD GROUPS

There are some common types of phrases in English that form useful units of meaning. If you take some time to start to understand and recognise them, your conscious and unconscious ability to pick them out and take them in in a single chunk will improve.

To get the most from the table below, it's best to check you're happy with some basic grammar language we'll be using. If you're pretty comfortable with grammar terms you could skip straight to the table.

Some people find grammar tedious or difficult. If you're one of them, all the more reason you should try to get a handle on this part of the book and the tools here. But if it's something you'd rather come back to later, you could focus on the tools that don't need you to think about the difference between verbs, adverbs and adjectives.

Noun A naming word – a thing. Examples include: John, Jane, London, computer, desk, pen, skyscraper, patience, time, communication, maintenance. A pronoun is often used instead of a full name (I, he, it, she, they, etc.)

Adjective A descriptive word that describes a noun, such as: blue, beautiful, quick, total, tall, long, uncertain, difficult, happy, watchful, ridiculous, sweeter, technical, smartest, frostier, hottest, lightest, free, expensive or admirable.

Verb A doing word – an action or state of being in the past, present or future, such as: walk, walks, walking, walked, is, was, does, be, listen, ventured, invested, kill, pickling, writing, jarred, resurrected, applaud, covering, sold, seems, stood or diminished.

Adverb A describing word that tells us how, in what way, when, where or to what extent something happens. They don't generally describe nouns. Examples include: quickly, beautifully, only, very, totally, almost, here, there, often, never, definitely, usually

Subject The thing a sentence is about. **My company** makes widgets. **My ex-wife** married the President. **You** may not have heard this. **Several unpleasant incidents** have caused a change in our policy.

Object The thing a subject acts towards or concerning. My company makes **widgets**. My ex-wife married **the President**. You may not have heard **this**. Several unpleasant incidents have caused **a change in our policy**.

So, armed with those terms, here are some common types of phrase – if you can recognise these, you can pick them out more easily as ideas or units of meaning, with all the benefits we talked about in the last chapter.

Type of Phrase	What is it – what does it do?	Examples
Adverb Phrase	Gives a which, where, when or how to another part of the sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘the plant under the window needs watering’ (which) • ‘the toilets are behind reception’ (where) • ‘you left before five o’clock’ (when) • ‘I won by outsmarting them’ (how)
Adjective Phrase	An adjective (and the modifying words around it) that describe a noun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘the suit is beautifully tailored’ • ‘you’re much quicker than me’ • ‘shareholders are unhappy with the dividend’ • ‘the allegations are totally unfounded’
Noun Phrase	A noun and the words around it, that are the subject or object of a sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘the way home is difficult’ • ‘the road was closed as a result of high winds’ • ‘he won with a pair of jacks’ • ‘nearly every house had decorations up’.
Verb Phrase	A verb and the words around it that say what the subject does (or did or will do)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The board vetoed the project’ • ‘The report was a dog’s dinner of graphs and charts’ • ‘I wandered lonely as a cloud’ • ‘You won’t get another chance’

Figure 6.4: The four main types of phrase

Don’t worry too much about memorising the names of these or the exact differences between them – the key is to be able to start to pick them out as units of meaning. You don’t need to know at a conscious level whether ‘wandered lonely as a cloud’ is a verb phrase or a noun phrase – you just need to be able to pick it out as a usable unit of meaning.

Also, just because something is a phrase, doesn’t mean you have to pick it out in one go. The phrase ‘was a dog’s dinner of charts and graphs’ might be a little long, so you could do it in two: ‘was a dog’s dinner / of charts and graphs’.

Finally, you will often find that a line-break separates the start and end of a phrase you'd like to take in in one glance, so it will not always be possible. But getting comfortable with different, longer kinds of phrases as units of meaning – as ideas – will mean that you:

- Digest them faster
- Take in more words per eye movement as your peripheral vision is able to better make out or infer blurred letters away from the centre of the phrase
- Use less working memory, so having too many concepts to work with won't slow you down.

Tool #15: Get used to common types of phrase so that you can digest them quickly and easily



What if you could build your future and create the future?

The innovation accelerator

One generation's transformation is the next's status quo. In the near future, people may soon think it's strange that devices ever had to be "plugged in." To obtain that status, there needs to be "The Shift".

