**How to Read Faster: 10 Ways to Increase Your Reading Speed**

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Do you have a lot of paperwork to get through with a deadline that continues to stalk you around every corner? Do you have a lot of reading to do? Do you simply just want to read at a faster rate, whether it be for your own personal reasons, or for work?

So, how to read faster? Here are 10 proven ways to help increase your reading speed.

**1. Stop the Inner Monologue**

One’s inner monologue, also known as subvocalization, is an extremely common trait among readers. It is the process of speaking the words in your head as you read, and it is the biggest obstacle that gets in the way of you being able to increase your reading speed.

If you’re hearing voices in your head when you’re reading, don’t fret. As long as it is your own voice, reading along with you, you’re fine. In fact, this is how teachers teach kids to read – say the words silently in your head as you read.

Do you recall the instructions, “Read in your head, as I read the passage aloud”, that were said fairly often in the classrooms? That is one of the ways in which this habit of having an inner monologue was ingrained into you as a young reader.

When you were initially taught to read, you were taught to sound out everything and read aloud. Once you were proficient enough at that, your teacher had you start saying the words in your head. This is how the habit originated, and most people continue reading this way. It does not adversely affect them in any way, until they start wanting to read at a faster pace. If you are seeking to increase your reading speed, this is the first thing you must learn to overcome.

Why does this slow you down? The average reading speed is pretty much the same as the average talking speed. According to Forbes, the average adult reading speed is 300 words per minute.[1]  
The average talking speed is the same.

Since most people are in the habit of saying the words aloud in their head as they read, they tend to read around the same pace as they talk. This means, your reading speed will only increase so much if you continue to keep up that inner monologue. If you want to continue to increase your reading speed, you need to eliminate it.

To do this, you need to understand one thing: It’s unnecessary. You do not need to say every word in your head in order to understand the material you are reading. It was when you are younger, but now you are able to input the meaning from just seeing the words. Your brain still processes the information.

For example, when you see a “YIELD” sign, do you actually stop to speak the word in your head? Of course not. You just look at it and process it automatically. This is what you need to be doing when you read your print material, such as books or paperwork.

If you have a hard time attempting this, try reading with instrumental music playing in headphones or chew on some gum. A distraction will keep your brain less focused on subvocalization, though you will still look at the words and process them.

**2. Word–Chunking**

Word-chunking closely parallels with the idea of eliminating the inner monologue. This is the act of reading multiple words at once, and is the key to reading faster. All of these reading tips tie together, yet word-chunking is probably the most active tool to use when you work to increase your reading speed.

A person can take in several words at a time, even though we are trained – as mentioned with the inner monologue – to read each word at a time and not miss a single article. Using your peripheral vision is one way to make this step easier, but we will get to that in the next section.

For now, focus on trying to read three words with one glance. Continue on down the page like that, taking note of how much faster you complete the entire page of text. You are still able to process and comprehend what you read, but spend far less time doing it.

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Now, take that concept one step further. Take a pencil and lightly draw two vertical, parallel lines down your page, separating the text into three sections. Start at the top left of the page as usual, and cover up everything below that line with your hand or a piece of paper.

Focus on reading the text in each section as one thing. Chunk the words together, and read them at a glance as you would a road sign. Keep doing this down the page, moving the paper accordingly. You will notice that your speed was faster than before.

Continue with this method until you feel comfortable enough to challenge yourself a bit more.

**3. Do *Not* Reread the Words on the Page**

Before we move on to the peripheral vision part – that’s the real kicker – you’re going to want to make sure you break the habit of rereading the words on the page.

If you watch the average person’s eyes as they read, you will notice they jump and flit about. They do not just flow evenly back and forth, as they should. This is because the average person – you do this, too – tends to backtrack over words they have already read. This is one thing that prevents you from being able to increase your reading speed.

You most likely do this without even realizing that you are doing it, which makes it a bit of a tricky habit to break out of. The easiest way, even though you may feel a bit childish, is to use your finger or bookmark to guide you along.

Keep your finger running back and forth across the page, without stopping or going back. Keep tracking the words as your finger continues to make its way down the text. When you get to the end, think about what you read. You did not go back over a single word (I hope!), and yet you still recall what you have read.

**4. Use Peripheral Vision**

Congratulations! You’ve made it to the key step that really ties everything together. While this may not be the final step, it’s certainly a critical one.

Use the techniques from everything above to view and comprehend several words at one time. Instead of chunking in smaller groups of words, try reading one line at a time. This involves looking at the center of the line, and using your peripheral vision to read the rest of it. Scan the page in this manner and, when you reach the bottom, you will find that you still understood what you read, but you did it in record time.

**5. Use a Timer**

Speaking of ‘record time’, now is your chance to test yourself and work on how to increase your reading speed each time you read. Set a timer for one minute, reading normally as the time dwindles down. When the timer goes off, note how many pages you have read.

The website, *[WordstoPages](http://wordstopages.com/)*, will help you to figure out how many words you have read. Now, combine everything you have learned and repeat the test. Jot down that number, too.

Keep doing this, continuing to beat your previous count each time. Set a daily or weekly goal, and treat yourself when you reach it. Continue with this little game, and you’ll be able to increase your reading speed in no time!

**6. Set a Goal**

Holding yourself accountable will better ensure you stick with your reading and your timer tests. Give yourself a goal of a certain number of pages to read each day/week/etc., and stick to it. When you reach it, treat yourself. Incentive never hurt anyone!

**7. Read MORE**

The old adage, “Practice makes perfect,” is actually pretty darn accurate. Any professional, artist, musician, etc. practices their work regularly.

A reader should be doing the same thing. The more you read, the more you will be better at it. The better you are at reading, the more you will increase your reading speed.

Theodore Roosevelt read one book before breakfast, and then three or four more in the evening. He also read papers and other such pamphlet-style reading material. I’m not sure how long these books were, but I am going to assume they were of average length. Use his obsession as fuel for your own goal.

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**8. Use a Marker**

Do you find your vision slipping and sliding through the page as you read? Not a problem. Simply place an index card below each line, and slip it down as you read. This will ensure you stay at reading one line at a time, rather than flitting your eyes about and taking nothing in.

**9. Work on Improving Your Vocabulary**

Think about it: You’re reading along, and then you run into a word you don’t know. Do you skip it? Do you try to figure it out by context? Do you stop to look it up? Whichever course of action you take, you are slowing your time significantly, if not stopping it all together to go and look up the retarding word.

If you work on improving your vocabulary, you will know more words. The more words you add to your repertoire, the faster you read. The faster you read, the more you can read. It may be self-evident, but it’s important.

**10. Skim the Main Points FIRST**

Finally, when you’re in a real time-crunch and need to get something read by yesterday, take a deep breath and calm down. Open the book, and take some time reading over all the main points. Read the table of contents. Read the subtitles. Read the captions under the diagrams. Get an overall feel for the chapter/section/etc..

Next, read the first paragraph of each main section. Read the last. Read the middle. Think this over in your head, and piece it together.

Then, start reading everything else while employing the techniques we have just discussed. You’ll retain your information better, as well as your get your reading done faster.