Reading for Speed and Retention

Strategies for reading quickly and effectively from paper and screen

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Acknowledgements: Tony Buzan

Speed reading is the process of rapidly recognising and absorbing phrases or sentences all at once, rather than focusing on individual words.

Whilst many of us take our reading skills for granted, today's workshop will help us to develop our reading effectiveness. As part of the session we will be focusing on increasing our reading speed as well as learning techniques that will improve our understanding and retention of important documents.

Programme highlights include:

- The process of reading
- How to minimise barriers to fast reading
- Using different reading styles
- Maximising eye/brain relationship
- Reading from computer and tablet screens
- Reading carefully for understanding and retention.

I know that you will find the session interesting, practical and useful.

Miranda Smythe

An Introduction to Speed Reading

It is difficult not to feel overwhelmed by the volume of materials we are expected to read. Whether delivered in the form of emails, reports or meeting papers, the current "information explosion" places pressure on all of us.

As children, we were taught certain ways of reading which we may have taken into adulthood. Whilst some of these approaches remain useful, it is possible that some of these old habits are no longer helpful or may even be actively working against us.

The ability to process a large amount of data within a relatively short period of time has obvious attractions and today's session will provide you with a range of ideas and approaches which you can adapt and adjust to suit your personal working style.

The concept of reading at speed is not new and has existed in different forms for centuries. During the first world war, knowledge of the human brain's ability to absorb information at speed was used to advantage in the training of American aircrew.

Pilots were shown pictures of aircraft which were flashed on a screen at speeds up to 1/500th of a second using a device called a tachistoscope.

This activity enabled the pilots to identify enemy planes within a fraction of a second, which considerably improved their recognition and response timings.

Post-war, research from the United States radically changed perceptions about how we absorb information and it is now believed that our brain works by looking for groups of words rather than seeking out individual letters.

In the 1950s, Evelyn Wood started to study the habits of fast readers and developed a series of methods which were widely taught across America. She is best known for teaching President Kennedy his fast reading habits.

In the UK, psychologist Tony Buzan has popularised speed reading through his seminars and books. His publications, "The Speed Reading Book" and "Use Your Head" continue to be re-printed 30 years after they were originally written.

Assumptions about Reading

Answer true or false to each of the following statements:

1. A reading speed of over 800 words per minute is possible

2. In order to comprehend a piece of text, it is always better to read it slowly

3. To read efficiently, the eye should sweep in a continuous flowing movement along the line

4. Reading with a finger under the words slows a reader down

5. An important document should always be read from start to finish, in a linear fashion

6. One of the dangers with reading quickly is that comprehension is lowered

7. If a piece of text is difficult to understand, it is important to keep working at it before moving on

8. Skipping words is a lazy habit

What is Reading?

Reading is a complex process between our brain and our eyes who co-operate together to make sense of a symbol or a range of symbols. Reading is often referred to as a "hidden skill" because we absorb so much information on an unconscious level. It is estimated that most of us spend around 80% of our waking hours reading.

There are six key stages within the reading process:

1. Recognition
Recognition is defined as the ability to recognise and interpret signals. It is impossible to read or to make sense of information if it is in a language which uses unknown characters.

2. Assimilation
Assimilation is the physical process of light striking the printed page, reflecting into the eye and passing along the optic nerve. If there is no light, then it is impossible to see the print. The quality of assimilation is often impacted on by "hygiene" factors such as the amount of light or the type of lighting being used.

3. Intra-integration
Intra-integration is means making sense of what is being read. This involves basic comprehension and the linking of letters, words or symbols to concepts. As an example of this, the letters "c-o-w" linked together represent an animal.

4. Extra-integration
This part of the process involves the reader bringing all of their previous knowledge together to make sense of this new information.

5. Retention
Retention involves the brain placing information into its storage bank. Not all stored memories are easily retrievable and retention on its own is not enough: we also need the ability to recall information.

6. Recall
Recall is the brain's ability to retrieve stored information. Extra-integration, which is associated with making links between ideas, relies on the memory's ability to recall previously laid-down facts.

Reading Exercise

Read the paragraph displayed below in the blue box:

A businessman had just turned off the lights in the store when a man appeared and demanded money. The owner opened the cash register.
The contents of the cash register were scooped up and the man sped away.

