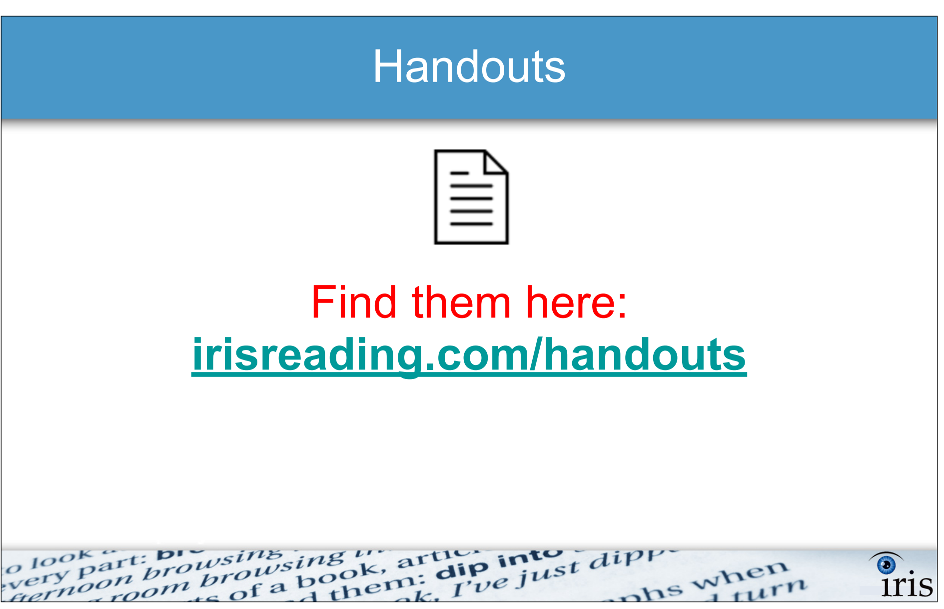
Speed Reading Workshop
Paul Nowak
Founder & CEO
irisreading.com



Handouts
Find them here:
irisreading.com/handouts
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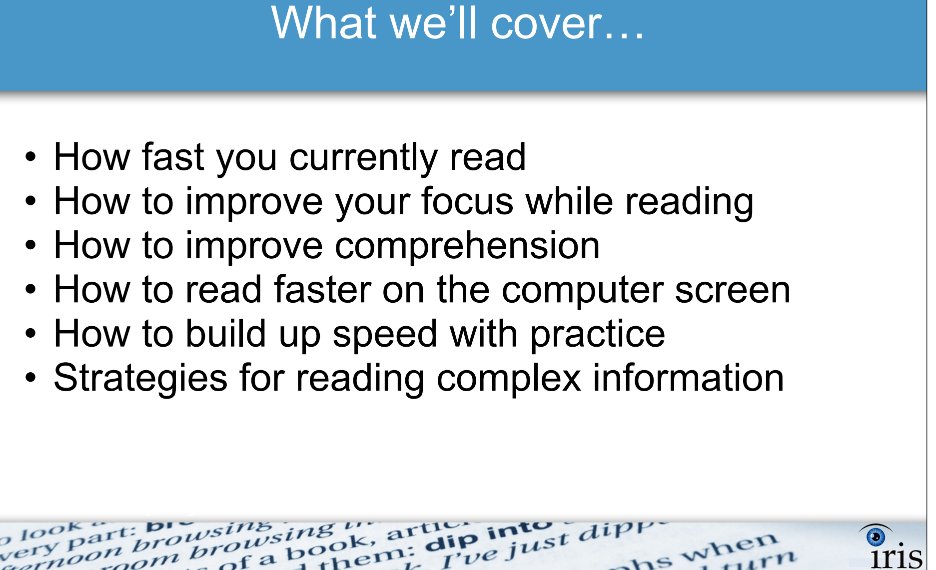

What we'll cover…
• How fast you currently read
• How to improve your focus while reading
• How to improve comprehension
• How to read faster on the computer screen
• How to build up speed with practice
• Strategies for reading complex information
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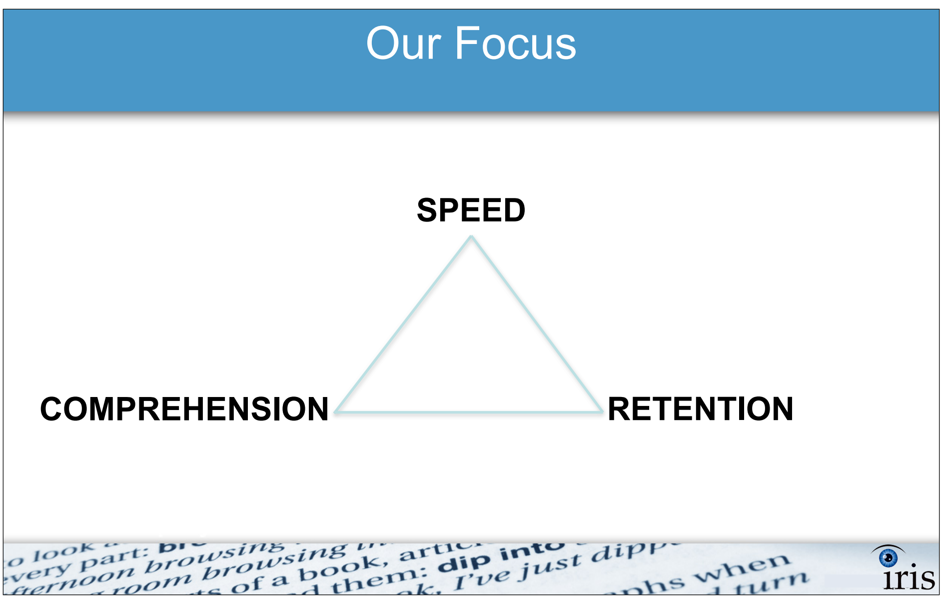

Our Focus
SPEED
COMPREHENSION
RETENTION
iris

How Most People Read

As a general rule, a contract is formed upon a valid offer, acceptance, and consideration. Generally, the formation of a contract requires a bargain in which there is a manifestation of mutual assent to an exchange. An analysis of contract formation is as follows: (1) was there a proper offer and acceptance of the offer; (2) was there proper consideration or an appropriate substitute for consideration; and (3) are there any applicable defenses to the formation of the contract. Offer, acceptance, and consideration are discussed in this section.

Old Reading Habits

Old Reading Habits

Fixation

An analysis of contract formation is as follows...

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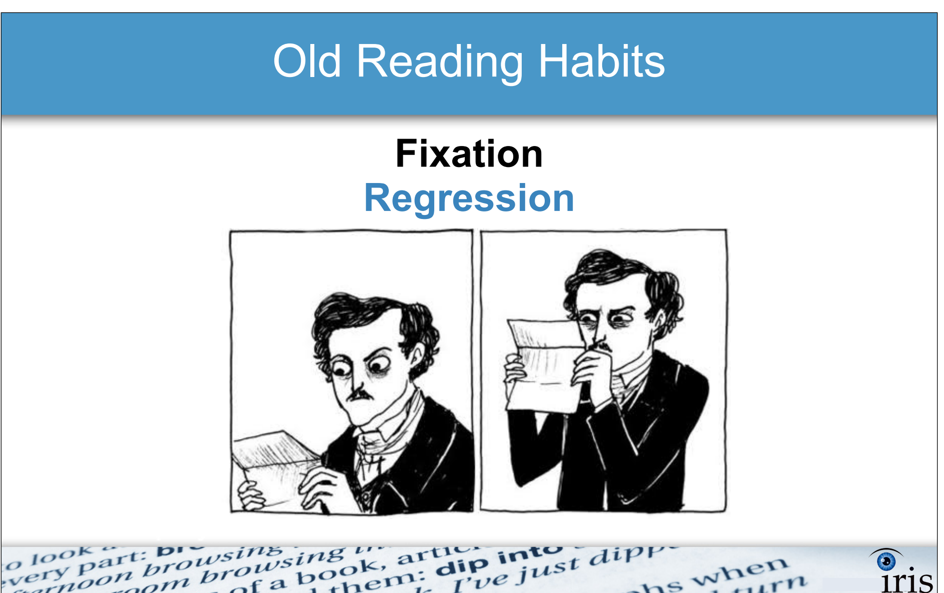
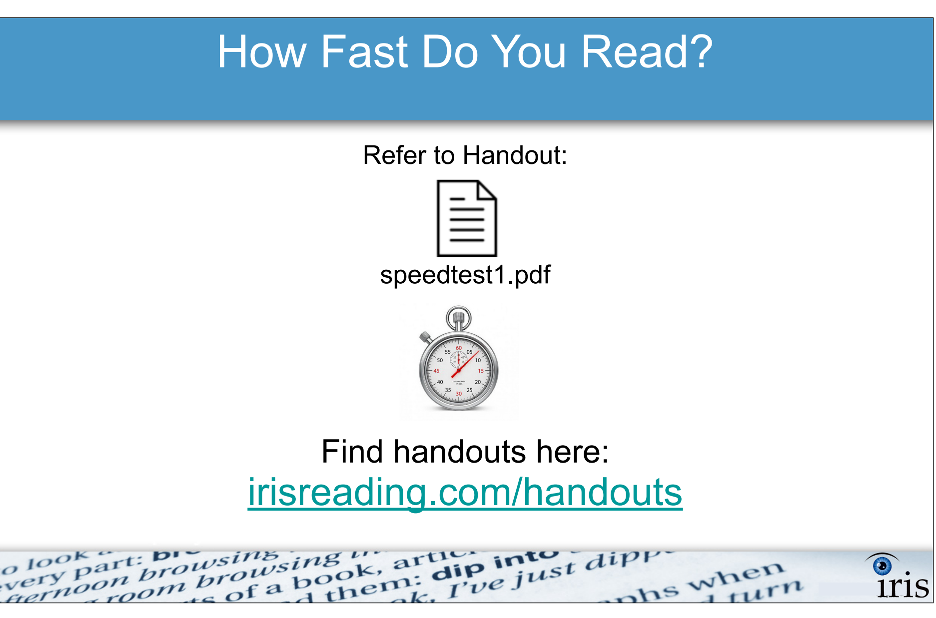
Old Reading Habits

