

Speed Reading for Better Grades

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J. WESTON
WALCH
PUBLISHER

Portland, Maine

Contents

	<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	<i>v</i>
	<i>WHAT DOES RESEARCH SAY ABOUT SPEED READING?</i>	<i>vii</i>
	<i>WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT READING</i> <i>—STUDENT INVENTORY</i>	<i>ix</i>
	<i>TO THE TEACHER</i>	<i>xiii</i>
Lesson 1	WHAT IS AN EFFICIENT READER?	1
Lesson 2	COMMON READING FAULTS	9
Lesson 3	EYE MOVEMENTS	17
Lesson 4	BUILD YOUR VOCABULARY	25
Lesson 5	READING PURPOSE IS THE KEY TO COMPREHENSION	33
Lesson 6	PREVIEWING	41
Lesson 7	READ IN THOUGHT UNITS	49
Lesson 8	SKIMMING AND SCANNING	57
Lesson 9	SKIMMING FOR THE MAIN IDEA	65
Lesson 10	SKIMMING FOR DETAILS	73
Lesson 11	IMPROVE YOUR SPEED IN SOCIAL STUDIES	81
Lesson 12	IMPROVE YOUR SPEED IN MATHEMATICS	89
Lesson 13	IMPROVE YOUR SPEED IN SCIENCE	97
Lesson 14	IMPROVE YOUR SPEED IN LITERATURE	105
Lesson 15	STUDY-READING AND MEMORY	113
Lesson 16	CONTINUING PROGRESS THROUGH PRACTICE	121
	<i>APPENDIX</i>	<i>129</i>
	<i>ANSWERS</i>	<i>135</i>

Lesson Five

Teacher
Page

Reading Purpose Is the Key to Comprehension



Plan of Action

Many students sit down after the evening meal, assemble their textbooks, and proceed to “read” their assignments. Many do this simply because the teacher assigned the material. Time spent on “reading” assignments in this manner can be wasted effort. Looking at words isn’t reading. The process requires much more skill than that. To be a successful and efficient reader, students must use several specialized reading skills to achieve success. First of all, they must concentrate on the selective content. More than that, their purpose in reading must be established *before* tackling any printed materials. The interpretation exercises in this book have been designed to help students establish this most important key to successful reading practice. The exercises by themselves will not do the job; the most important ingredient is the student and how he or she approaches reading activities. We suggest that students learn immediately how to develop an aggressive, searching attitude toward all printed materials. They need to decide beforehand *why* they are reading. The answer becomes their purpose. Reading purpose depends upon the information students want to gain and the amount of time they have to secure it. Once established, they should read in terms of that goal. Remind students to avoid distractions. They should approach reading with a question, read, and come up with an answer. Students should create a plan of action with reading: establish their purpose, ask themselves mental questions, then read for the answers. Their purpose will be satisfied, the answers their own reward.

Purpose

Purpose has a great deal to do with reading success, as it has with most everything we attempt. There are as many good reasons for reading as there are things to read—even classroom assignments! Purpose determines what students will read, the reason “why,” and the manner in which they pursue this activity.

Remind students to listen to the questions and directions of a reading assignment, then, as they read, to search specifically for the things asked for. When no directions or questions are given, students should ask themselves their own questions before they begin. They should look for the answers as they read. Students are, in part, setting their own purpose when they ask themselves questions about an assignment. It is these questions that serve as guides for what they're attempting to achieve.

An easy way to establish purpose is to convert the title, chapter heading, or subheading into a question, then read to answer those questions. Often the opening paragraph explains the theme of a chapter and provides clues for developing purpose-setting questions. The closing paragraph often provides a purposeful base for formulating questions because that one paragraph generally summarizes all points covered in the selection. Students should use all of the author's aids—titles, subtitles, pictures, captions, opening and closing paragraphs—to help establish purposeful questions.