Then examine each of the statements which follow:

- Circle the **'T'** if you believe the statement is true
- Circle the **'F'** if you believe the statement is false
- Circle the **'?'** if you believe the answer to the statement is unknown.

1.	A man appeared after the owner had turned off his store lights	**T**	**F**	**?**
2.	The robber was a man	**T**	**F**	**?**
3.	The man who appeared did not demand money	**T**	**F**	**?**
4.	The man who opened the cash register was the owner	**T**	**F**	**?**
5.	The store owner scooped up the contents of the cash register and ran away	**T**	**F**	**?**
6.	While the cash register contained money, the story does not state how much	**T**	**F**	**?**
7.	The robber demanded money of the owner	**T**	**F**	**?**
8.	After the store lights were turned off the man entered the store	**T**	**F**	**?**
9.	Taking the contents of the cash register the man ran out into the street	**T**	**F**	**?**

Aoccdrnig to Raeserch

Read the text below out loud and as quickly as you can:

The acatual wrod deson't rlaley matter.

The olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer are in the rghit pclae. Eevn if the rset are tolatly julebmd up you can sitll raed it.

Tihs is bcuseae the huamn barin deos not raed ecah lteter invuddilialy, but inesatd renisgoecs the wrod as a wlohe.

So terhe you hvae it.

You mhigt hvae thgohut taht yuor biran wdulon't be wroikng perplory atfer all the Crhstiams and New Yaer celbiratoins, and tehn all tshee ticrks and isollunis smeeed to sohw taht yuor biarn is eslaiy feolod.

Tihs autalcly manes taht yoru biran is wkonrig pfretecly nolralmy.

Cnogrtaulatoins!

Barriers to Reading

There are a number of barriers to reading which can be classified into two main areas:

1. Physical Barriers

Whilst some of these relate to the reading environment which the reader can influence, other barriers can be associated with the way the document has been written or constructed. Examples of physical barriers include the:

- Document's layout and typography
- Author's writing style including the density of language being used
- Reader's eyesight
- Inappropriate lighting
- Uncomfortable chair - or a chair that is too comfortable
- Reader's level of alertness
- Room temperature
- Reader's environment including noise or interruptions.

2. Psychological or Emotional Barriers

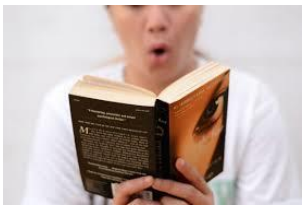
These are associated with the reader's psychological state, for example:

- Fear or dislike of the subject
- Past experiences with certain types of information which have caused problems, eg. financial or highly technical reports which the reader has found difficult to understand
- Pre-conceived idea that they will not understand a document
- Dislike of the writer
- Prejudice against the writer's slant
- Pressure to read or absorb information within a limited timeframe
- Reader over-highlighting passages of text as a deferral technique.

Factors which can slow a Reader

Sub-vocalisation

Sub-vocalisation is a term used to describe a reader's habit of saying words silently as they read. This may be a residual habit, left over from school days, when children were encouraged to sound out each word as it was read. There are four levels of sub-vocalisation:



1. ***Physical Level***

Physical level is when a reader forms the word and then uses their lips to mouth the word. Readers with this habit are easy to spot as their lip movements are very obvious.

2. ***Hearing Level***

Hearing level occurs when a reader hears the words silently in their head. Whilst this type of "mouthing" does not have such a major impact as the physical level, this habit will still slow a reader's speed.

3. ***Half-hearing Level***

This happens when the reader still hears the text, although their focus is more on picking out key words and phrases. This is not likely to slow a reader too much and many readers adopt this approach when they are reading an important document. It is useful to be able to switch this technique on and off.

4. ***Little-hearing level***

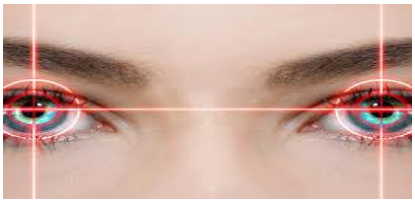
Little-hearing level is when a reader only hears a fraction of the words. Very fast readers tend to operate at a little-hearing level.

To break mouthing habits, try the following:

- Use a pointer to keep your eyes moving which will allow you less time to sub-vocalise
- Chew gum or hum
- Read with a finger placed over your lips to remind yourself to keep them still
- Reduce the number of fixation points that you use, to keep the momentum of your reading
- Every time that you find yourself mouthing or hearing the words, tell yourself to stop.