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6.7 CONCEPTUALISING AND VISUALISING FOR SPEED AND COMPREHENSION



We talked about units of meaning each taking up one of the five to seven slots in your working memory. When trying to take in larger phrases with each eye movement, you are limited by the span of words your eye can focus on, even if you are able to use your peripheral vision and inference. But when we are reading phrase after phrase rapidly, our working memory can still become a block. If we reach five, six or seven concepts, we may have difficulty taking in more, and we may find that we slow down.

But we can add a number of concepts together by conceptualising, and further, visualising ideas built from a number of successive phrases or eye movements. To illustrate, let's go back to:

New joiners will be given ID passes within two weeks

We found that we could group this into three ideas:

New joiners / will be given ID passes / within two weeks

But we could group these first two together (even if we needed two eye fixations to take them in) by conceptualising in our heads the idea of new joiners being given ID passes. If you try for a moment, you can see it. The fresh-faced, hopeful newbie, holding his or her ID pass. That's one idea – one concept. The five to seven 'slots' in our working memory can each be held by quite complex things, particularly if they're easy to visualise. You might well get away with one working memory 'slot' for the whole sentence if the sentence was:

New joiners / at the London offices / will be given red
and blue ID passes / by their managers

It's a little harder, but you can visualise the new joiner, at a London office, with a red and blue striped pass being handed to them by a manager. This kind of grouping is what we do when we try to remember phone numbers or other long numbers.

You probably already do this to some extent without thinking about it, but it's another skill you can practice and develop. Visualising better and more quickly will help you to:

- Move on more quickly to the next idea
- Process more ideas at once, so you're not slowed down by working memory getting clogged
- Better understand, digest and recall what you read

To practice this skill, try visualising each of these sentences in one picture, by adding or changing details in the picture you build as you read them. So, your visualisation of the first might begin with the colour red, then being added to a Ferrari race car, then seeing that car in a scene where it's easily picked out, etc.

- A. The red colourscheme / of the Ferrari team / is easy to pick out / as the cars race past, / exhaust fumes trailing in their wake.
- B. All visitors to building sites / must wear high-vis jackets; / hard hats and boots / must also be worn / to avoid hazards from falling debris.
- C. The teambuilding event / was a great success; / delegates started by building a raft / but rated the seven-course lunch / as the high point, / especially the tiramisu.
- D. The design process begins / with a stakeholder meeting / where we brainstorm ideas / the designers then create a storyboard / and get feedback from the client.
- E. Foxes are now commonplace / on the streets of London; / many householders regard them as pests / who dig up plants, / foul paths / and steal items such as shoes.

Some of these are more visual than others – it's easier to see hordes of foxes in your mind's eye than a 'design process', but visualisation doesn't always have to be completely literal to

help. Whatever image the words ‘design process’ conjures up for you, go with it. It will develop as concepts are added (such as a ‘stakeholder meeting’, which may be easier to visualise, and brainstorming, which may well allow you to tie the three ideas together).

Tool #16: Build each new connected part of an idea into a single visualisation

6.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

We’ve covered the sixteen tools included in the book, and it’s time to see how you’re equipped now. This is the last test you’ll be asked to do, as the final couple of sections are about troubleshooting and ongoing improvement beyond the course.

As before, use whichever tools you feel most happy with from previous sections, probably focusing on a few in particular from:

Tool #5: Take in bigger chunks with each eye movement, whenever you can

Tool #6: Avoid backskipping unless you need to – use a card to train yourself how.

Tool #7: Use a guide to control where you focus and where and when your eyes move

Tool #8: Try to set a steady, rhythmic pace, and push that pace a little

Tool #11: Preview texts for an idea of their structure, to help speed and comprehension

Tool #12: Work out what to expect from the text beforehand, to process ideas quicker

Tool #13: Familiarise yourself with different types of paragraph and focus accordingly

And you now have three new tools, which you should try to use at least one of:

Tool #14: Try to read in bigger chunks that are self-contained ideas or units of meaning

Tool #15: Get used to common types of phrase so that you can digest them quickly and easily

Tool #16: Build each new connected part of an idea into a single visualisation

You should use as many of these as you feel comfortable with in this final test, as well as any from previous times. If it all seems like too many, just focus on the one or ones you feel could work best for you, for now.