Fixation

Regression





***The Age of Distraction* by Leo Babauta**

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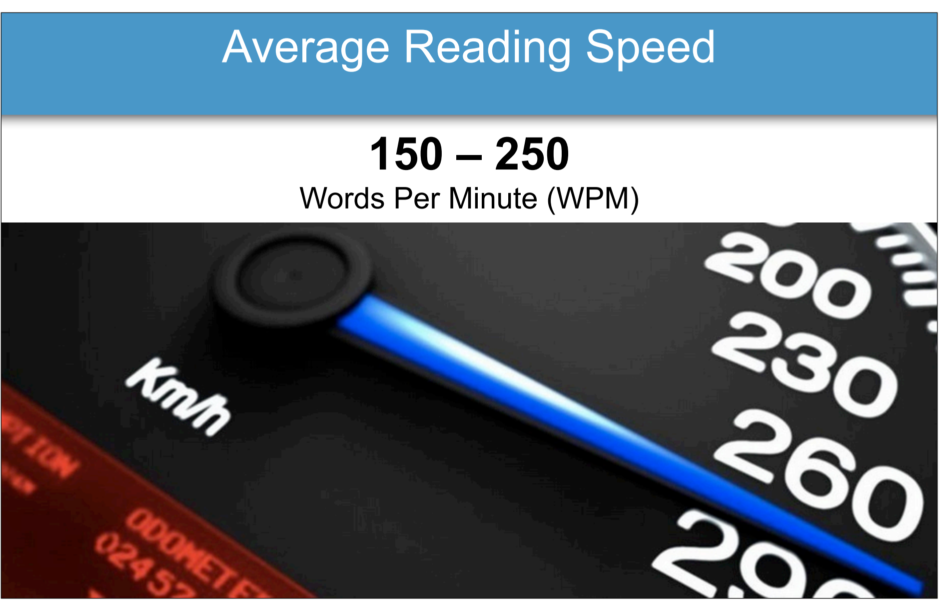
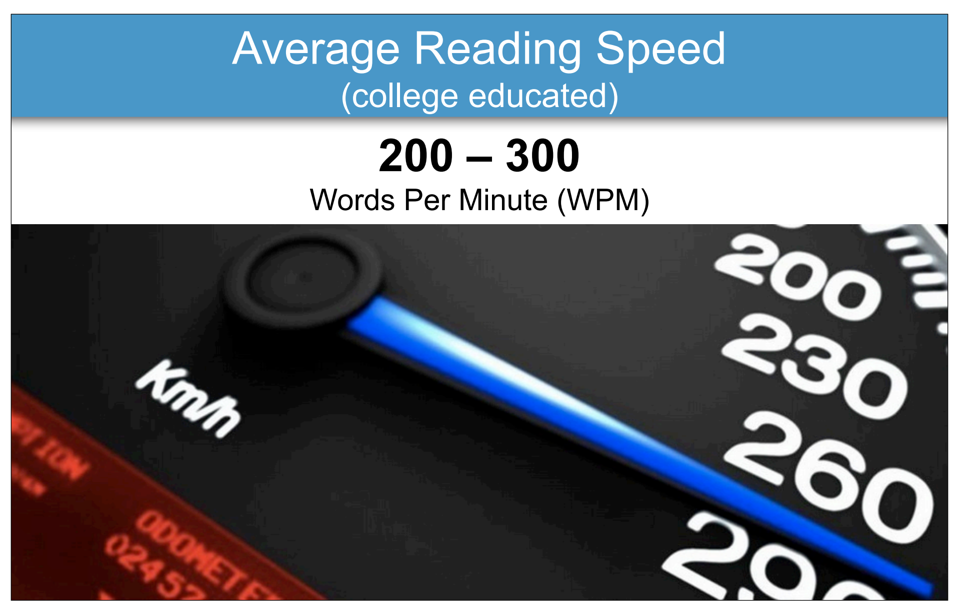
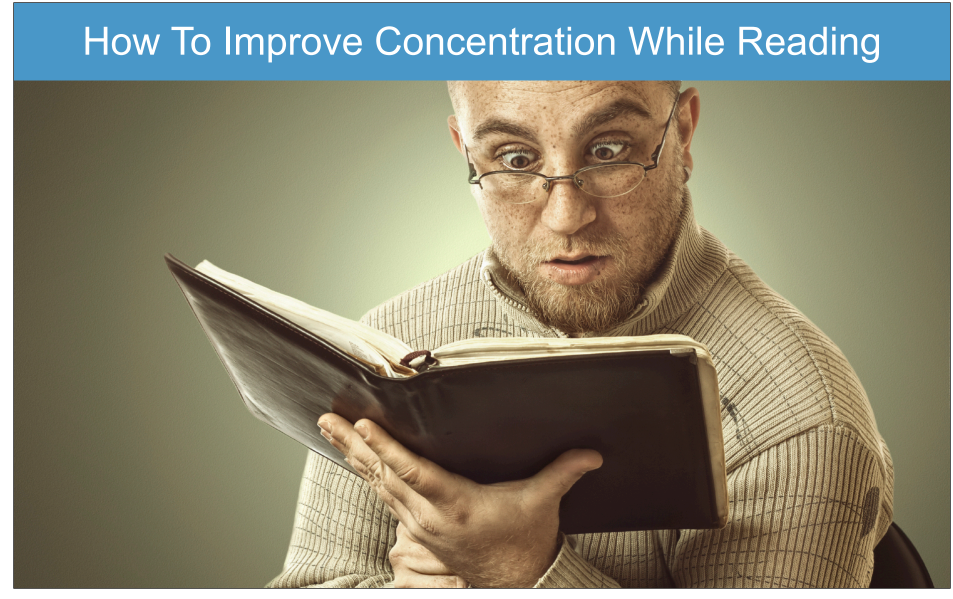
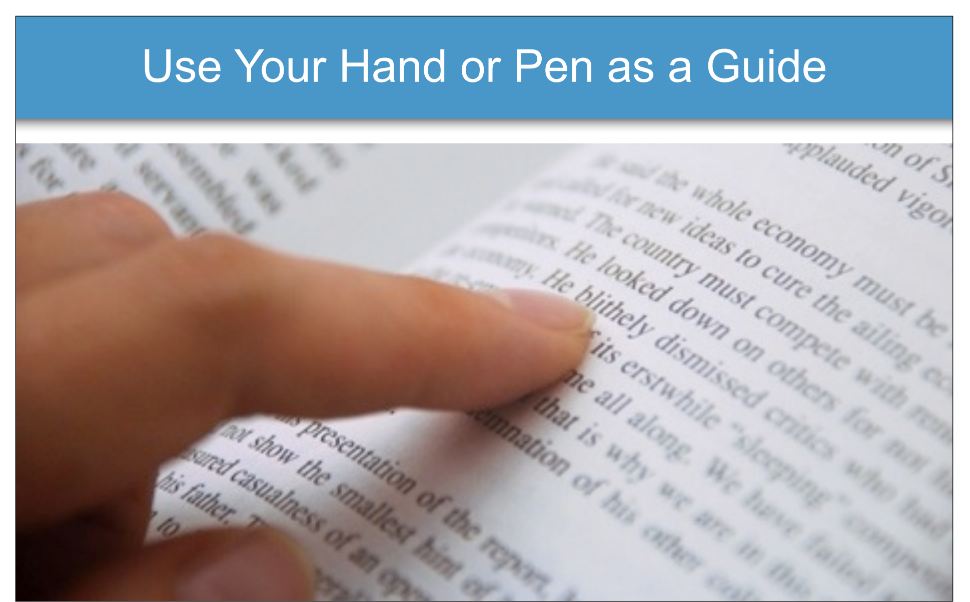



Average Reading Speed
(college educated)
200 – 300
Words Per Minute (WPM)
200
230
260
Km/h

Old Reading Habits
Fixation
Regression
Subvocalization
iris

Average Reading Speed = Average Talking Speed
150 – 250 WPM
200
230
260
Km/h

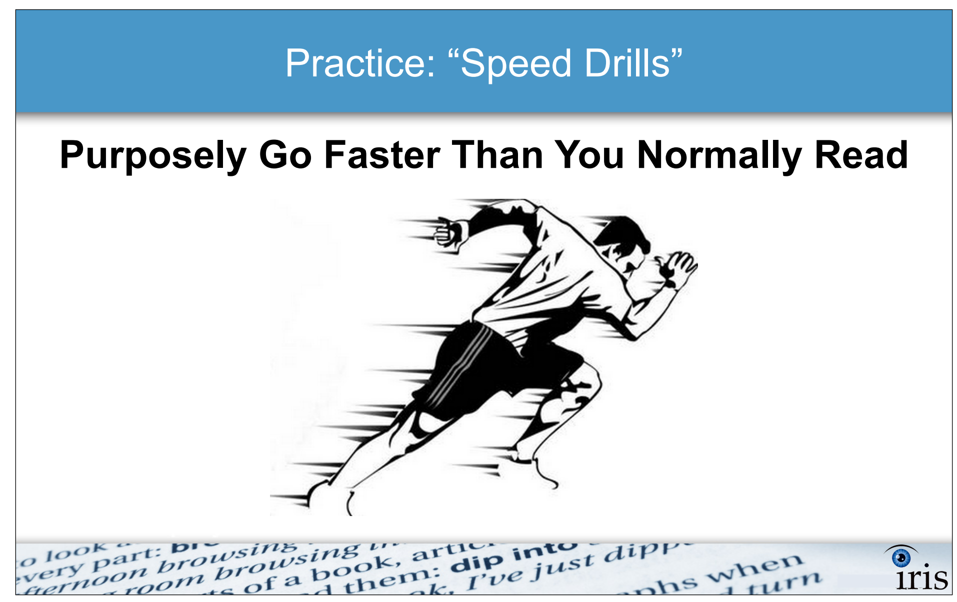

How To Improve Concentration While Reading


Use Your Hand or Pen as a Guide

Reading on the Screen
iris

Reading on the Screen
AccelaReader
AccelaReader.com
iris

How do you get better at anything?
iris



Speed Drill:

40-seconds

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35-seconds

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1-minute
&
30-seconds

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15-seconds

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Back To Normal Reading

Refer to Handout:

speedtest2.pdf

Find handouts here:
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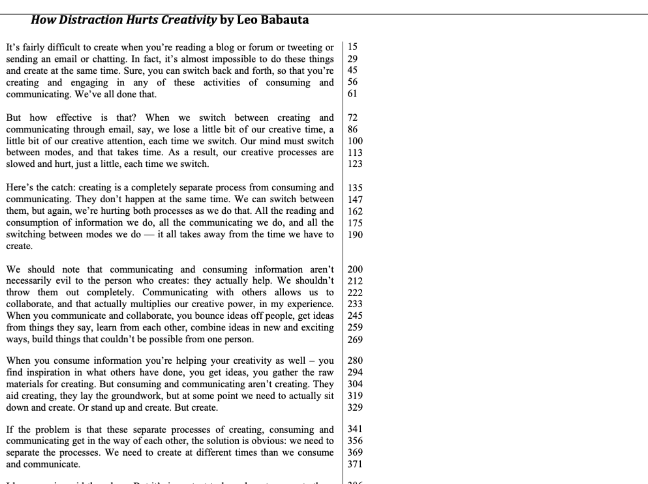

***How Distraction Hurts Creativity* by Leo Babauta**

It's fairly difficult to create when you're reading a blog or forum or tweeting or 15
sending an email or chatting. In fact, it's almost impossible to do these things 29
and create at the same time. Sure, you can switch back and forth, so that you're 45
creating and engaging in any of these activities of consuming and 56
communicating. We've all done that. 61

But how effective is that? When we switch between creating and 72
communicating through email, say, we lose a little bit of our creative time, a 86
little bit of our creative attention, each time we switch. Our mind must switch 100
between modes, and that takes time. As a result, our creative processes are 113
slowed and hurt, just a little, each time we switch. 123

Here's the catch: creating is a completely separate process from consuming and 135
communicating. They don't happen at the same time. We can switch between 147
them, but again, we're hurting both processes as we do that. All the reading and 162
consumption of information we do, all the communicating we do, and all the 175
switching between modes we do — it all takes away from the time we have to 190
create.