Inefficient Eye Motion

Slow readers tend to focus on each word and work their way across each line. The eye can actually span about 1.5 inches at a time, which, for an average page, encompasses four or five words. Most readers tend not to use their peripheral vision to see words at the end of each line of text.

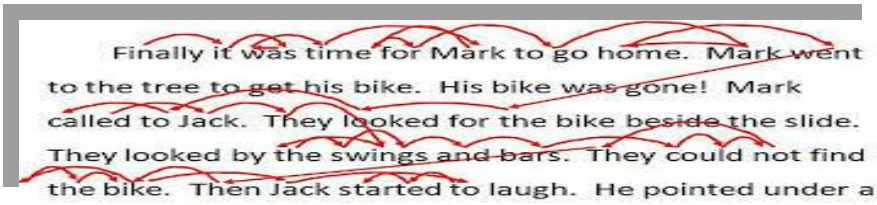


To overcome this, try to "soften" your gaze as you read. You can do this by relaxing your face and expanding your gaze, which means that you will begin to see blocks of words instead of seeing each word as a distinct unit.

As you become practised at this, your eyes will skip faster and faster across the page. Once you get close to the end of the line, let your peripheral vision take over to see the last set of words. This way you will be able to scan across and down to the next line.

Regression and Eye Tics

Regression is the unnecessary re-reading of material. Sometimes people form the habit of skipping back to words they have just read, while, other times, they may jump back a few sentences, just to make sure that they read something correctly. This type of regression means that the flow and structure of the text is lost. This is an inefficient way of reading which can result in reduced understanding. The paragraph below shows an example of regression:



If you have this habit, be aware that you tend to do this and only allow yourself to re-read material if you really must. To reduce the number of times your eyes skip back, run a pointer along the line as you read. Your eyes will follow the tip of your pointer, helping you avoid skipping back. The speed at which you read using this method will largely depend on the speed at which you move your chopstick.

Approaching Reading Linearly

We are taught to read across and down, taking in every word, sentence, paragraph and page in sequence.

To overcome this, scan the page for headings and look for bullet points and text printed in bold. There is no rule saying that you have to read a document in the order that the author intended, so scan it quickly, and decide what is necessary versus what isn't.

Skim over the fluff in favour of isolating the key points: if you understand the reader's point, you do not need to spend time reading examples or illustrations.

Similarly, decide what you need to re-read as well. It is always much better and more effective to read a document quickly twice, than it is to read it slowly, once.

Reading Speed Test

Read this passage (pages 11 - 13 inclusive) at a speed that is comfortable for you. Make a note of the time you start reading, to the nearest half minute. Time started: .....

Stock market analysts watch, like hawks, ten individuals in Silicon Valley. When there is even a hint that one might move from Company A to Company B, the world's stock markets shift. The English Manpower Services Commission recently published a survey in which it was noted that, of the top 10 per cent of British companies, 80 per cent invested considerable money and time in training; and in the bottom 10 per cent of companies no money or time was invested.

In Minnesota, the Plato Computer Education Project has already raised the thinking and academic performance levels of 200,000 pupils. In the armed forces of an increasing number of countries, mental martial arts are becoming as important as physical combat skills.

National Olympic squads are devoting as much as 40 per cent of their training time to the development of positive mind set, mental stamina and visualisation. In the Fortune 500 (the 500 top-earning US companies), the top five computer companies alone have spent over a billion dollars on educating their employees, and the development of intellectual capital has become the main priority, including the development of the world's most powerful currency - the currency of intelligence.

In Caracas, Dr. Luis Albert Machado became the first person to be given a government portfolio as Minister of Intelligence, with a political mandate to increase the mental power of the nation.

We are witnessing a quantum leap in human evolution - the awareness by intelligence of itself, and the concomitant awareness that this intelligence can be nurtured to astounding advantage. This encouraging news must be considered in the context of the most significant problem areas as defined by the business community. During the last 20 years over 100,000 from each of the five major continents have been polled. The top 10 areas commonly mentioned as requiring improvement are:

1. Reading speed
2. Reading comprehension
3. General study skills
4. Handling the information explosion
5. Memory
6. Concentration
7. Oral communication skills
8. Written communication skills
9. Creative thinking
10. Planning.