Fifth Test

I'd strongly recommend preparing for the test by practising, particularly with the newest tools: on the text you've already read in this book, or the articles from the list below you've already read, or in fact any piece of text. If you go straight from reading about the tools to trying them in the test without practising in between, you won't do as well.

In case you've forgotten, here's what to do.

1. Choose one of the articles listed below at random (a different one to last time).
2. Set a stopwatch going on your phone or find one online – hit 'start' and start reading the article; hit 'stop' when you finish.
3. Find your words per second by taking the number of words in the test article and dividing it by the number of seconds (if you took 2 minutes 30 seconds, you took 150 seconds). Then multiply this by sixty to get your words per minute (wpm).
4. Check your comprehension via the test in Appendix I and find your % comprehension score. Each comprehension test is evenly divided between 'detail' questions and 'gist' questions.

- A. Five ways to use the power of anchors in learning (917 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/five-ways-to-use-the-power-of-anchors-in-learning/>
- B. Leaping the hot-cold empathy gap to aid learning (785 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/leaping-the-hot-cold-empathy-gap-to-aid-learning/>
- C. Handling behaviour change barriers: Yes, it applies to you (991 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/yes-it-applies-to-you/>
- D. Stephen Covey's 'Seven Habits' in the 21st Century (973 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/covey-in-the-21st-century-seven-habits-now/>
- E. Framing and communication: Choose your words carefully (893 words)
<http://360learningdesign.com/framing-it-right/>

How did you do? Most people see an improvement by this stage, but if you didn't see as much of an improvement as you'd like, did you practice the techniques? It's hard to improve if all you're doing is reading the theory and taking the tests.

If you have been practising and still aren't happy with your improvement, keep trying. Some find it harder than others. There aren't any more tests for you to compare, but there are more ideas for measuring progress at the end of the book.

If, like most people, you improved overall on speed without affecting comprehension too much, well done. Keep reading, though – we'll finish off with some more ideas that can help even more.

7 TROUBLESHOOTING

7.1 YOUR ENVIRONMENT



Your environment can make a difference. We probably don't often notice how much of a difference, but little things can all add up to many lost words per minute. It's worth taking the time to optimise your environment, especially if you're settling in for a long read.

Light

Not enough light will make us strain our eyes. Too much will make us squint and feel uncomfortable. Set lighting levels so they feel comfortable, and don't have too much light directly on to the page (or even worse, the screen where it will cause glare).

Interruptions and distractions

Noises. People walking or moving nearby. Screensavers. Searching out the next thing to read. Pop-up notifications. The list goes on, but anything your brain has to process, because it's too near or loud or distracting, is taking resources away from your reading. Also, the rhythm we talked about in earlier chapters is easily disturbed.

So try to read somewhere where nobody and nothing is moving or making noise. This may not always be possible, but do your best. Get all of your reading materials ready so that you can switch from one text to another easily. Turn off alarms and notifications. Make sure it's not too hot or too cold. Get as close as possible to the scenario where there's just you and the text.

7.2 YOUR POSTURE

You can read for a short time in more or less any position. But if your posture is unnatural and uncomfortable, then sooner or later your brain will have to devote some processing power to dealing with complaints from the uncomfortable parts of you.

So make sure your seated posture is good – sit up straight and if reading a screen make sure it's level with your eyes (I see you, habitual laptop users). Make sure what you're reading is a comfortable distance from your eyes (about twenty inches or fifty centimetres for most people, but experiment). Generally make sure you're comfortable and can stay that way.

7.3 SUBVOCALISING

When we voice the words 'aloud' under our breath or in our heads, that's called subvocalising. It's a topic of some debate – more on that below – but most agree that too much subvocalisation, or subvocalisation that's too pronounced, slows reading speed, and isn't needed for comprehension.

You may feel you don't subvocalise at all, but if you do noticeably subvocalise, you may get speed gains from stopping or reducing it. If you find it difficult to stop, try 'mumbling' at a subvocal level instead, not forming full words. You could also try just 'sounding' the important words, and leaving the rest silent or 'mumbled'. If you're a keen subvocaliser, this may take some practice.

Myth: 'Studies have shown that the part of the vocal system concerned with subvocalisation is almost always active when reading; the only effective ways to not subvocalise at all have been to do something else auditory to distract, such as humming or repeating a mantra. As this then affected both speed and comprehension considerably, minimising subvocalisation is neither possible nor desirable'.