We should note that communicating and consuming information aren't 200
necessarily evil to the person who creates: they actually help. We shouldn't 212
throw them out completely. Communicating with others allows us to 222
collaborate, and that actually multiplies our creative power, in my experience. 233
When you communicate and collaborate, you bounce ideas off people, get ideas 245
from things they say, learn from each other, combine ideas in new and exciting 259
ways, build things that couldn't be possible from one person. 269

When you consume information you're helping your creativity as well – you 280
find inspiration in what others have done, you get ideas, you gather the raw 294
materials for creating. But consuming and communicating aren't creating. They 304
aid creating, they lay the groundwork, but at some point we need to actually sit 319
down and create. Or stand up and create. But create. 329

If the problem is that these separate processes of creating, consuming and 341
communicating get in the way of each other, the solution is obvious: we need to 356
separate the processes. We need to create at different times than we consume 369
and communicate. 371

I know, easier said than done. But it's important to learn how to separate these 386
processes. Because in the end, when you separate them, you'll free up your time 400
and mind for creating, and create better and more prodigiously than ever before. 413

Separate your day: a time for creating, and a time for consuming and 426
communicating. And never the twain shall meet. You can split your day into 439
many different combinations of the two, but don't put them all together. Or if 453
you do, just be aware that you're hurting your creativity. That's OK sometimes, 466
as there isn't a need to be uber-productive, as long as you're doing something 480
you enjoy. But if your interest is in creating, separate your day. 492

How To Improve Comprehension

Slowing Down & Speeding Up

India's Skills Famine

by James Surowiecki

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But India has run into a surprising hitch on its way to superpower status: its inexhaustible supply of workers is becoming exhausted. Although India has one of the youngest workforces on the planet, the head of Infosys said recently that there was an "acute shortage of skilled manpower," and a study by Hewitt Associates projects that this year salaries for skilled workers will rise fourteen and a half per cent, a sure sign that demand for skilled labor is outstripping supply.

How is this possible in a country that every year produces two and a half million college graduates and four hundred thousand engineers? Start with the fact that just ten per cent of Indians get any kind of post-secondary education, compared with some fifty per cent who do in the U.S. Moreover, of that ten per cent, the vast majority go to one of India's seventeen thousand colleges, many of which are closer to community colleges than to four-year institutions. India does have more than three hundred universities, but a recent survey by the London *Times Higher Education Supplement* put only two of them among the top hundred in the world. Many Indian graduates therefore enter the workforce with a low level of skills. A current study led by Vivek Wadhwa, of Duke University, has found that if you define "engineer" by U.S. standards, India produces just a hundred and seventy thousand engineers a year, not four hundred thousand. Infosys says that, of 1.3 million applicants for jobs last year, it found only two per cent acceptable.

There was a time when many economists believed that post-secondary education didn't have much impact on economic growth. The really important educational gains, they thought, came from giving rudimentary skills to large numbers of people (which India still needs to do—at least thirty per cent of the population is illiterate). They believed that, in economic terms, society got a very low rate of return on its investment in higher education. But lately that assumption has been overturned, and the social rate of return on investment in university education in India has been calculated at an impressive nine or ten per cent. In other words, every dollar India puts into higher education creates value for the economy as a whole. Yet India spends roughly three and a half per cent of its G.D.P. on education, significantly below the percentage spent by the U.S., even though India's population is much younger, and spending on education should be proportionately higher.

The irony of the current situation is that India was once considered to be overeducated. In the seventies, as its economy languished, it seemed to be a country with too many engineers and Ph.D.s working as clerks in government offices. Once the Indian business climate loosened up, though, that meant companies could tap a backlog of hundreds of thousands of eager, skilled workers at their disposal. Unfortunately, the educational system did not adjust to the new realities. Between 1985 and 1997, the number of teachers in India actually fell, while the percentage of students enrolled in high school or college rose more slowly than it did in the rest of the world. Even as the need for skilled workers was increasing, India was devoting relatively fewer resources to producing them.

Since the Second World War, the countries that have made successful leaps from developing to developed status have all poured money, public and private, into education. South Korea now spends a higher percentage of its national income on education than nearly any other country in the world. Taiwan had a system of universal primary education before its phase of hypergrowth began. And, more recently, Ireland's economic boom was spurred, in part, by an opening up and expansion of primary and secondary schools and increased funding for universities. Education will be all the more important for India's well-being; the earlier generation of so-called Asian Tigers depended heavily on manufacturing, but India's focus on services and technology will require a more skilled and educated workforce.

India has taken tentative steps to remedy its skills famine—the current government has made noises about doubling spending on education, and a host of new colleges and universities have sprung up since the mid-nineties. But India's impressive economic performance has made the problem seem less urgent than it actually is, and allowed the government to defer difficult choices. (In a country where more than three hundred million people live on a dollar a day, producing college graduates can seem like a low priority.) Ultimately, the Indian government has to pull off a very tough trick, making serious changes at a time when things seem to be going very well. It needs, in other words, a clear sense of everything that can still go wrong. The paradox of the Indian economy today is that the more certain its glowing future seems to be, the less likely that future becomes.

Slow Down Then Speed Up

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Changing Speed Forces You To Pay Attention

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Inspecting an Article:
Read the
1st Sentence
of Each
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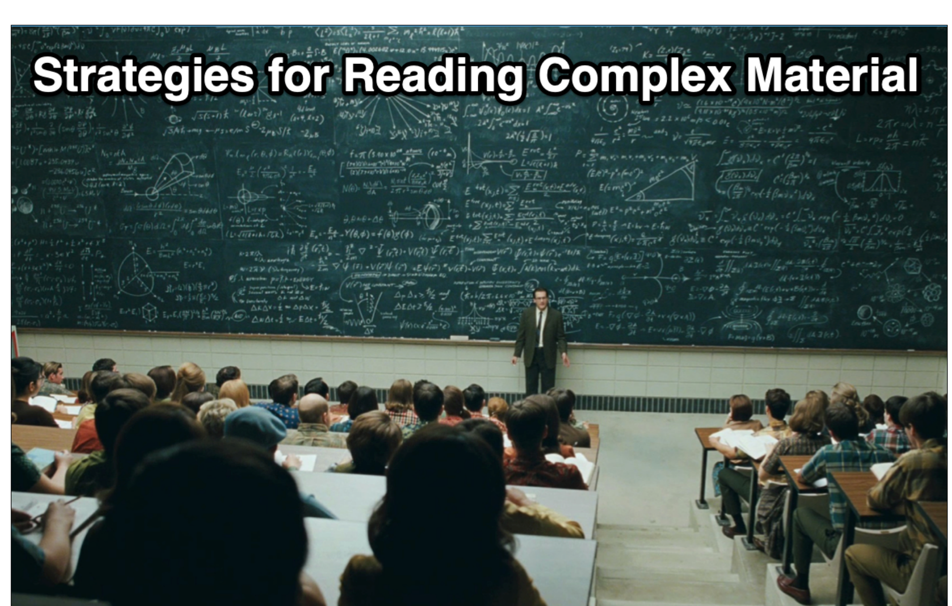
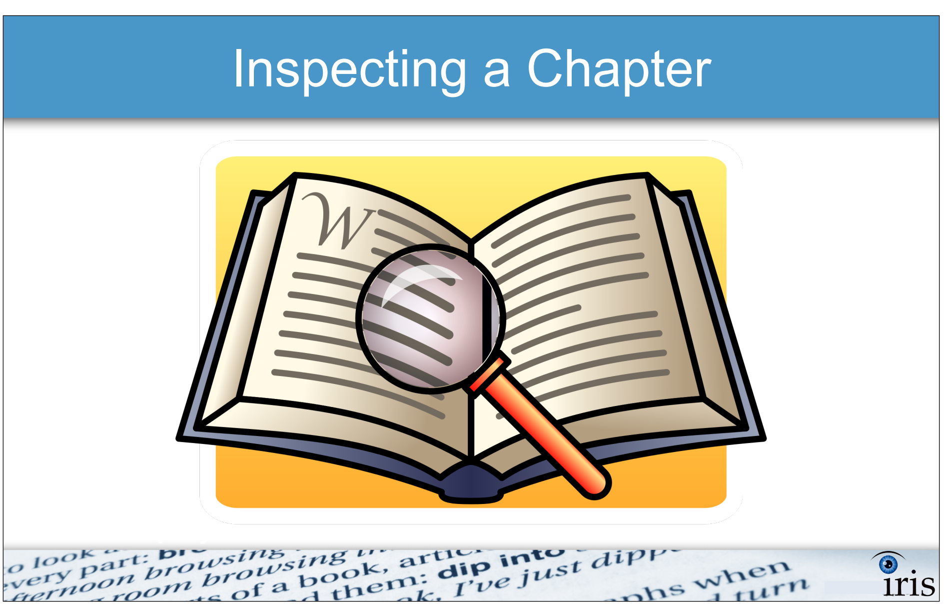
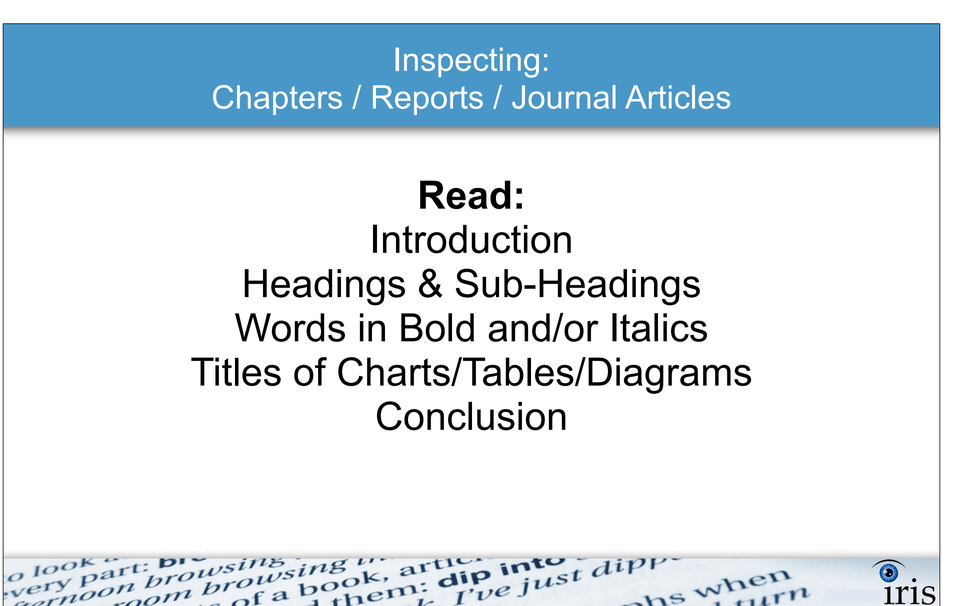
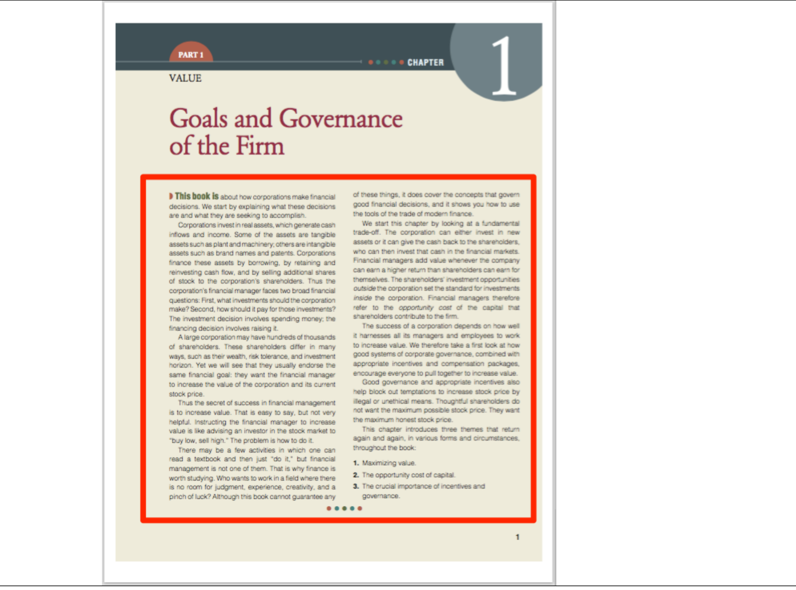
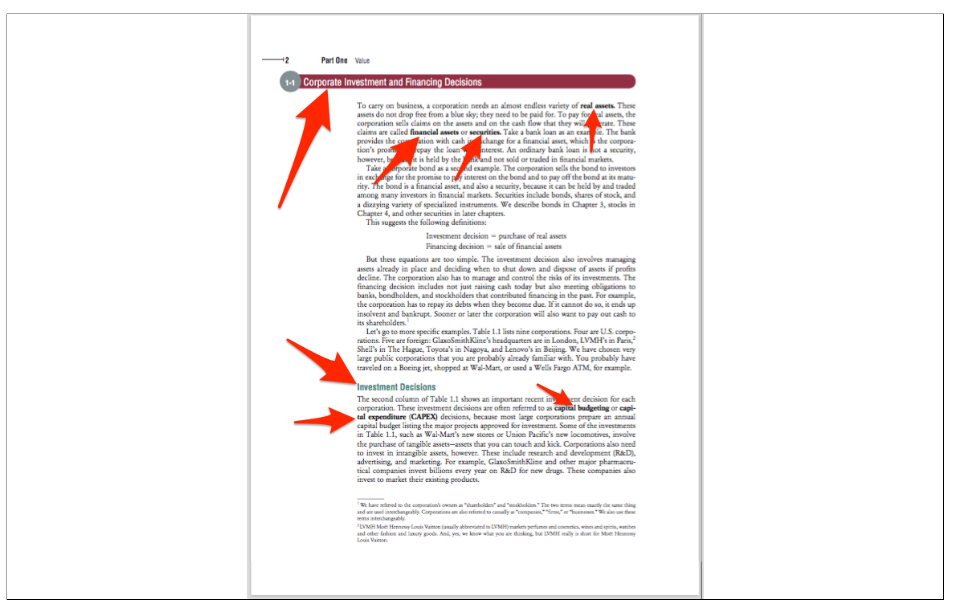
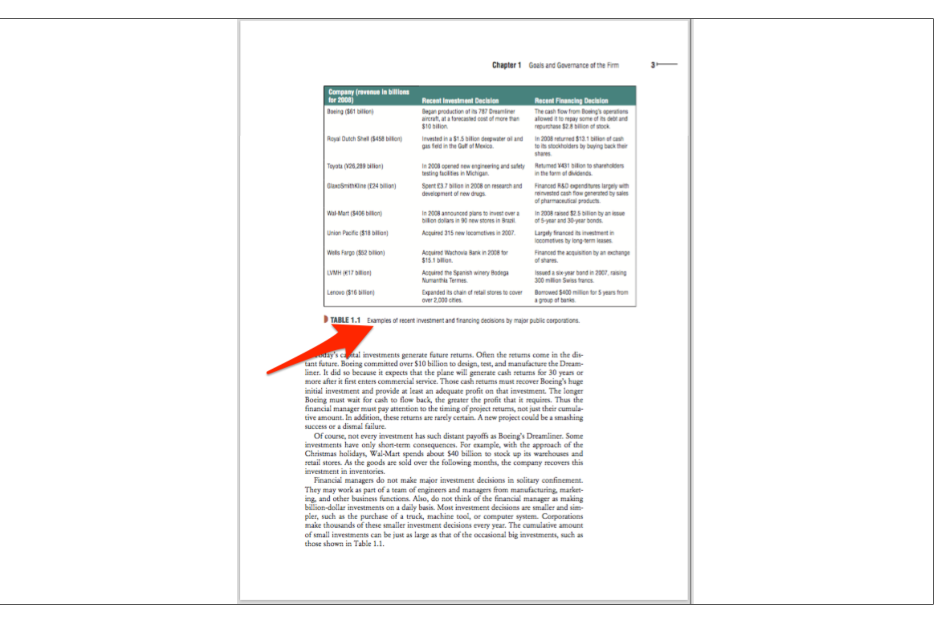