Reading Speeds

Once purpose has been established, the students' reading speed will be regulated by that purpose and the difficulty of the material. Obviously, the more they know about the subject before they read it, the more they'll get out of it and the faster they'll read. Having established their purpose, students must now match that goal with one of three reading speeds: (1) study rate, (2) skimming rate, and (3) recreational rate. The study rate is the slowest of all reading speeds and is used for difficult material. It is also the one that provides the highest degree of understanding due to its concern with main ideas and details. Too often, students tend to use the study rate for all reading tasks, when, in reality, they should be using a study technique such as the P-Q-R-S-T, S-Q-3-R, or any other tested, organized approach to studying. I like the P-Q-R-S-T study method and will discuss it in full detail in a later lesson.

Recreational or leisure-time reading rates are those used when reading for pleasure. This is where increased rapid reading speeds really come into their own. Typical reading materials may consist of detective stories, light novels, or adventure stories. Vocabulary and writing patterns of this type of material are usually adequate enough to tell the story, but are not too complex. The main purpose in reading such materials is to be entertained and not instructed.

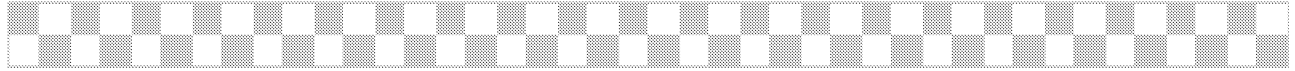
Skimming is reading at the fastest possible speed to get important information quickly. Skimming is a selective process of "looking and reading"; one looks for necessary specifics (this is purpose), then pauses to read. When skimming, the eyes sweep down the printed page without actually reading every word, searching for important facts or significant phrases that coincide with one's purpose.

There you have it. Students must learn to read different kinds of materials in different ways. They must ask themselves these kinds of questions: What type of reading material is this? What is my purpose in reading this material? What reading rate best suits my purpose and difficulty of the selection? But remember, students must define their purpose *before* they begin, then utilize an appropriate rate. If they follow this simple plan, they will be surprised by the results.

Name _____

*Reading Purpose Is the Key to
Comprehension*

Date _____



WARM-UP

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE

Time limit: 31 seconds

Directions: Check each item that is capable of being worn.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| _____ 1. new windbreaker | _____ 11. threadbare |
| _____ 2. heart on my sleeve | _____ 12. chemise |
| _____ 3. book jacket | _____ 13. mantle of despair |
| _____ 4. clothed in sorrow | _____ 14. orthopedic sneakers |
| _____ 5. embroidered statement | _____ 15. clothes horse |
| _____ 6. feather boa | _____ 16. uniform agreement |
| _____ 7. storm belts | _____ 17. clothed in night |
| _____ 8. wool over the eyes | _____ 18. theatrical makeup |
| _____ 9. horn-rimmed glasses | _____ 19. unshrinkable position |
| _____ 10. cloud cover | _____ 20. satin bib |

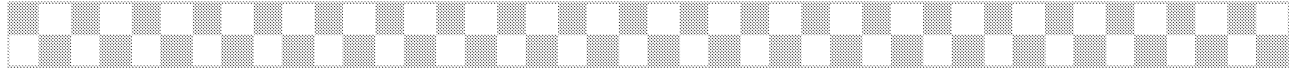
Time _____

Errors _____

Score _____

Name _____

Date _____



PERCEPTION EXERCISE

Time limit: 36 seconds

Directions: Underline the same word as the key word.

Key Word

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. afternoon | afterwards, again, against, noon, afternoon |
| 2. belief | believes, beliefs, belfry, belief, briefs |
| 3. censor | censure, census, cement, sense, censor |
| 4. devious | devise, devious, devoid, devolve, devote |
| 5. excellent | excellency, excellent, except, sent, except |
| 6. agates | agency, ages, agents, age, agates, aglow |
| 7. beneficial | benefit, benevolent, bent, beneficial, beneath |
| 8. centaur | center, central, centaur, center, cereal |
| 9. devotee | devotedly, devote, devotion, devour, devotee |
| 10. extension | extensive, extended, mention, extension, action |
| 11. agreeable | agreement, freeable, aggression, agrees, agreeable |
| 12. bliss | blind, blister, blew, bliss, blink, bless |
| 13. chafe | chaff, chagrin, chafe, chain, chair, chapter |
| 14. diadem | diagnose, diadem, diagnosis, diagonal, diagram |
| 15. eyeball | football, eyebrow, eyeful, eyelash, eyeball |
| 16. ahoy | shoal, annoy, ahead, cloy, ahoy, a boy |
| 17. blistered | blizzard, lizard, mustard, blistered, blister |
| 18. champ | chimp, chump, chuck, shanty, champ, chomp |
| 19. dictation | dictate, dictator, diction, dictation, dickey |
| 20. facial | facile, facet, faucet, facial, facility |