Reality: It's true that studies have shown that the part of the vocal system concerned with subvocalisation is almost always active when reading. But that's not very relevant. Minimising subvocalisation as a speed reading tool is about stopping the subvocalising of all or most words at a rate that slows us down. If we continue to use part of our vocal system in a non-distracting way, and/or we subvocalise key words, that's not a problem – we're still speeding up by cutting out problematic subvocalisation.

I'm not sure why anyone would be surprised by the idea that humming or repeating a mantra while reading hinders speed and comprehension. I definitely wouldn't recommend that as a method.

7.4 VOCABULARY

The better your vocabulary, the more quickly you'll recognise words and the less often you'll have to pause to figure something out. The best way to increase vocabulary is to read a lot. Most of the fastest readers are frequent readers. Read outside your normal comfort zone. Read different kinds of books, websites and other documents.

The other little trick is, when you hit an unfamiliar word, try just reading past it and seeing if you can pick up the meaning from the context. You'll be surprised how often this can work.

7.5 SCREEN ISSUES



Most people find reading on a screen harder and slightly slower than reading on paper. There are a number of things you can try which help most people reduce this effect:

- Print it out (try to use scrap paper already printed on one side for this, for environmental reasons)
- Use a 'paper-white' screen – these are relatively expensive right now, but are coming down in price, particularly in tablet form
- Play around with the brightness and contrast settings until they work well for you
- Adjust the text size, zoom, font, colour and background colour until they're comfortable; most people read quicker black on white
- Use your mouse cursor as a guide

With this, as with all the troubleshooting tips, just be aware of what's getting in your way, and take conscious steps to remove barriers and get back to reading at your best.

8 MAKING A LASTING DIFFERENCE TO READING SPEED

I hope you've already seen some speed reading gains. I'm confident you will have, if you've been practicing between the tests. But this book isn't magic. Reading it will not make you a faster reader. What will make you a faster reader is reading about, understanding and putting into regular practice the tools in this book.

Here they are, collected in one place:

Tool #1: Decide your goal up front and keep it in mind.

Tool #2: Make an effort to get yourself into a positive mindset about what you're reading

Tool #3: At first, review your reading 'process' or technique consciously to identify how to improve

Tool #4: Practice good techniques until they become unconscious

Tool #5: Take in bigger chunks with each eye movement, whenever you can

Tool #6: Avoid backskipping unless you need to – use a card to train yourself how

Tool #7: Use a guide to control where you focus and where and when your eyes move

Tool #8: Try to set a steady, rhythmic pace, and push that pace a little

Tool #9: Scan by fixing your target in your head and being ruthless about discarding all else

Tool #10: Skim for the gist by picking out key parts to read closer, and looking for key words

Tool #11: Preview texts for an idea of their structure, to help speed and comprehension

Tool #12: Work out what to expect from the text beforehand, to process ideas quicker

Tool #13: Familiarise yourself with different types of paragraph and focus accordingly

Tool #14: Try to read in bigger chunks that are self-contained ideas or units of meaning

Tool #15: Get used to common types of phrase so that you can digest them quickly and easily

Tool #16: Build each new connected part of an idea into a single visualisation

It looks like a lot, but you don't have to try to make them all work for you, all at once. Focus on the ones you seem to be making progress with, and practice with them until you do them unconsciously. Then add others to your repertoire until you're doing as much as you feel comfortable with.

Happy reading!

APPENDIX: COMPREHENSION TESTS

If you've completed one of the five reading speed tests, check your comprehension in this appendix. Each of the five sets of questions appears on the following pages under the title of the article, with the answers on the following page.

Write down your answers as you go and then check how many you got right. Your comprehension percentage will be the number you got right multiplied by ten.

