



Reading Tips & Strategies

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." – Francis Bacon

How you read a specific piece of material depends largely on your purpose and the type of material you are reading. This "tip sheet" will provide some practical tips and strategies to guide you through your reading.

TIP # 1

Use Your Hand to Guide Your Eyes as You Read

- **Helps You Read Faster:** Using your hand to read will usually give an instant boost to your speed because your eyes are naturally attracted to motion.
- **Helps with Concentration:** Anytime you point to something, you're calling attention to it. Using your hand to read keeps your mind from wandering off.
- **Enables You to Change Your Speed:** You shouldn't always read fast, and you shouldn't always read slowly. Using your hand can help you easily speed up or slow down. It's difficult to do this if you're not using your hand while reading.

TIP # 2

How To Manage Your Reading Speed for Better Comprehension (Speeding Up & Slowing Down)

- **Rule of Thumb:** Slow down on the first sentence of a paragraph and then speed up through the rest of the paragraph. Since the main idea usually occurs in the first sentence, carefully reading that first sentence will not only help you understand the paragraph better, but will also allow you to read the rest it more quickly.
- **When Do I Slow Down?** On the first sentence of a paragraph, when you see bold-faced words or diagrams, or when the material gets very technical.
- **When Do I Speed Up?** After reading the first sentence of a paragraph, when you're familiar with the material, or when the material is not important for your reading purposes.

TIP # 3

How to Read More Efficiently

YOU DO NOT NEED TO READ EVERYTHING FROM BEGINNING TO END

1. **Preview** the chapter. Read the introduction to the chapter (first few paragraphs) and the conclusion at the end of the chapter. The goal here is to start with the big picture before getting into the details. Take some notes.
2. **Overview** the chapter. Flip through all the headings and sub-headings – anything that sticks out on the page (bold-faced words, diagrams and pictures). While doing this, try thinking about how the chapter is structured. If there are no headings, read the first sentence of every paragraph. Take some notes.
3. **Read** the chapter. Now that you know what to expect (from doing step 1 & 2) you can read through the material confidently. This is like traveling with a map. You know where you're going and what to expect. At this point, you should be reading a little faster than usual with an elevated sense of comprehension and retention.

TIP # 4

What To Do When You Finish Reading

- **Final Review:** Flip through the chapter one last time. Read every heading and sub-heading one last time. Is there anything you need to read again to clarify?
- **Take Notes:** Start by writing down anything that you remember. After you can't remember anything else off the top of your head, flip through the chapter and copy all headings, sub-headings and bold-faced words.
- **Recite:** This can be a class discussion or simply a talk with a friend or family member. Discussing what you have read reinforces your memory of that topic.

TIP # 5

Taking Notes Visually – Mind Mapping

- Taking notes can help you remember things (like when you make a list of groceries).
- Mind Maps can help you sort out information visually to get a “bird’s eye view.”