PART 1
VALUE
CHAPTER 1
Goals and Governance of the Firm


2 Part One Value
1-1 Corporate Investment and Financing Decisions
Investment decision = purchase of real assets
Financing decision = sale of financial assets
Investment Decisions


Chapter 1 Goals and Governance of the Firm 3
TABLE 1.1 Examples of recent investment and financing decisions by major public corporations.

Financing Decisions

The third column of Table 1.1 lists a recent financing decision by each corporation. A corporation can raise money (cash) from lenders or from shareholders. If it borrows, the lenders contribute the cash, and the corporation promises to pay back the debt plus a fixed rate of interest. If the shareholders put up the cash, they get no fixed return, but they hold shares of stock and therefore get a fraction of future profits and cash flow. The shareholders are *equity investors*, who contribute *equity financing*. The choice between debt and equity financing is called the **capital structure** decision. *Capital* refers to the firm's sources of long-term financing.

The financing choices available to large corporations seem almost endless. Suppose the firm decides to borrow. Should it borrow from a bank or borrow by issuing bonds that can be traded by investors? Should it borrow for 1 year or 20 years? If it borrows for 20 years, should it reserve the right to pay off the debt early if interest rates fall? Should it borrow in Paris, receiving and promising to repay euros, or should it borrow dollars in New York? As Table 1.1 shows, the French company LVMH borrowed Swiss francs, but it could have borrowed dollars or euros instead.

Corporations raise equity financing in two ways. First, they can issue new shares of stock. The investors who buy the new shares put up cash in exchange for a fraction of the corporation's future cash flow and profits. Second, the corporation can take the cash flow generated by its existing assets and reinvest the cash in new assets. In this case the corporation is reinvesting on behalf of existing stockholders. No new shares are issued.

What happens when a corporation does not reinvest all of the cash flow generated by its existing assets? It may hold the cash in reserve for future investment, or it may pay the cash back to its shareholders. Table 1.1 shows that in 2008 Toyota paid cash dividends of ¥431 billion, equivalent to about $4.3 billion. In the same year Shell paid back $13.1 billion to its stockholders by repurchasing shares. This was in addition to $9.8 billion paid out as cash dividends. The decision to pay dividends or repurchase shares is called the *payout decision*. We cover payout decisions in Chapter 16.

In some ways financing decisions are less important than investment decisions. Financial managers say that "value comes mainly from the asset side of the balance sheet." In fact the most successful corporations sometimes have the simplest financing strategies. Take Microsoft as an example. It is one of the world's most valuable corporations. At the end of 2008, Microsoft shares traded for $19.44 each. There were about 8.9 billion shares outstanding. Therefore Microsoft's overall market value—its *market capitalization* or *market cap*—was $19.44 × 8.9 = $173 billion. Where did this market value come from? It came from Microsoft's product development, from its brand name and worldwide customer base, from its research and development, and from its ability to make profitable future investments. The value did *not* come from sophisticated financing. Microsoft's financing strategy is very simple: it carries no debt to speak of and finances almost all investment by retaining and reinvesting cash flow.

Financing decisions may not add much value, compared with good investment decisions, but they can destroy value if they are stupid or if they are ambushed by bad news. For example, when real estate mogul Sam Zell led a buyout of the *Chicago Tribune* in 2007, the newspaper took on about $8 billion of additional debt. This was not a stupid decision, but it did prove fatal. As advertising revenues fell away in the recession of 2008, the *Tribune* could no longer service its debt. In December 2008 it filed for bankruptcy with assets of $7.6 billion and debts of $12.9 billion.

Business is inherently risky. The financial manager needs to identify the risks and make sure they are managed properly. For example, debt has its advantages, but too much debt can land the company in bankruptcy, as the *Chicago Tribune* discovered. Companies can also be knocked off course by recessions, by changes in commodity prices, interest rates and exchange rates, or by adverse political developments. Some of these risks can be hedged or insured, however, as we explain in Chapters 26 and 27.

What Is a Corporation?

We have been referring to "corporations." Before going too far or too fast, we offer some basic definitions. Details follow as needed in later chapters.

A **corporation** is a legal entity. In the view of the law, it is a legal *person* that is owned by its shareholder[illegible] legal person, the corporation can make contracts, carry on a business, borrow or lend [illegible], and sue or be sued. One corporation can make a takeover bid for another and then [illegible] the two businesses. Corporations pay taxes—but cannot vote!

In the U.S., corporati[illegible] are formed under state law, based on *articles of incorporation* that set out the purpose of [illegible] business and how it is to be governed and operated.[3] For example, the articles of incorporation specify the composition and role of the *board of directors*. A corporation's directors choose and advise top management and are required to sign off on some corporate actions, such as mergers and the payment of dividends to shareholders.

A corporation is owned by its shareholders but is legally distinct from them. Therefore the shareholders have **limited liability,** which means that shareholders cannot be held personally responsible for the co[illegible]'s debts. When the U.S. financial corporation Lehman Brothers failed in 2008, n[illegible] demanded that its stockholders put up more money to cover Lehman's massive d[illegible]hareholders can lose their entire investment in a corporation, but no more.

Corporations do not have to be prominent, [illegible]ltinational businesses like those listed in Table 1.1. You can organize a local plumbing contractor or barber shop as a corporation if you want to take the trouble.[4] But usually corporations are larger businesses or businesses that aspire to grow.

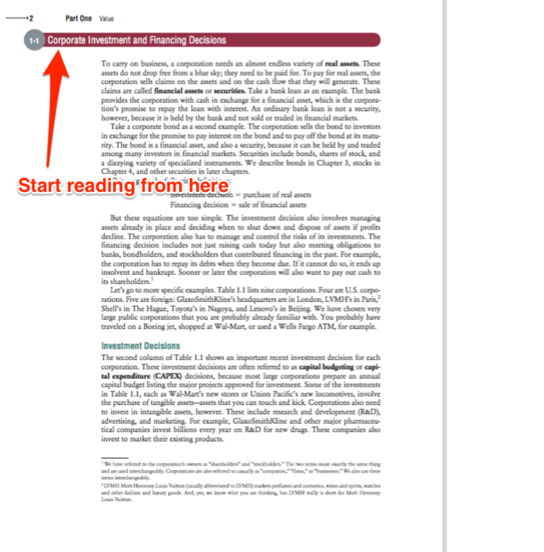
When a corporation is first established, its shares may be privately held by a small group of investors, perhaps the company's managers and a few backers. In this case the shares are not publicly traded and the company is *closely held*. Eventually, when the firm grows and new shares are issued to raise additional capital, its shares are traded in public markets such as the New York Stock Exchange. Such corporations are known as *public companies*. Most well-known corporations in the U.S. are public companies with widely dispersed shareholdings. In other countries, it is more common for large corporations to remain in private hands, and many public companies may be controlled by just a handful of investors. The latter category includes such well-known names as Fiat, Porsche, Benetton, Bosch, IKEA, and the Swatch Group.