A FIVE WAYS TO USE THE POWER OF ANCHORS IN LEARNING

QUESTIONS

1. What was the name of the cards produced by Brian Eno and used with David Bowie?
 - a) Acute Tactics
 - b) Oblique Strategies
 - c) Object Tactics
 - d) Inspiration Strategies
2. Which of the following were ways suggested to 'provoke' using anchors?
 - a) Asking learners to rank elements in order of importance
 - b) Asking learners to put elements in alphabetical order
 - c) Asking learners to arrange elements in a controversial sequence
 - d) Asking learners to mix up the order of things so it appears random
3. What is an anchor?
 - a) A comforting thought that grounds you in a safe place
 - b) A thought that drags you back and keeps you from progressing
 - c) An initial thought that influences further thought
 - d) A thought you can come back to if you get lost
4. What can anchors be used to do in learning?
 - a) Practice, perfect, hone, streamline and optimise
 - b) Organise, correlate, stratify, categorise and streamline
 - c) Analyse, number, estimate, correlate and order
 - d) Inspire, provoke, organise, categorise and analyse
5. In what unusual situation can anchors still influence?
 - a) Even when clearly not relevant
 - b) Even when you explain what an anchor is
 - c) Even when there are several conflicting anchors
 - d) Even when the person's opinions on the matter are strongly ingrained

6. Anchors are an improvement on which two ways of helping learners explore something?
 - a) Asking them to research it online, and telling them
 - b) Asking them to discuss or brainstorm it, and using trial and error
 - c) Telling them, and asking them to discuss or brainstorm it
 - d) Using trial and error, and asking them to research it online

7. Giving learners elements, like a jigsaw, and asking them to arrange them, could replace what?
 - a) Giving learners a process or model
 - b) Action planning
 - c) Workbooks
 - d) Fielding questions from learners

8. Process mapping was given as a key tool in which category of anchor use?
 - a) Provoke
 - b) Analyse
 - c) Inspire
 - d) Change

9. Which of the following is given as a way to explore delegation?
 - a) Giving groups a few steps and asking them to arrange them into a delegation process
 - b) Giving groups an existing delegation process and asking them to improve it
 - c) Asking groups to come up with a delegation process and then critiquing it
 - d) Giving groups half a delegation process and asking them to complete it

10. How does the use of anchors compare across numbers and concepts?
 - a) It works much better with numbers
 - b) It works much better with concepts
 - c) It works just as well with both
 - d) Nobody knows

ANSWERS

1. B
2. A
3. C
4. D
5. A
6. C
7. A
8. B
9. A
10. C

B LEAPING THE HOT-COLD EMPATHY GAP TO AID LEARNING

QUESTIONS

1. What is the 'hot-cold empathy gap'?
 - a) The idea that temperature has a severe effect on our ability to empathise with others
 - b) The idea that people from different climates find it hard to relate to one another
 - c) The idea that, when in a 'hot' state, we find it very difficult to relate to a 'cold' state
 - d) The idea that we can never fully empathise with another person
2. In what three main ways does the hot-cold empathy gap affect us?
 - a) Predicting, remembering and relating
 - b) Understanding, influencing and analysing
 - c) Logic, emotion and body rhythms
 - d) Assertiveness, calmness and listening
3. Which of the following is an example of 'tying them to the mast'?
 - a) Making commitments public
 - b) Sending them on an innovative teambuilding day
 - c) Getting them angry
 - d) Using an actor
4. Why is using an actor a good way to bridge the hot-cold empathy gap?
 - a) They can play somebody in a hot state or a cold state
 - b) They can make everything more professional
 - c) They can trigger the real emotional responses that would actually happen
 - d) They can put people outside their comfort zone
5. How does telling stories help?
 - a) It helps learners relate to a hot state
 - b) It helps learners relate to a cold state
 - c) It's the next best thing to using an actor
 - d) It helps learners remove themselves from the idea of hot or cold states

6. How does the hot-cold empathy gap get in the way in the training room?
 - a) Learners fail to empathise with each other
 - b) If the room is too hot or cold, learners' ability to empathise is affected
 - c) Learners under or over estimate how emotions will affect things in real life
 - d) Learners won't be able to learn about empathy

7. Which of the following is not a 'hot' emotional state?
 - a) Tempted
 - b) Angry
 - c) Tired
 - d) Sated

8. What might the hot-cold empathy gap make learners underestimate?
 - a) Their ability to stay unruffled in the face of change
 - b) How easily they'll get 'hooked' by difficult behaviour in others
 - c) Their ability to resist temptation
 - d) Their ability to transfer learning

