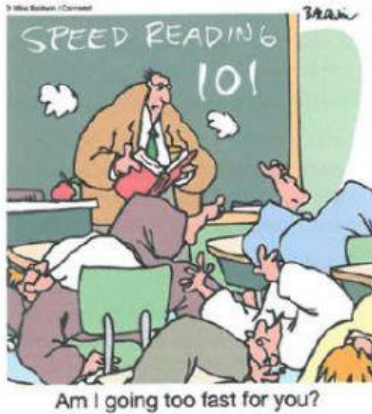# SPEED READING

Am I going too fast for you?

What is speed reading, and why do we need it?

A

Speed reading is not just about reading fast. It is also about how much information you can remember when you have finished reading. The World Championship Speed-Reading Competition says that its top competitors average between 1,000 and 2,000 words a minute. But they must remember at least 50 percent of this in order to qualify for the competition.

B

Nowadays, speed reading has become an essential skill in any environment where people have to master a large volume of information. Professional workers need reading skills to help them get through many documents every day, while students under pressure to deal with assignments may feel they have to read more and read faster all the time.

C

Although there are various methods to increase reading speed, the trick is deciding what information you want first. For example, if you only want a rough outline of an issue, then you can skim the material quickly and extract the key facts. However, if you need to understand every detail in a document, then you must read it slowly enough to understand this.

D

Even when you know how to ignore irrelevant detail, there are other improvements you can make to your reading style which will increase your speed. For example, most people can read much faster if they read silently. Reading each word aloud takes time for the information to make a complete circuit in your brain before being pronounced. Some researchers believe that as long as the first and last letters are in place, the brain can still understand the arrangement of the other letters in the word because it logically puts each piece into place.

E

Chunking is another important method. Most people learn to read either letter by letter or word by word. As you improve, this changes. You will probably find that you are fixing your eyes on a block of words, then moving your eyes to the next block of words, and so on. You are reading blocks of words at a time, not individual words one by one. You may also notice that you do not always go from one block to the next: sometimes you may move back to a previous block if you are unsure about something.

F

A skilled reader will read a lot of words in each block. He or she will only look at each block for an instant and will then move on. Only rarely will the reader's eyes skip back to a previous block of words. This reduces the amount of work that the reader's eyes have to do. It also increases the volume of information that can be taken in over a given period of time.

G

On the other hand, a slow reader will spend a lot of time reading small blocks of words. He or she will skip back often, losing the flow and structure of the text, and muddling their overall understanding of the subject. This irregular eye movement quickly makes the reader tired. Poor readers tend to dislike reading because they feel it is difficult to concentrate and comprehend written information.

H

The best tip anyone can have to improve their reading speed is to practise. In order to do this effectively, a person must be engaged in the material and want to know more. If you find yourself constantly having to re-read the same paragraph, you may want to switch to reading material that grabs your attention. If you enjoy what you are reading, you will make quicker progress.

1

Questions 1-6

The reading passage has seven paragraphs,
A-H. Which paragraph contains the following information?
Write the correct letter, A-H.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

the types of people who need to read more quickly

the fastest reading speeds

how a reader can become confused

why reading material should be interesting

a definition of speed reading

what you should consider before you start reading

Questions 7-13

Complete the table below.
Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Chunking

Type of reader	Reading method	Effect of method on reader
skilled reader	many 7_____ in a block	reader's 8_____do less work
	reader hardly ever goes back	more 9_____is processed
10 _____	small blocks	reader easily gets 12_____
	reader 11_____goes back	finds it hard to 13_____ on passage