A large public corporation may have hundreds of thousands of shareholders, who own the business but cannot possibly manage or control it directly. This *separation of ownership and control* gives corporations permanence. Even if managers quit or are dismissed and replaced, the corporation survives. Today's stockholders can sell all their shares to new investors without disrupting the operations of the business. Corporations can, in principle, live forever, and in practice they may survive many human lifetimes. One of the oldest corporations is the Hudson's Bay Company, which was formed in 1670 to profit from the fur trade between northern Canada and England. The company still operates as one of Canada's leading retail chains.

The separation of ownership and control can also have a downside, for it can open the door for managers and directors to act in their own interests rather than in the stockholders' interest. We return to this problem later in the chapter.

[3] In the U.S., corporations are identified by the label "Corporation," "Incorporated," or "Inc.," as in US Airways Group, Inc. The U.K. identifies public corporations by "plc" (short for "Public Limited Corporation"). French corporations have the suffix "SA" ("Société Anonyme"). The corresponding labels in Germany are "GmbH" ("Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung") or "AG" ("Aktiengesellschaft").

[4] Single individuals doing business on their own behalf are called sole proprietorships. Smaller, local businesses can also be organized as partnerships or professional corporations (PCs). We cover these alternative forms of business organization in Chapter 14.



Harnessing the Science of Persuasion

by *Robert B. Cialdini*

No leader can succeed without mastering the art of persuasion. But there's hard science in that skill, too, and a large body of psychological research suggests there are six basic laws of winning friends and influencing people.

A lucky few have it; most of us do not. A handful of gifted "naturals" simply know how to capture an audience, sway the undecided, and convert the opposition. Watching these masters of persuasion work their magic is at once impressive and frustrating. What's impressive is not just the easy way they use charisma and eloquence to convince others to do as they ask. It's also how eager those others are to do what's requested of them, as if the persuasion itself were a favor they couldn't wait to repay.

The frustrating part of the experience is that these born persuaders are often unable to account for their remarkable skill or pass it on to others. Their way with people is an art, and artists as a rule are far better at doing than at explaining. Most of them can't offer much help to those of us who possess no more than the ordinary quotient of charisma and eloquence but who still have to wrestle with leadership's fundamental challenge: getting things done through others. That challenge is painfully familiar to corporate executives, who every day have to figure out how to motivate and direct a highly individualistic work force. Playing the "Because I'm the boss" card is out. Even if it weren't demeaning and demoralizing for all concerned, it would be out of place in a world where cross-functional teams, joint ventures, and intercompany partnerships have blurred the lines of authority. In such an environment, persuasion skills exert far greater influence over others' behavior than formal power structures do.

Which brings us back to where we started. Persuasion skills may be more necessary than ever, but how can executives acquire them if the most talented practitioners can't pass them along? By looking to science. For the past five decades, behavioral scientists have conducted experiments that shed considerable light on the way certain interactions lead people to concede, comply, or change. This research shows that persuasion works by appealing to a limited set of deeply rooted human drives and needs, and it does so in predictable ways. Persuasion, in other words, is governed by basic principles that can be taught, learned, and applied. By mastering these principles, executives can bring scientific rigor to the business of securing consensus, cutting deals, and winning concessions. In the pages that follow, I describe six fundamental principles of persuasion and suggest a few ways that executives can apply them in their own organizations.

The Principle of Liking:

People like those who like them.

The Application:

Uncover real similarities and offer genuine praise.

The retailing phenomenon known as the Tupperware party is a vivid illustration of this principle in action. The demonstration party for Tupperware products is hosted by an individual, almost always a woman, who invites to her home an array of friends, neighbors, and relatives. The guests' affection for their hostess predisposes them to buy from her, a dynamic that was confirmed by a 1990 study of purchase decisions made at demonstration parties. The researchers, Jonathan Frenzen and Harry Davis, writing in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, found that the guests' fondness for their hostess weighed twice as heavily

Harvard Business Review

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by Robert B. Cialdini

No leader can succeed without mastering the art of persuasion. But there's hard science in that skill, too, and a large body of psychological research suggests there are six basic laws of winning friends and influencing people.

A lucky few have it; most of us do not. A handful of gifted "naturals" simply know how to capture an audience, sway the undecided, and convert the opposition. Watching these masters of persuasion work their magic is at once impressive and frustrating. What's impressive is not just the easy way they use charisma and eloquence to convince others to do as they ask. It's also how eager those others are to do what's requested of them, as if the persuasion itself were a favor they couldn't wait to repay.

The frustrating part of the experience is that these born persuaders are often unable to account for their remarkable skill or pass it on to others. Their way with people is an art, and artists as a rule are far better at doing than at explaining. Most of them can't offer much help to those of us who possess no more than the ordinary quotient of charisma and eloquence but who still have to wrestle with leadership's fundamental challenge: getting things done through others. That challenge is painfully familiar to corporate executives, who every day have to figure out how to motivate and direct a highly individualistic work force. Playing the "Because I'm the boss" card is out. Even if it weren't demeaning and demoralizing for all concerned, it would be out of place in a world where cross-functional teams, joint ventures, and intercompany partnerships have blurred the lines of authority. In such an environment, persuasion skills exert far greater influence over others' behavior than formal power structures do.

Which brings us back to where we started. Persuasion skills may be more necessary than ever, but how can executives acquire them if the most talented practitioners can't pass them along? By looking to science. For the past five decades, behavioral scientists have conducted experiments that shed considerable light on the way certain interactions lead people to concede, comply, or change. This research shows that persuasion works by appealing to a limited set of deeply rooted human drives and needs, and it does so in predictable ways. Persuasion, in other words, is governed by basic principles that can be taught, learned, and applied. By mastering these principles, executives can bring scientific rigor to the business of securing consensus, cutting deals, and winning concessions. In the pages that follow, I describe six fundamental principles of persuasion and suggest a few ways that executives can apply them in their own organizations.

The Principle of Liking:

People like those who like them.

The Application:

Uncover real similarities and offer genuine praise.

The retailing phenomenon known as the Tupperware party is a vivid illustration of this principle in action. The demonstration party for Tupperware products is hosted by an individual, almost always a woman, who invites to her home an array of friends, neighbors, and relatives. The guests' affection for their hostess predisposes them to buy from her, a dynamic that was confirmed by a 1990 study of purchase decisions made at demonstration parties. The researchers, Jonathan Frenzen and Harry Davis, writing in the Journal of Consumer Research, found that the guests' fondness for their hostess weighed twice as heavily

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in their purchase decisions as their regard for the products they bought. So when guests at a Tupperware party buy something, they aren't just buying to please themselves. They're buying to please their hostess as well.

What's true at Tupperware parties is true for business in general: If you want to influence people, win friends. How? Controlled research has identified several factors that reliably increase liking, but two stand out as especially compelling—similarity and praise. Similarity literally draws people together. In one experiment, reported in a 1968 article in the *Journal of Personality*, participants stood physically closer to one another after learning that they shared political beliefs and social values. And in a 1963 article in *American Behavioral Scientists*, researcher F. B. Evans used demographic data from insurance company records to demonstrate that prospects were more willing to purchase a policy from a salesperson who was akin to them in age, religion, politics, or even cigarette-smoking habits.

Managers can use similarities to create bonds with a recent hire, the head of another department, or even a new boss. Informal conversations during the workday create an ideal opportunity to discover at least one common area of enjoyment, be it a hobby, a college basketball team, or reruns of *Seinfeld*. The important thing is to establish the bond early because it creates a presumption of goodwill and trustworthiness in every subsequent encounter. It's much easier to build support for a new project when the people you're trying to persuade are already inclined in your favor.

Praise, the other reliable generator of affection, both charms and disarms. Sometimes the praise doesn't even have to be merited. Researchers at the University of North Carolina writing in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* found that men felt the greatest regard for an individual who flattered them unstintingly even if the comments were untrue. And in their book *Interpersonal Attraction* (Addison-Wesley, 1978), Ellen Berscheid and Elaine Hatfield Walster presented experimental data showing that positive remarks about another person's traits, attitude, or performance reliably generates liking in return, as well as willing compliance with the wishes of the person offering the praise.

Along with cultivating a fruitful relationship, adroit managers can also use praise to repair one that's damaged or unproductive. Imagine you're the manager of a good-sized unit within your organization. Your work frequently brings you into contact with another manager—call him Dan—whom you have come to dislike. No matter how much you do for him, it's not enough. Worse, he never seems to believe that you're doing the best you can for him. Resenting his attitude and his obvious lack of trust in your abilities and in your good faith, you don't spend as much time with him as you know you should; in consequence, the performance of both his unit and yours is deteriorating.

The research on praise points toward a strategy for fixing the relationship. It may be hard to find, but there has to be something about Dan you can sincerely admire, whether it's his concern for the people in his department, his devotion to his family, or simply his work ethic. In your next encounter with him, make an appreciative comment about that trait. Make it clear that in this case at least, you value what he values. I predict that Dan will relax his relentless negativity and give you an opening to convince him of your competence and good intentions.

The Principle of Reciprocity:

People repay in kind.

The Application:

Give what you want to receive.

Praise is likely to have a warming and softening effect on Dan because, ornery as he is, he is still human and subject to the universal human tendency to treat people the way they treat him. If you have ever caught yourself smiling at a coworker just because he or she smiled first, you know how this principle works.

Charities rely on reciprocity to help them raise funds. For years, for instance, the Disabled American Veterans organization, using only a well-crafted fund-raising letter, garnered a very respectable 18% rate of response to its appeals. But when the group started enclosing a small gift in the envelope, the response rate nearly doubled to 35%. The gift—personalized address labels—was extremely modest, but it wasn't what prospective donors received that made the difference. It was that they had gotten anything at all.

What works in that letter works at the office, too. It's more than an effusion of seasonal spirit, of course, that impels suppliers to shower gifts on purchasing departments at holiday time. In 1996, purchasing

managers admitted to an interviewer from *Inc.* magazine that after having accepted a gift from a supplier, they were willing to purchase products and services they would have otherwise declined. Gifts also have a startling effect on retention. I have encouraged readers of my book to send me examples of the principles of influence at work in their own lives. One reader, an employee of the State of Oregon, sent a letter in which she offered these reasons for her commitment to her supervisor:

He gives me and my son gifts for Christmas and gives me presents on my birthday. There is no promotion for the type of job I have, and my only choice for one is to move to another department. But I find myself resisting trying to move. My boss is reaching retirement age, and I am thinking I will be able to move out after he retires... [F]or now, I feel obligated to stay since he has been so nice to me.

Ultimately, though, gift giving is one of the cruder applications of the rule of reciprocity. In its more sophisticated uses, it confers a genuine first-mover advantage on any manager who is trying to foster positive attitudes and productive personal relationships in the office: Managers can elicit the desired behavior from coworkers and employees by displaying it first. Whether it's a sense of trust, a spirit of cooperation, or a pleasant demeanor, leaders should model the behavior they want to see from others.

The same holds true for managers faced with issues of information delivery and resource allocation. If you lend a member of your staff to a colleague who is shorthanded and staring at a fast-approaching deadline, you will significantly increase your chances of getting help when you need it. Your odds will improve even more if you say, when your colleague thanks you for the assistance, something like, "Sure, glad to help. I know how important it is for me to count on your help when I need it."