Time _____

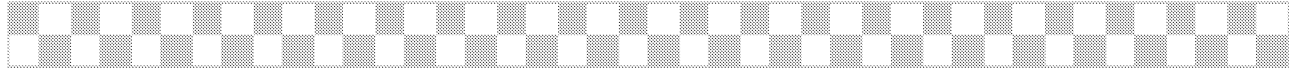
Errors _____

Score _____

Name _____

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Date _____



COMPREHENSION EXERCISE

Time limit: 46 seconds

Directions: Underline the word or words that mean the same or about the same as the key word.

Key Word

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. derive | vague, caterpillar, draw from, smelly onion |
| 2. flush | whole, flow, shallow, flash in the pan, liner |
| 3. gratitude | thankfulness, ceremony, thereupon, piano, in school |
| 4. minor | ambassador, define, westward, inferior, southwest |
| 5. peril | amuse, danger, agricultural, reflection, devil |
| 6. regiment | hasten, delicious, army unit, regulation, drill |
| 7. shriek | anguished cry, emerge from, alter, shipping docks |
| 8. simplicity | offend, fit, charter, plain, city, complicated ones |
| 9. vapor | visible diffused substance in air, labor, abhorred |
| 10. ample | sample, reception, goal, large, thine, my own |
| 11. plaid | variegated cloth, hauled over, widely seen, plain |
| 12. diminish | sensation, induce, make less, vainly dressed |
| 13. heir | session, one who inherits, departure from, amendment |
| 14. grim | tenth, menace, despise, fierce, grit, greatest |
| 15. mingle | combine, northwest, employment, amusement, to see |
| 16. pitcher | upset, water vessel, Florida, patient, picture |
| 17. remote | weekly, pebble, distant, reasonable, remake |
| 18. lush | adapt, luxurious, gracious, reckon, lash onto, crowd |
| 19. colonial | colonel, sensible, of a colony, reduction to ash |
| 20. discipline | adore, license, inherit, strict rule, decide upon |

Time _____

Errors _____

Score _____

Name _____

Date _____

STORY I

As a nation, are we “going to the dogs,” or are the dogs coming to us? Public officials across the nation are saying that dog bites are now a serious health hazard and at an epidemic level. Mail carriers are not the only people affected. Recent statistics tell us that dogs have bitten more than 1 million of us. Officials state that three factors contribute to the significance of this statistic: (1) the incidence of dog bites is skyrocketing; (2) the number of cases of rabies in the United States is moving upward accordingly; and (3) Two percent of all youngsters between the ages of five and nine were bitten in one major American city with 10 percent suffering wounds serious enough to require stitching.

What’s behind this epidemic? First, the increasing number of dogs. There are 53 million dogs in this country. Because many owners either are ignorant of the needs and behavior of their dogs, or just don’t care, many dogs are allowed to run free or are subjected to exceptional strain. Many Americans are buying large, aggressive breeds of dogs, many of which are trained to attack. There are also breeders who are mass-producing puppies and rapidly cashing in on the public’s demand for large dogs with little or no regard for the animals’ quality. Too often, these animals are nervous, neurotic, or bad tempered. Finally, dogs are being abandoned at an alarming rate. Even though many of these abandoned creatures are killed by the elements, speeding cars, or animal shelters, many more survive and soon revert to the instincts of their ancestors—the wolves.