9. What might the hot-cold empathy gap make learners overestimate?
 - a) How easily they'll get 'hooked' by difficult behaviour in others
 - b) The chance they'll implement their action plan in the face of a stressful work environment
 - c) How important stories are
 - d) Their ability to transfer learning

10. Why might you try to get learners a little angry during a training session?
 - a) So that they can feel the difference between angry and calm
 - b) So that they can more easily relate to times they're angry in the real world
 - c) So that they can roleplay angry people better
 - d) So that you can demonstrate how to calm them down

ANSWERS

1. C
2. A
3. A
4. C
5. A
6. C
7. D
8. B
9. B
10. B

C HANDLING BEHAVIOUR CHANGE BARRIERS: YES, IT APPLIES TO YOU

QUESTIONS

1. What is Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson's book?
 - a) You Made Some Mistakes (But I Didn't)
 - b) Mistakes Were Made (But Not by Me)
 - c) People Sometimes Behave Irrationally (But I Don't)
 - d) Yes, It Applies to You

2. How does confirmation bias affect driving?
 - a) Drivers don't notice, or downplay, times they drove badly
 - b) Drivers don't notice, or downplay, times others drove badly
 - c) Drivers get distracted by looking for confirmation that they're going the right way
 - d) Drivers get distracted by wondering how well they're driving

3. When will you hit the 'it doesn't apply to me' defence?
 - a) When trying to get people to hold two conflicting ideas in their head
 - b) When asking people to accept that a coin toss was random
 - c) When asking people to believe that 90% of drivers think they're above average
 - d) When getting people to accept there's something about their behaviour that needs changing

4. Which of the following is one of the three suggested ways to overcome the defence?
 - a) Don't assume they behave problematically
 - b) Trick them into proving they behave problematically
 - c) Get them to use processes instead of relying on gut feelings
 - d) Give them lots of statistics to prove that most people behave problematically

5. Why do experienced recruiters often resist the idea that their gut feeling is unreliable?
 - a) It conflicts with their idea that they're a good recruiter, causing cognitive dissonance
 - b) They feel it's better than tossing a coin
 - c) They don't trust rigid processes
 - d) Their gut feeling is actually a valuable tool and they don't want to sideline it

6. Most people would travel three-quarters of a mile to save £10 on a £20 item, but not to save £10 on a £1,000 item. What does this show?
- That they are irrational
 - That they are guilty of confirmation bias
 - That they make value judgements relatively, not absolutely
 - That cognitive dissonance is at work
7. What does Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk illustrate?
- That even those who are very self-aware suffer from cognitive dissonance
 - That even very well educated people are guilty of confirmation bias
 - That even those who suffer from stereotyping do the same to others
 - That even rational people can act irrationally
8. Asking people to record examples of a problematic behaviour over time can help, but...?
- Only if they're engaged enough with the question to honestly consider it
 - Only if they're not self-aware enough to realise they engage in the behaviour
 - Only if you trick them into it
 - Only if they understand confirmation bias
9. What will be a common response to the idea that 90% of drivers think they're above average?
- 'I'm in the 10% who don't think that'
 - 'I don't believe that – only 50% of people can be above average'
 - 'I must be overestimating my driving abilities, because I thought I was above average'
 - 'I'm in the 49% of drivers who justifiably think that, not the 41% who overestimate'
10. What's the best way to get past the 'it doesn't apply to me' defence?
- Trick them into showing the behaviour
 - Assume they exhibit the behaviour, and act accordingly
 - Ask them to record examples over time
 - There isn't one right way

ANSWERS

1. B
2. A
3. D
4. B
5. A
6. C
7. C
8. A
9. D
- 10.D

D STEPHEN COVEY'S 'SEVEN HABITS' IN THE 21ST CENTURY

QUESTIONS

1. Which president asked for Stephen Covey's advice?
 - a) George Bush
 - b) George W Bush
 - c) Bill Clinton
 - d) Barack Obama
2. What is mentioned as an example of a modern innovation that helps with 'Being Proactive'?
 - a) Kickstarter
 - b) Evernote
 - c) Facebook
 - d) Uber
3. What's the danger in focusing overly on goals?
 - a) We may be disappointed if we don't achieve them
 - b) Your goals may conflict with those of others and cause conflict in your life
 - c) We may forget about the here and now and the need to enjoy the journey
 - d) You might seem like you're selling to people, who are tired of being sold to
4. What are listed as things that might get in the way of 'Putting First Things First'?
 - a) Memory loss, getting distracted easily and changing priorities
 - b) Autism, Twitter and instant messages
 - c) SAD, Kickstarter and modern society
 - d) ADHD, Facebook and email
5. What contributes towards the importance of 'Think Win-Win' in the 21st century?
 - a) The proliferation of successful businesses
 - b) The idea of abundance
 - c) The widening gap between rich and poor
 - d) Organisations like Uber and AirBnb