The Principle of Social Proof:

People follow the lead of similar others.

The Application:

Use peer power whenever it's available.

Social creatures that they are, human beings rely heavily on the people around them for cues on how to think, feel, and act. We know this intuitively, but intuition has also been confirmed by experiments, such as the one first described in 1982 in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. A group of researchers went door-to-door in Columbia, South Carolina, soliciting donations for a charity campaign and displaying a list of neighborhood residents who had already donated to the cause. The researchers found that the longer the donor list was, the more likely those solicited would be to donate as well.

To the people being solicited, the friends' and neighbors' names on the list were a form of social evidence about how they should respond. But the evidence would not have been nearly as compelling had the names been those of random strangers. In an experiment from the 1960s, first described in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, residents of New York City were asked to return a lost wallet to its owner. They were highly likely to attempt to return the wallet when they learned that another New Yorker had previously attempted to do so. But learning that someone from a foreign country had tried to return the wallet didn't sway their decision one way or the other.

The lesson for executives from these two experiments is that persuasion can be extremely effective when it comes from peers. The science supports what most sales professionals already know: Testimonials from satisfied customers work best when the satisfied customer and the prospective customer share similar circumstances. That lesson can help a manager faced with the task of selling a new corporate initiative. Imagine that you're trying to streamline your department's work processes. A group of veteran employees is resisting. Rather than try to convince the employees of the move's merits yourself, ask an old-timer who supports the initiative to speak up for it at a team meeting. The compatriot's testimony stands a much better chance of convincing the group than yet another speech from the boss. Stated simply, influence is often best exerted horizontally rather than vertically.

The Principle of Consistency:

People align with their clear commitments.

The Application:

Make their commitments active, public, and voluntary.

Liking is a powerful force, but the work of persuasion involves more than simply making people feel warmly toward you, your idea, or your product. People need not only to like you but to feel committed to what you want them to do. Good turns are one reliable way to make people feel obligated to you. Another is to win a public commitment from them.

My own research has demonstrated that most people, once they take a stand or go on record in favor of a position, prefer to stick to it. Other studies reinforce that finding and go on to show how even a small, seemingly trivial commitment can have a powerful effect on future actions. Israeli researchers writing in 1983 in the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* recounted how they asked half the residents of a large apartment complex to sign a petition favoring the establishment of a recreation center for the handicapped. The cause was good and the request was small, so almost everyone who was asked agreed to sign. Two weeks later, on National Collection Day for the Handicapped, all residents of the complex were approached at home and asked to give to the cause. A little more than half of those who were not asked to sign the petition made a contribution. But an astounding 92% of those who did sign donated money. The residents of the apartment complex felt obligated to live up to their commitments because those commitments were active, public, and voluntary. These three features are worth considering separately.

There's strong empirical evidence to show that a choice made actively—one that's spoken out loud or written down or otherwise made explicit—is considerably more likely to direct someone's future conduct than the same choice left unspoken. Writing in 1996 in the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Delia Cioffi and Randy Garner described an experiment in which college students in one group were asked to fill out a printed form saying they wished to volunteer for an AIDS education project in the public schools. Students in another group volunteered for the same project by leaving blank a form stating that they didn't want to participate. A few days later, when the volunteers reported for duty, 74% of those who showed up were students from the group that signaled their commitment by filling out the form.

The implications are clear for a manager who wants to persuade a subordinate to follow some particular course of action: Get it in writing. Let's suppose you want your employee to submit reports in a more timely fashion. Once you believe you've won agreement, ask him to summarize the decision in a memo and send it to you. By doing so, you'll have greatly increased the odds that he'll fulfill the commitment because, as a rule, people live up to what they have written down.

Research into the social dimensions of commitment suggests that written statements become even more powerful when they're made public. In a classic experiment, described in 1955 in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, college students were asked to estimate the length of lines projected on a screen. Some students were asked to write down their choices on a piece of paper, sign it, and hand the paper to the experimenter. Others wrote their choices on an erasable slate, then erased the slate immediately. Still others were instructed to keep their decisions to themselves.

The experimenters then presented all three groups with evidence that their initial choices may have been wrong. Those who had merely kept their decisions in their heads were the most likely to reconsider their original estimates. More loyal to their first guesses were the students in the group that had written them down and immediately erased them. But by a wide margin, the ones most reluctant to shift from their original choices were those who had signed and handed them to the researcher.

This experiment highlights how much most people wish to appear consistent to others. Consider again the matter of the employee who has been submitting late reports. Recognizing the power of this desire, you should, once you've successfully convinced him of the need to be more timely, reinforce the commitment by making sure it gets a public airing. One way to do that would be to send the employee an e-mail that reads, "I think your plan is just what we need. I showed it to Diane in manufacturing and Phil in shipping, and they thought it was right on target, too." Whatever way such commitments are formalized, they should never be like the New Year's resolutions people privately make and then abandon with no one the wiser. They should be publicly made and visibly posted.

More than 300 years ago, Samuel Butler wrote a couplet that explains succinctly why commitments must be voluntary to be lasting and effective: "He that complies against his will/Is of his own opinion still." If an undertaking is forced, coerced, or imposed from the outside, it's not a commitment; it's an unwelcome burden. Think how you would react if your boss pressured you to donate to the campaign of a political candidate. Would that make you more apt to opt for that candidate in the privacy of a voting booth? Not likely. In fact, in their 1981 book *Psychological Reactance* (Academic Press), Sharon S. Brehm and Jack W. Brehm present data that suggest you'd vote the opposite way just to express your resentment of the boss's coercion.

This kind of backlash can occur in the office, too. Let's return again to that tardy employee. If you want to

produce an enduring change in his behavior, you should avoid using threats or pressure tactics to gain his compliance. He'd likely view any change in his behavior as the result of intimidation rather than a personal commitment to change. A better approach would be to identify something that the employee genuinely values in the work-place—high-quality workmanship, perhaps, or team spirit—and then describe how timely reports are consistent with those values. That gives the employee reasons for improvement that he can own. And because he owns them, they'll continue to guide his behavior even when you're not watching.

The Principle of Authority:

People defer to experts.

The Application:

Expose your expertise; don't assume it's self-evident.

Two thousand years ago, the Roman poet Virgil offered this simple counsel to those seeking to choose correctly: "Believe an expert." That may or may not be good advice, but as a description of what people actually do, it can't be beaten. For instance, when the news media present an acknowledged expert's views on a topic, the effect on public opinion is dramatic. A single expert-opinion news story in the *New York Times* is associated with a 2% shift in public opinion nationwide, according to a 1993 study described in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*. And researchers writing in the *American Political Science Review* in 1987 found that when the expert's view was aired on national television, public opinion shifted as much as 4%. A cynic might argue that these findings only illustrate the docile submissiveness of the public. But a fairer explanation is that, amid the teeming complexity of contemporary life, a well-selected expert offers a valuable and efficient shortcut to good decisions. Indeed, some questions, be they legal, financial, medical, or technological, require so much specialized knowledge to answer, we have no choice but to rely on experts.

Since there's good reason to defer to experts, executives should take pains to ensure that they establish their own expertise before they attempt to exert influence. Surprisingly often, people mistakenly assume that others recognize and appreciate their experience. That's what happened at a hospital where some colleagues and I were consulting. The physical therapy staffers were frustrated because so many of their stroke patients abandoned their exercise routines as soon as they left the hospital. No matter how often the staff emphasized the importance of regular home exercise—it is,in fact, crucial to the process of regaining independent function—the message just didn't sink in.

Interviews with some of the patients helped us pinpoint the problem. They were familiar with the background and training of their physicians, but the patients knew little about the credentials of the physical therapists who were urging them to exercise. It was a simple matter to remedy that lack of information: We merely asked the therapy director to display all the awards, diplomas, and certifications of her staff on the walls of the therapy rooms. The result was startling: Exercise compliance jumped 34% and has never dropped since.

What we found immensely gratifying was not just how much we increased compliance, but how. We didn't fool or browbeat any of the patients. We *informed* them into compliance. Nothing had to be invented; no time or resources had to be spent in the process. The staff's expertise was real—all we had to do was make it more visible.

The task for managers who want to establish their claims to expertise is somewhat more difficult. They can't simply nail their diplomas to the wall and wait for everyone to notice. A little subtlety is called for. Outside the United States, it is customary for people to spend time interacting socially before getting down to business for the first time. Frequently they gather for dinner the night before their meeting or negotiation. These get-togethers can make discussions easier and help blunt disagreements—remember the findings about liking and similarity—and they can also provide an opportunity to establish expertise. Perhaps it's a matter of telling an anecdote about successfully solving a problem similar to the one that's on the agenda at the next day's meeting. Or perhaps dinner is the time to describe years spent mastering a complex discipline—not in a boastful way but as part of the ordinary give-and-take of conversation.

Persuasion Experts, Safe at Last (Located at the end of this article)

Granted, there's not always time for lengthy introductory sessions. But even in the course of the preliminary conversation that precedes most meetings, there is almost always an opportunity to touch lightly on your relevant background and experience as a natural part of a sociable exchange. This initial

disclosure of personal information gives you a chance to establish expertise early in the game, so that when the discussion turns to the business at hand, what you have to say will be accorded the respect it deserves.

The Principle of Scarcity:

People want more of what they can have less of.

The Application:

Highlight unique benefits and exclusive information.

Study after study shows that items and opportunities are seen to be more valuable as they become less available. That's a tremendously useful piece of information for managers. They can harness the scarcity principle with the organizational equivalents of limited-time, limited-supply, and one-of-a-kind offers. Honestly informing a coworker of a closing window of opportunity—the chance to get the boss's ear before she leaves for an extended vacation, perhaps—can mobilize action dramatically.

Managers can learn from retailers how to frame their offers not in terms of what people stand to gain but in terms of what they stand to lose if they don't act on the information. The power of "loss language" was demonstrated in a 1988 study of California home owners written up in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Half were told that if they fully insulated their homes, they would save a certain amount of money each day. The other half were told that if they failed to insulate, they would lose that amount each day. Significantly more people insulated their homes when exposed to the loss language. The same phenomenon occurs in business. According to a 1994 study in the journal *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, potential losses figure far more heavily in managers' decision making than potential gains.

In framing their offers, executives should also remember that exclusive information is more persuasive than widely available data. A doctoral student of mine, Amram Knishinsky, wrote his 1982 dissertation on the purchase decisions of wholesale beef buyers. He observed that they more than doubled their orders when they were told that, because of certain weather conditions overseas, there was likely to be a scarcity of foreign beef in the near future. But their orders increased 600% when they were informed that no one else had that information yet.

The persuasive power of exclusivity can be harnessed by any manager who comes into possession of information that's not broadly available and that supports an idea or initiative he or she would like the organization to adopt. The next time that kind of information crosses your desk, round up your organization's key players. The information itself may seem dull, but exclusivity will give it a special sheen. Push it across your desk and say, "I just got this report today. It won't be distributed until next week, but I want to give you an early look at what it shows." Then watch your listeners lean forward.

Allow me to stress here a point that should be obvious. No offer of exclusive information, no exhortation to act now or miss this opportunity forever should be made unless it is genuine. Deceiving colleagues into compliance is not only ethically objectionable, it's foolhardy. If the deception is detected—and it certainly will be—it will snuff out any enthusiasm the offer originally kindled. It will also invite dishonesty toward the deceiver. Remember the rule of reciprocity.

