

# Double Your Reading Speed Now

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Do you read fast enough? Do you need an edge to satisfy the reading demands this "Information Age" has placed upon most of us? Would it help you to double your reading speed right now? One of my favorite tricks when I was teaching Psychology of Learning to graduate students was to offer them "Dr. Clarke's Two-Minute Course in Speed-Reading." I'd give them a timed reading test before, tell them the first technique I'm about to tell you. Then I'd time them while they first practiced the technique. Everyone improved their time immediately while learning the technique. You will, too.

O.K., here's the secret of how to double your reading speed, right now, quick and dirty.

First, if you are reading this on the web page, stop and take a moment to print this article in hard copy. Then, grab a standard size bookmark (most are 8" x 2" or 6" x 1 1/2") or fold a sheet of paper to that size. Now, while reading the rest of this article (and from now on, everything else you read) place the bookmark lengthwise across the page with the lower edge immediately **above** the line of text you are currently reading. As you finish reading a line, pull the bookmark down to cover that line.

What that does for you, and why it will help you read twice as fast is just this simple: it prevents your eyes from backtracking and you from re-reading something you've already seen. Almost everyone has a tendency to re-read, and about half your potential speed is lost in that one habit. Prevent the habit and double your speed instantly!

But that's not all. Having that mark in place helps you focus both your eyes and your attention on the line you are reading. Having a focus will additionally increase your speed. (Furthermore, you can gradually push yourself to even faster reading by moving the bookmark over the line just a little before you've actually finished the line, encouraging your eyes to move a bit faster than your norm. That technique, however is best used after learning to read word groups -- our second speed-increasing concept.)

After breaking your backtracking habit, you may want to go further. An additional increase in speed can be made by learning to see words in groups. Have you ever noticed that it's easier to read magazine and newspaper articles than most books? This is because the text is in columns and the lines are so much shorter that you can see an entire line at a glance. When lines are longer as in, say, a novel, you are likely to become discouraged by that length and break down the line to individual words to read one at a time.

To learn to read word groups instead of individual words, use magazines and newspapers with the bookmark technique. This time, though, you're going to do some surgery on the bookmark. Cut a hole in the center of the bookmark; make that hole 1 line high and about three words long -- just measure an

average column in a magazine or newspaper for height and length. Then, when you read, place the hole in the bookmark over the words you are reading and move the bookmark from left to right as you read the line, then down to the beginning of the next line. This should help you to focus on groups of three words at a time, rather than one word at a time and should automatically shorten the lines for you so that you don't feel pushed to try for a whole line at a time until you are ready. You can cut gradually bigger holes in your bookmark to adjust your ability to its maximum. Obviously, the same hole-in-the-bookmark technique will work as well -- or better -- with books. I recommend starting with newspapers and magazines because you can quickly learn to read an entire line at a glance, which is a great confidence builder.

If you have trouble with grouping words, check to see if you are subvocalizing -- reading word by word because you are reading with your lips instead of your eyes. Put your finger on your lips as you read -- if your lips move, you are subvocalizing. Also, listen to your thoughts as you read -- can you "hear" each word articulated rather than seeing pictures without even noticing actual words? If you do find you are subvocalizing, break the habit by keeping a finger on your lips whenever you read, for about three weeks. That should do the trick.

The foregoing techniques, combined with lots of reading practice should give you an amazing increase in speed. If you become an enthusiast and want more, by all means take a course or read the books recommended in the sidebar to the right. It really is true that you can learn to read in excess of 1000 words per minute. Considering that the national average reading speed is 250 words per minute, you can see the advantages of being able to do so much more.

RESOURCE:

<http://superperformance.com/double.html>