6. With which of the seven habits has the development of easy communication via the internet helped?
 - a) Sharpen the saw
 - b) Synergise
 - c) Be proactive
 - d) Begin with the end in mind

7. Why does the fact that we're sold to so much affect the habit 'Seek first to understand, then be understood'?
 - a) We enjoy it when somebody takes the time to find out where we stand before selling to us
 - b) We need to make sure we buy things that suit our needs
 - c) We like talking to people who understand us
 - d) The gap between rich and poor is widening

8. What two modern ideas are linked to 'Sharpening the saw'?
 - a) Kickstarter and synergy
 - b) Wellbeing and lifelong learning
 - c) Work-life balance and resilience
 - d) Employee relations and paternity leave

9. What honour was bestowed on Covey's book in 2011?
 - a) Included in the top 25 most influential business management books, by Time Magazine
 - b) Included in the top 10 most influential smart thinking books, by the New York Times
 - c) Won the Pulitzer prize
 - d) Shortlisted for a special prize for its thirty years of influence, by the Washington Post

10. Successful businesses that sustain success have been proven time and again to be the ones...?
 - a) Whose executives have read The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People
 - b) That use new technologies such as Kickstarter and Facebook
 - c) Who review classic business ideas in light of modern developments
 - d) That do so with their employees and customers, not at the expense of them

ANSWERS

1. C
2. A
3. D
4. D
5. C
6. B
7. A
8. B
9. A
10. D

E FRAMING AND COMMUNICATION: CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the word framing useful when thinking about how we communicate?
 - a) It makes a useful parallel with innocent people being 'framed' for crimes they didn't commit
 - b) It reminds us that we never fully see reality, except through the frame we choose
 - c) It makes a useful parallel with picture hanging
 - d) It makes us think about how we spend time choosing the most expensive looking frame

2. What was the relation between the two different framings of the 'disease' problem used?
 - a) They were the same options, framed differently
 - b) They presented completely different options
 - c) One had worse options than the other
 - d) There was no relation between them

3. What is 'solution framing'?
 - a) Framing that looks for the one correct answer
 - b) Framing that focuses on ways to move forward positively
 - c) Framing that influences people to adopt your solution
 - d) Framing that shoots down solutions you don't agree with

4. How many people was the disease outbreak expected to affect?
 - a) 100
 - b) 200
 - c) 400
 - d) 600

5. What is suggested as a solution frame for 'I can't do this?'
 - a) 'I've never been able to do this'
 - b) 'I always mess things up'
 - c) 'I know I can do this.'
 - d) 'How can I make this easier to do?'

6. Whose 1981 study is quoted?
 - a) Tversky and Kahneman
 - b) Tomasson and Kahneman
 - c) Tversky and Tomasson
 - d) Tomasson and McClean

7. What happens when we frame things in terms of the problem?
 - a) We take the first step towards a solution
 - b) We are seen as negative and become less popular
 - c) We create a block that discourages us from finding a way to address the issue
 - d) We motivate ourselves to change things

8. What should we do if we've pressed home the gravity of the situation by outlining the problem?
 - a) Continue to explore the problem in depth
 - b) Field questions about the seriousness of the matter
 - c) Build on it quickly by moving to the solution frame
 - d) Put a positive spin on it by being as positive as possible

9. What may happen when we use a problem frame to outline an issue to colleagues?
 - a) They may focus on the positives
 - b) They may ignore us
 - c) They may have an indignant response to perceived criticism
 - d) They may flip it around to a solution frame

10. What kind of response may we get if we frame issues in a solution frame?
 - a) Indignant
 - b) Confused
 - c) Productive
 - d) Happy

ANSWERS

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. D
5. D
6. A
7. C
8. C
9. C
10. C