Putting It All Together

There's nothing abstruse or obscure about these six principles of persuasion. Indeed, they neatly codify our intuitive understanding of the ways people evaluate information and form decisions. As a result, the principles are easy for most people to grasp, even those with no formal education in psychology. But in the seminars and workshops I conduct, I have learned that two points bear repeated emphasis.

First, although the six principles and their applications can be discussed separately for the sake of clarity, they should be applied in combination to compound their impact. For instance, in discussing the importance of expertise, I suggested that managers use informal, social conversations to establish their credentials. But that conversation affords an opportunity to gain information as well as convey it. While you're showing your dinner companion that you have the skills and experience your business problem demands, you can also learn about your companion's background, likes, and dislikes—information that will help you locate genuine similarities and give sincere compliments. By letting your expertise surface and also establishing rapport, you double your persuasive power. And if you succeed in bringing your dinner partner on board, you may encourage other people to sign on as well, thanks to the persuasive power of social evidence.

The other point I wish to emphasize is that the rules of ethics apply to the science of social influence just as they do to any other technology. Not only is it ethically wrong to trick or trap others into assent, it's ill-advised in practical terms. Dishonest or high-pressure tactics work only in the short run, if at all. Their long-term effects are malignant, especially within an organization which can't function properly without a bedrock level of trust and cooperation.

That point is made vividly in the following account, which a department head for a large textile manufacturer related at a training workshop I conducted. She described a vice president in her company who wrung public commitments from department heads in a highly manipulative manner. Instead of giving his subordinates time to talk or think through his proposals carefully, he would approach them individually at the busiest moment of their workday and describe the benefits of his plan in exhaustive, patience-straining detail. Then he would move in for the kill. "It's very important for me to see you as being on my team on this," he would say. "Can I count on your support?" Intimidated, frazzled, eager to chase the man from their offices so they could get back to work, the department heads would invariably go along with his request. But because the commitments never felt voluntary, the department heads never followed through, and as a result the vice president's initiatives all blew up or petered out.

This story had a deep impact on the other participants in the workshop. Some gulped in shock as they recognized their own manipulative behavior. But what stopped everyone cold was the expression on the department head's face as she recounted the damaging collapse of her superior's proposals. She was smiling.

Nothing I could say would more effectively make the point that the deceptive or coercive use of the principles of social influence is ethically wrong and pragmatically wrongheaded. Yet the same principles, if applied appropriately, can steer decisions correctly. Legitimate expertise, genuine obligations, authentic similarities, real social proof, exclusive news, and freely made commitments can produce choices that are likely to benefit both parties. And any approach that works to everyone's mutual benefit is good business, don't you think? Of course, I don't want to press you into it, but, if you agree, I would love it if you could just jot me a memo to that effect.

Persuasion Experts, Safe at Last

Thanks to several decades of rigorous empirical research by behavioral scientists, our understanding of the how and why of persuasion has never been broader, deeper, or more detailed. But these scientists aren't the first students of the subject. The history of persuasion studies is an ancient and honorable one, and it has generated a long roster of heroes and martyrs.

A renowned student of social influence, William McGuire, contends in a chapter of the *Handbook of Social Psychology*, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press,1985) that scattered among the more than four millennia of recorded Western history are four centuries in which the study of persuasion flourished as a craft. The first was the Periclean Age of ancient Athens, the second occurred during the years of the Roman Republic, the next appeared in the time of the European Renaissance, and the last extended over the hundred years that have just ended, which witnessed the advent of large-scale advertising, information, and mass media campaigns. Each of the three previous centuries of systematic persuasion study was marked by a flowering of human achievement that was suddenly cut short when political authorities had the masters of persuasion killed. The philosopher Socrates is probably the best known of the persuasion experts to run afoul of the powers that be.

Information about the persuasion process is a threat because it creates a base of power entirely separate from the one controlled by political authorities. Faced with a rival source of influence, rulers in previous centuries had few qualms about eliminating those rare individuals who truly understood how to marshal forces that heads of state have never been able to monopolize, such as cleverly crafted language, strategically placed information, and, most important, psychological insight.

It would perhaps be expressing too much faith in human nature to claim that persuasion experts no longer face a threat from those who wield political power. But because the truth about persuasion is no longer the sole possession of a few brilliant, inspired individuals, experts in the field can presumably breathe a little easier. Indeed, since most people in power are interested in remaining in power, they're likely to be more interested in acquiring persuasion skills than abolishing them.

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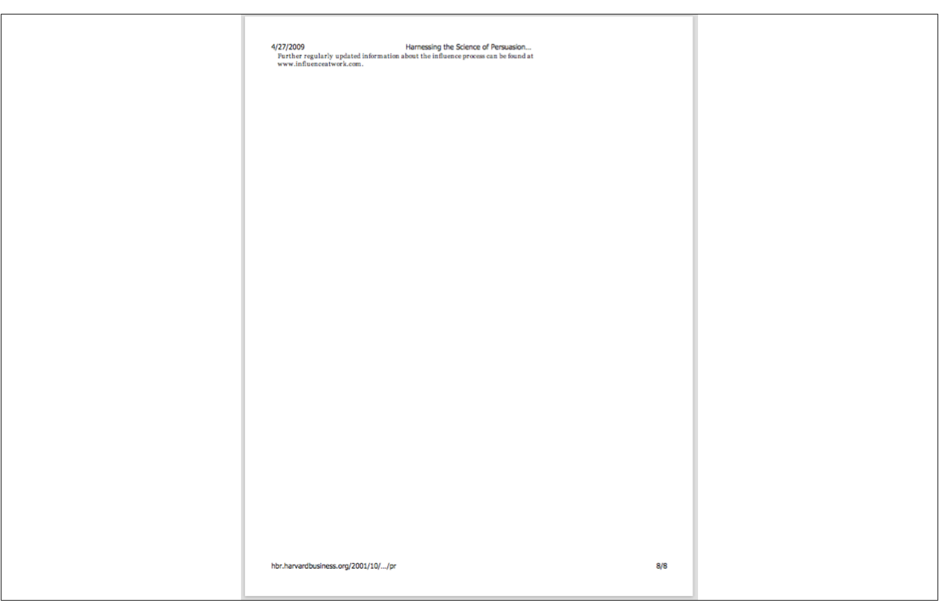

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Further regularly updated information about the influence process can be found at www.influenceatwork.com.

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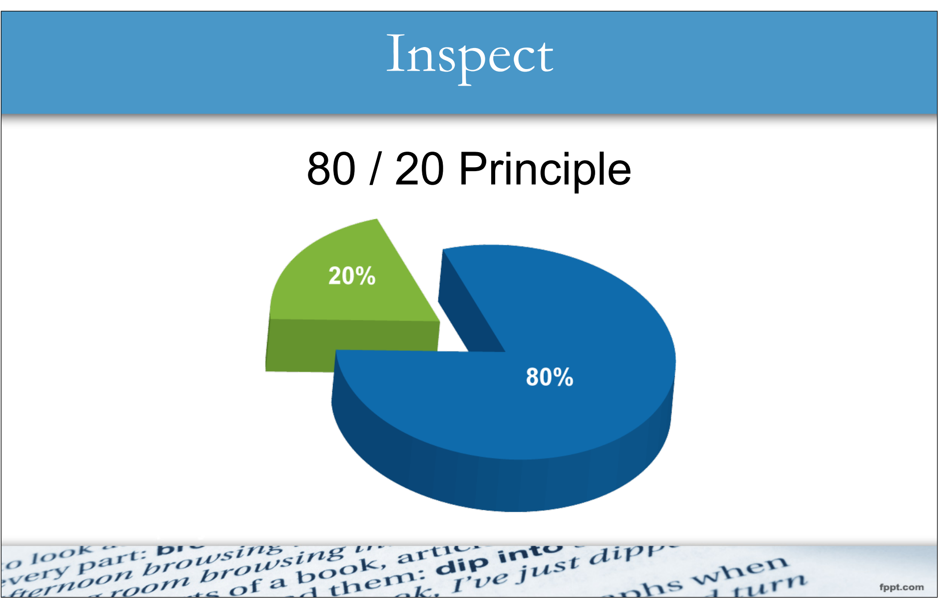

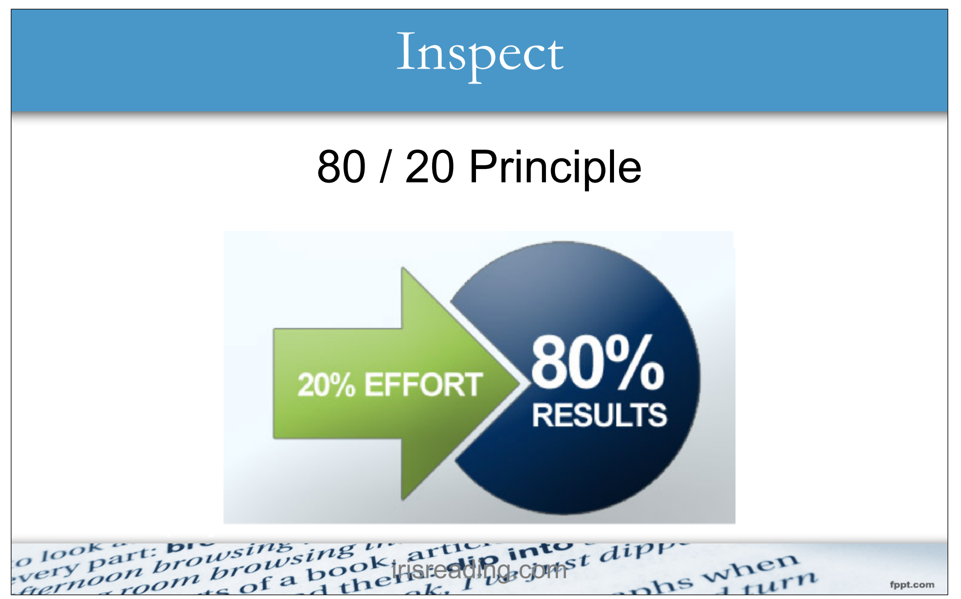

How Does an “Inspection” Influence Speed

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Single-Tasking and Productivity
Passage selected from the book *Focus: A simplicity manifesto in the Age of Distraction*

“Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun’s rays do not burn until brought to a focus.” – Alexander Graham Bell

Many of us grew up in the age of multi-tasking, where you couldn’t call yourself productive if you weren’t a good multi-tasker. We learned to always have several balls in the air at once — while writing something on the computer, we had a phone call going, we were writing something on a notepad or paper form, we were reviewing documents, sometimes even holding a meeting at the same time. That’s the productive worker, the effective executive. When email, instant messaging, blogs and the rest of the Internet came along, multi-tasking went haywire. Now we’re expected to do 10 things on the computer at once, still with the paper, phone, and meetings going, along with texting. Multi-tasking is no longer about being productive — it’s a way of living. However, it’s not a sane way of living, and it’s not necessarily the most effective way of working either.

The Problems with Multi-Tasking

Our brains can really only handle one thing at a time. When we get used to switching between one thing and another we program our brains to have a short attention span. This is why it’s so hard to learn to focus on one thing at a time.

