



# Speed Reading Workshop

## Key Highlights and Takeaways

*There is no greater skill than having the ability to get through new information quickly, and remember it.*

### Essential Techniques to Enhance Your Reading Efficiency

#### 1. Using Visual Cues

- **Technique:** Use your hand, finger or pen to guide your eyes.  
**Benefit:** Using a visual cue as a pacer boosts your reading speed and improves comprehension by forcing you to focus more intently on the material, thereby enhancing your overall concentration.

#### 2. Adjusting Reading Speed

- **Tip:** Begin each paragraph by slowing down on the first sentence, then gradually accelerate through the remainder, repeating this process for each paragraph.
- **Advantage:** Constantly adjusting your speed enhances comprehension, prevents distractions and stimulates your focus. By varying your reading speed, you effectively trick yourself into paying better attention to the material.

#### 3. Mindfulness of Old Reading Habits

- **Fixation:** Occurs when you read on a word-by-word basis, which slows you down. You are capable of reading groups of words by utilizing your peripheral vision. Using a visual cue allows your eyes to move smoothly across the page, enabling you to pick up groups of words more effectively instead of reading word by word.
- **Regression:** The habit of going back to re-read parts of the text or entire sections, often unnecessarily. This habit is tied to focus and concentration. When you get caught up in the details, it's easy to lose sight of the big picture.
- **Subvocalization:** The act of saying all the words in your head while reading, also known as auditory reassurance. This slows you down because your thinking speed is much faster than your talking speed. Remember, we read for ideas, not just words.



## 4. Practicing Speed Drills

- **Activity:** Engage in regular eye-training exercises.
- **Goal:** The primary goal of a speed drill is to purposefully read faster than your usual pace, ideally at 2X your normal reading speed. Speed reading is largely about training your eyes to get used to seeing words at a faster pace and learning how to pick up groups of words more effectively.

**Drill:** Read a section (or chapter) with comprehension and then go back to the beginning, forcing yourself to see all the words you just read in half the time. Use a timer to hold yourself accountable. The emphasis during the speed drill is on speed, not comprehension. Since you already read the material for good comprehension the first time, the speed drill serves as a hand-eye coordination exercise. You may pick up additional details during this second exposure, but the focus remains on improving your reading speed.

## 5. Reading Faster on Screens

- **Tool:** Use AccelaReader with Rapid Serial Visual Presentation (RSVP).
- **Outcome:** AccelaReader is a free practice and productivity tool that helps you read faster and trains your eyes to grasp groups of words more effectively while reading on the screen. Simply copy and paste any text into AccelaReader to have the words blink on the screen at a speed you set. You can also choose the number of words that blink at the same time.

## 6. Implementing the IRIS Method

**The IRIS Method:** This method includes four steps: Inspect, Read, Inquire, and Store.

### 1. Inspect:

- **Overview:** Start with a strategic overview of the material.
- **Technique:** Use the 80/20 principle to prioritize important content and ask yourself, "How can I get 80% of the information in 20% of the time?"
- **Strategy:** There is no rule that says you need to read from beginning to end. Read out of order, focusing on the most important information and where it can be found. Read the introduction (or abstract/executive summary) and conclusion of the chapter/section/report. Read headings,



sub-headings, bold-faced words, or anything that stands out. If there are no introductions or conclusions, read the first and last paragraphs. If there are no headings/sub-headings, read the first sentence of each paragraph.

- **Purpose:** Familiarize yourself with what you're about to read so you know what to expect. This helps you get through the information more quickly, efficiently, effectively, and confidently. Sometimes you'll find exactly what you're looking for during the inspection and may not need to read the rest of the material.

## 2. Read:

- **Action:** After the inspection, go back to the beginning and read everything.
- **Focus:** Avoid the urge to switch your focus, re-read, or take notes midway through a paragraph. Force yourself to finish the paragraph/section and then determine whether you need to look something up, write something down or switch your focus to something else. Maintain a clear view of the big picture without getting caught up in the details.

## 3. Inquire:

- **Reflection:** This step involves reflecting on what you've just read.
- **Questioning:** Ask questions to focus your mind. Did you accomplish your goal in reading this material? Is there anything that needs to be remembered? If so, how will you remember it?
- **Technique:** Implement the 25/5 Rule (Pomodoro Technique). 25 minutes of focused reading followed by a 5-minute break. Repeat. Frequent breaks improve your mental agility. Use a timer to hold yourself accountable.

## 4. Store:

- **Memory:** Determine if there is anything that needs to be remembered from what you read. Implement the memory techniques covered in our Maximizing Memory Workshop.
- **Alternative:** This step can also be substituted with a Speed Drill.

By combining these techniques, you can enhance your reading speed and comprehension, ensuring a more efficient and effective approach to managing and retaining information. Reading encompasses all that we do, and the beauty of this skill-set lies in its immediate applicability to your own material. These techniques allow you to visualize your own strategic use cases and enable you to keep up with your required daily reading while simultaneously reinforcing and fine-tuning your reading efficiency.