1. The main idea of this story is (a) why dog bites are increasing, (b) why rabies is dangerous, (c) why we like animals, (d) why dogs act like wolves.
2. The dog-bite situation can be termed (a) catastrophic, (b) moderate, (c) epidemic level, (d) not at all serious.
3. The number of people affected so far has been (a) 2 million, (b) 1 million, (c) 50 million, (d) no information given.
4. One factor that shows the importance of the number of dog bites is the (a) number of mail carriers, (b) variety of dogs, (c) number of victims requiring stitches, (d) number of puppies.
5. The age group that suffers most is (a) birth to four years, (b) not given, (c) five to nine years, (d) 18 to 35 years.
6. The dog population in the United States is (a) about 1 million, (b) about 53 million, (c) about 10 million, (d) no information given.
7. The reason dogs are allowed to run free is (a) not given, (b) dogs are too large for the house, (c) dogs are ill-tempered, (d) dogs have ignorant owners.
8. More large dogs are bred today because of (a) military needs, (b) industrial needs, (c) no information given, (d) market demand.
9. According to the story, a factor contributing to neurotic dogs is (a) bad temper, (b) ignorant owners, (c) poor breeding, (d) speeding cars.
10. Dogs are being abandoned at an alarming rate (a) to become wolves, (b) to cash in on demand, (c) no information given, (d) to show need for more shelters.



Name _____

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STORY II

The Taj Mahal was designed by architect Ustad Isa and consists of a square, domed structure of white marble resting on two terraces, the lower of red sandstone, the upper of white marble. The structure itself stands 186 feet square and rises with the dome to a height of 210 feet. In the central chamber, above the vault in which the bodies of Shah Jehan and his wife are buried, are two cenotaphs surrounded by an octagonal screen of openwork inlaid with precious stones. Above the cenotaphs swings a beautiful bronze lamp, inlaid with silver and gold. The room's interior is lighted by diffused daylight, which filters through the translucent alabaster of the dome and the perforated marble screens of the windows. The entrance is framed by an archway, 66½ feet high, inscribed about the upper part with Arabic text; the big black lettering stands out boldly from the snowy whiteness of the facade. The tomb of the emperor is slightly to one side and is raised some 12 inches above the other. Both graves are of white marble exquisitely and elaborately inlaid with mosaics of precious stones. The screens surrounding the cenotaphs are indescribably beautiful, worked as they are with flower borders in colored mosaic. So minutely has the flower work been done, no less than 61 tiny gems have been united into a single rose. In conformity with Moslem custom, the real graves are in a crypt immediately under the central chamber containing the cenotaphs. A steep passage leads down to this vault where the sarcophagi are almost identical with those above. Now plain and bare, the walls and ceiling were once covered with sheets of pure gold, the same precious metal lining the grave wherein the empress was laid to rest.

1. The central chamber is located (a) on the sandstone terrace, (b) on the marble terrace, (c) under the terrace, (d) above the vault.
2. Dimensions of the structure are (a) 186 feet on each side, (b) a total of 186 feet on all sides, (c) 186 square feet, (d) 46 feet on each side.
3. "Cenotaph" means (a) angels, (b) a burial site, (c) a monument in honor of a person buried elsewhere, (d) statuary.
4. The marble screen has (a) five sides, (b) six sides, (c) seven sides, (d) eight sides.
5. Shah Jehan is buried (a) in the dome, (b) in the garden, (c) in a crypt, (d) no information given.
6. The interior is lighted by (a) oil lamps, (b) candles, (c) sunlight, (d) lightbulbs.
7. "Facade" means (a) arcade, (b) building, (c) false front, (d) principal front.
8. The architect of the Taj Mahal was (a) Ustad Isa, (b) Mumtaz-i-Mahal, (c) Shah Jehan, (d) Jehan's wife.
9. One rose contains (a) few gems, (b) 61 jewels, (c) 15 pieces, (d) no gems.
10. Implied but not stated: The original gold of the lower vault (a) rusted, (b) disintegrated, (c) disappeared, (d) was never installed.

GWPM _____ (*times*) *Avg. Comp.* _____ (*equals*) *EWPM* _____

