Improving Reading Rate and Comprehension

1. **Read regularly.** Practice is extremely important. Read as much as you can. Practice at least half an hour a day, more if possible.

2. **Begin with easy material.** At the outset, read material with familiar vocabulary and ideas that can be grasped without effort. Get the feeling of moving along the lines of print quickly and comfortably. Begin with fictionized biography, science fiction, adventure stories, or other materials of high interest value for you.

3. **Work toward more difficult materials.** When you begin to see progress, step up to the next level of difficulty. Read news magazines and non-fiction on topics of current importance. Eventually you will work to improve your rate on all types of reading. As soon as possible, turn your attention to trade and professional journals in your field of specialization.

4. **Understand what you read.** Rate is determined primarily by the ability to comprehend. Read aggressively to answer key questions. Before you start, turn the title into a question and keep asking “What is the answer? What is the author saying?” Go in with a question; come out with an answer.

5. **Determine your purpose before you begin.** Decide why you are reading the particular selection and estimate its difficulty. Then set yourself to read at your most efficient rate in terms of these factors.

6. **See the pattern in the author’s plan of writing.** Before you begin non-fiction, spend a minute on a survey. Spot the central-thoughts and the author’s plan for developing it. The partial precomprehension will serve to speed you up and increase your understanding.

7. **Reduce vocalization in all silent reading.** Understand how incipient vocalization retards rate. Resolve to get the point by thinking meaning, not by saying the words. Press toward faster than the top speed at which words can be pronounced.

8. **Read under progressive pressure.** During practice, read as rapidly as you can without jeopardizing comprehension. Read as if you were to take a quiz in ten minutes and hadn’t studied the lesson. If you are near a reading laboratory, practice everyday on the reading accelerators. Work at top speed for a while, then turn off the motor and continue to read at the same speed, but without the mechanical stimulation. If accelerators are not available, you can still get excellent results by working each day to cover more ground in the same time than you did the day before.

9. **Improve your vocabulary.** Strange words interfere with understanding. Since speed is a function of understanding, you will profit from a systematic attempt to increase your word knowledge.

10. **Check your comprehension.** In pressuring to read faster, do not skip or skim and so miss the meaning. To make sure you are getting the ideas, stop at the end of each unit and make brief notes from memory. This form of self-recitation clarifies your understanding and helps make the ideas stick.

11. **Increase your store of knowledge.** Intelligent reading requires more than a mere knowledge of what the words mean. The more you more you know about a subject, the better and faster you can read about it.

12. **Don’t make a fetish of speed.** Slow down and speed up as the occasion demands. Experts use many speeds, not just one.

13. **Be persistent.** There is no magic formula to show you how to double your rate overnight. Pressing to read faster and answer questions may be fatiguing at first. For a time you may even seem to be more inefficient than before. But keep at it. Use any free time for additional practice. With a little persistence, more effective reading will become habitual.

**Good Luck!**