Multi-tasking is not the most effective way to work. It’s less efficient because of the need to constantly switch gears for each new task. Multi-tasking is also more complicated and thus, more prone to errors and stress.

A single-tasking life

Imagine instead, a single-tasking life. Imagine waking and going for a run, as if running were all you do. Nothing else is on your mind but the run, and you do it to the very best of your abilities. Then you eat, enjoying every flavorful bite of your fresh breakfast. You read a novel, as if nothing else in the world existed. You do your work, one task at a time, each task done with full focus and dedication. You spend time with loved ones, as if nothing else existed.

If you live your life this way, by this single principle, it will have tremendous effects. Your work will become more focused. You’ll become better at anything you do. Your time alone will be of better quality. Your time with your family will be much more meaningful. Your reading will have fewer distractions.

How to live a single-tasking life

It sounds nice, but how do you live a life like this? Is it as simple as saying you’re going to do it, or is it impossible? Somewhere in between, of course, and like anything worth doing, it takes practice. Here’s what we recommend:

1. **Become conscious.** When you start doing something, become more aware you’re starting that activity. As you do it, become aware of really doing it, and of the urge to switch to something else. Paying attention is the important first step.

How Does an “Inspection” Influence Speed

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How Fast Did You Read?

Time	WPM
1:00	842
1:15	674
1:30	561
1:45	481
2:00	421
2:15	374
2:30	337
2:45	306
3:00	281
3:15	259
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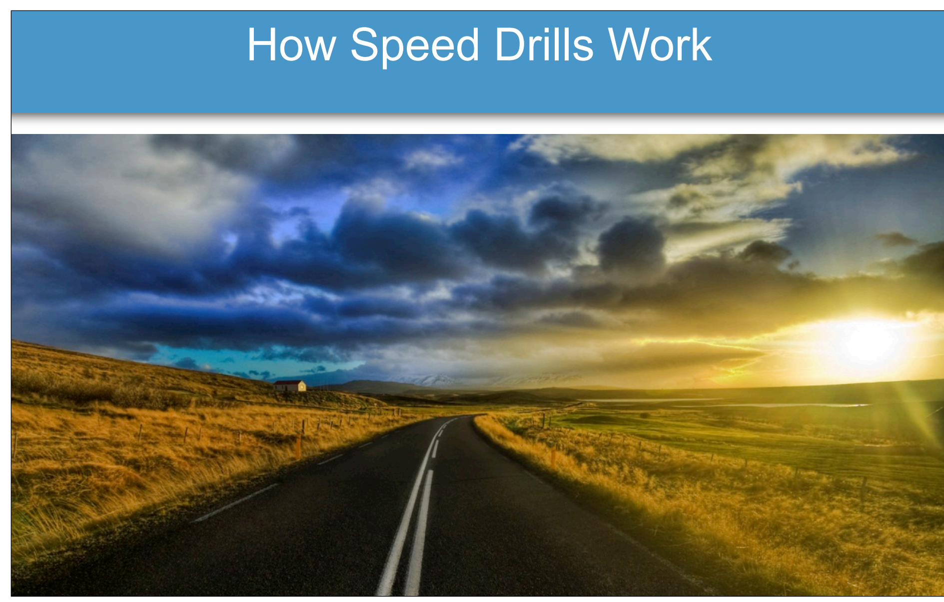
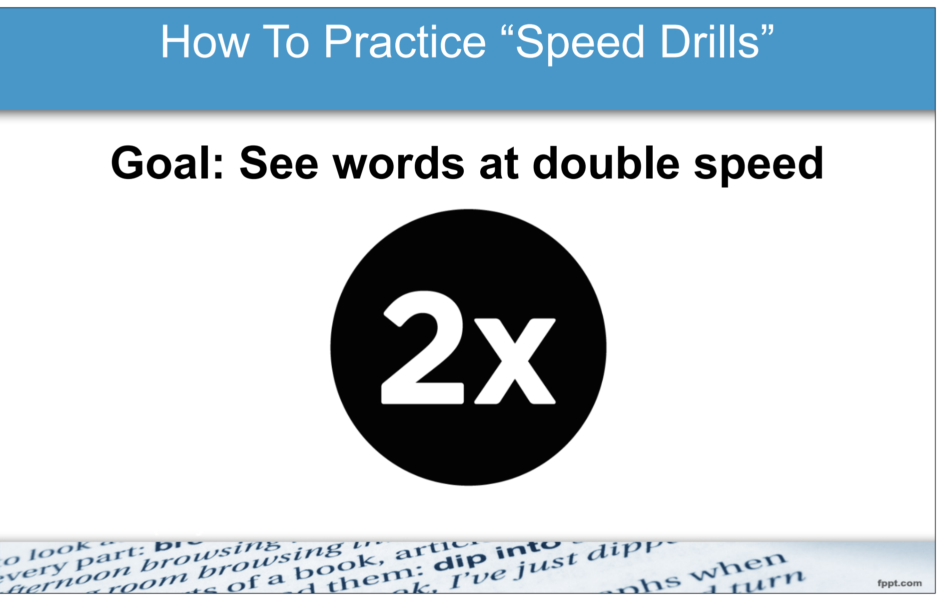


How Speed Drills Work



How To Practice "Speed Drills"
Goal: See words at double speed
2x

How Speed Drills Work

Reading Speed	Practice Speed
200	400
250	500
300	600
350	700
400	800

irisreading.com

fppt.com

Homework

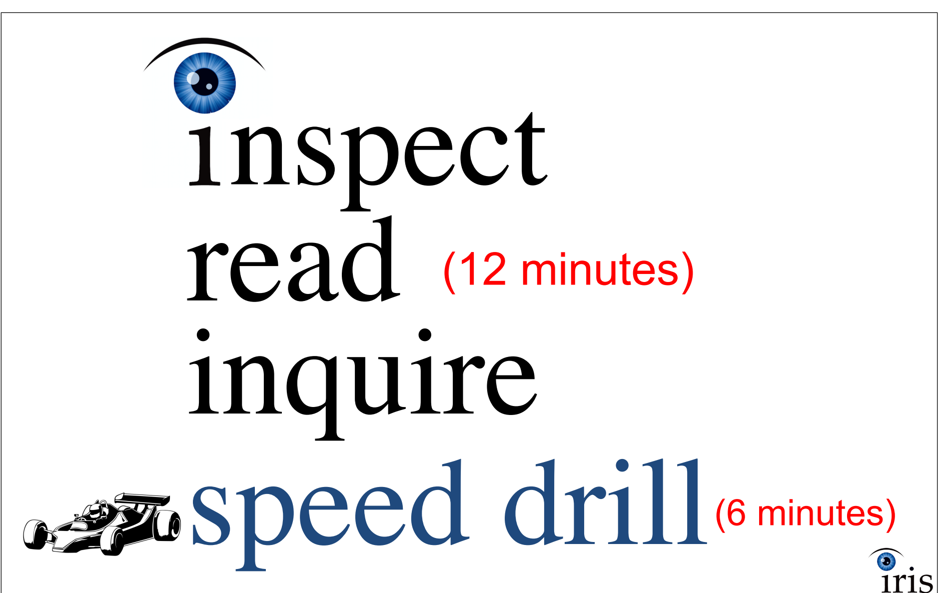
1.) Read your material first

2.) Speed Drill:

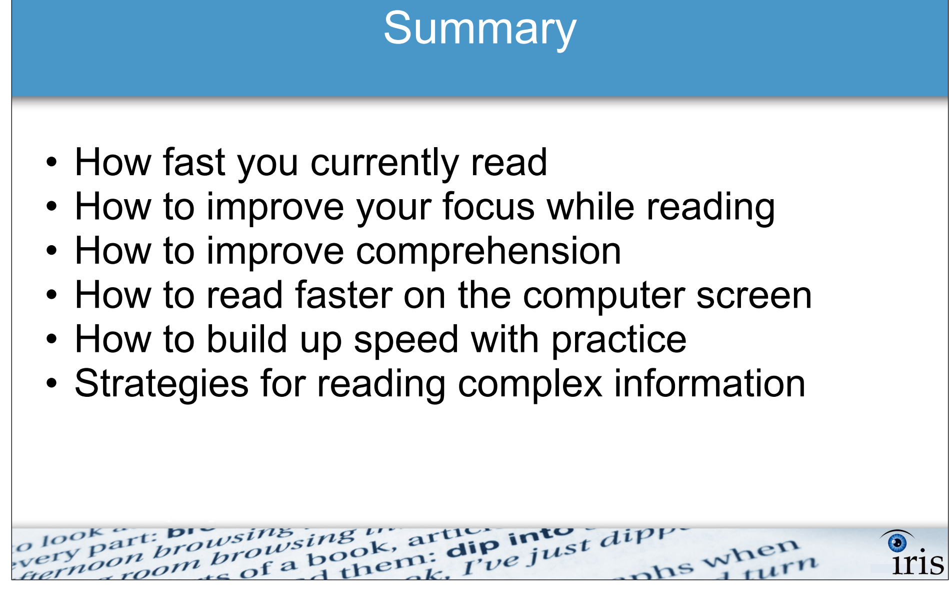
- Skim through what you just read in half the time (at 2x speed)

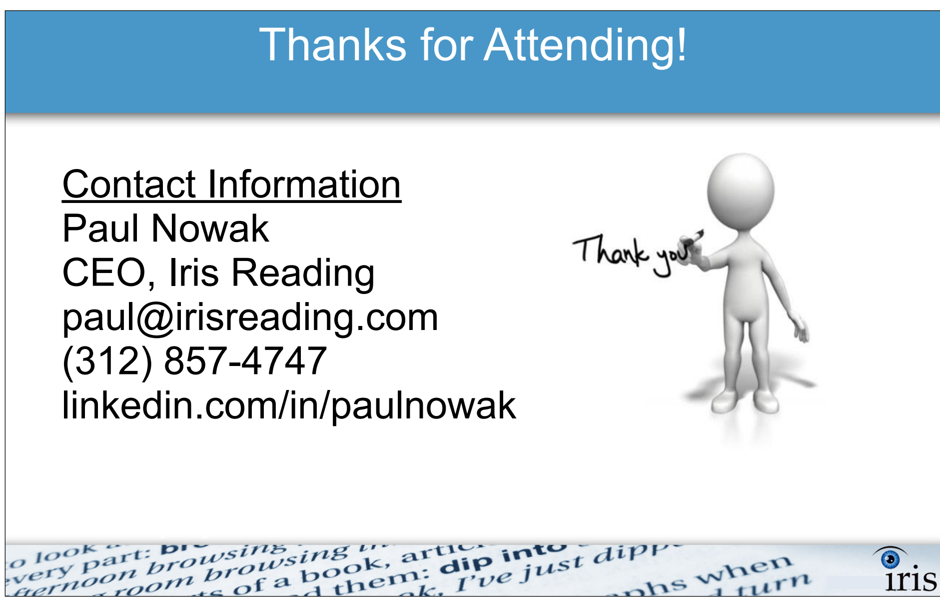
10-minutes of drills for 2 weeks

fppt.com



Questions?
Enter your questions in the chat box
iris


Summary
• How fast you currently read
• How to improve your focus while reading
• How to improve comprehension
• How to read faster on the computer screen
• How to build up speed with practice
• Strategies for reading complex information
iris


Thanks for Attending!
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Thank you
iris