With the aid of modern research on the functioning of the brain, each of these problems can be tackled with relative ease. This research covered:

1. The functions of the left and right cortex
2. Mind mapping
3. Super-speed and range reading/intellectual commando units
4. Mnemonic techniques
5. Memory loss after learning.

The Functions of the Left and Right Cortex

It has now become common knowledge that the left and right cortical structures of the brain tend to deal with different intellectual functions. The left cortex primarily handles logic, words, number sequence, analysis, linearity and listing; whilst the right cortex processes rhythm, colour, imagination, daydreaming, spatial relationships and dimension. What has recently been realised is that the left cortex is not the 'academic' side, nor is the right cortex the 'creative, intuitive emotional' side. We now know from volumes of research that both sides need to be used in conjunction with each other for there to be both academic and creative success. The Einsteins, Newtons, Cezannes and Mozarts of this world, like the great business geniuses, combined their linguistic, numerical and analytical skills with imagination and visualisation in order to produce their creative masterpieces.

Mind Mapping

Using this basic knowledge of our mental functioning, it is possible to train people in order to solve each of these problem areas, often producing incremental improvements of 500 per cent. One of the modern methods of achieving such improvements is Mind Mapping.

Mind Mapping, by contrast, uses the full range of the brain's abilities, placing an image in the centre of the page in order to facilitate memorisation and the creative generation of ideas, and subsequently branching out in associative networks that mirror externally the brain's internal structures. Using this approach, you can prepare speeches in minutes rather than days; problems can be solved both more comprehensively and more rapidly; memory can be improved from absent to perfect; and creative thinkers can generate a limitless number of ideas rather than a truncated list.

Super Speed and Range Reading/Intellectual Commando Units

By combining Mind Mapping with new super speed and range reading techniques (which allow speeds of well over 1,000 words per minute along with excellent comprehension, and eventual effective reading speeds of about 10,000 words per minute), one can form intellectual commando units.

Reading at these advanced speeds, Mind Mapping in detail the outline of the book and its chapters, and exchanging the information gathered by using advanced Mind Mapping and presentation skills, it is possible for four or more individuals to acquire, integrate, memorise and begin to apply in their professional situation four complete books' worth of new information in one day.

These techniques have recently been applied in the multinational organisations Nabisco and Digital Computers. In these instances, 40 and 120 senior executives respectively divided their groups into four. Each individual in each of the four sub-groups spent two hours applying speed and range reading techniques to one of the four selected books.

When the two hours were completed, the members of each sub-group discussed among themselves their understandings, interpretations and reactions to the book. Each sub-group then chose one representative who gave a comprehensive lecture to all the members of the three other sub-groups. This process was repeated four times, and at the end of each day, 40 and 120 senior executives in each company walked out of their seminar room with four completely new books' worth of information not only in their heads, but integrated, analysed and memorised. This approach can be similarly used in a family situation and is already being used in families around the world.

Recently a Mexican family applied it to their three children, ranging in age from six to 15. Within two months, each child was the top student in their year, having been able to complete in two days, with the help of other family members, what the average child/student complete in a year.

Mnemonic Techniques

Mnemonic techniques were originally invented by the Greeks and were thought to be 'tricks'. We now realise that these devises are soundly based on the brain's functioning and that, when applied appropriately, they can

dramatically improve anyone's memory. Mnemonic techniques require you to use the principles of association and imagination, to create dramatic, colourful, sensual and consequently unforgettable images in your mind.

There is an increasing awareness that learning 'how to learn' before any other training has been given is good business sense. That is why a number of the more progressive international organisations are now making mnemonics the obligatory 'front end' to all their training courses. Simple calculation shows that, if a million pounds is spent on training, and 80 per cent of that training is forgotten within two weeks, eight hundred thousand pounds has been lost during that same period!

Memory Loss after Learning

Memory loss after learning is dramatic. After a one-hour learning period there is a short rise in the recall of information as the brain integrates the new data. This is followed by a dramatic decline in which, after 24 hours, as much as 80 per cent of detail is lost.

The Brain Cell

In the last five years the brain cell has become the new frontier in the human search for knowledge. Not only do we each have 1,000,000,000,000 brain cells, but the interconnections between them can form a staggeringly large number of patterns and permutations. This number, calculated by the Russian neuro-anatomist Petr K. Anokhin, is one followed by ten million kilometres of standard typewritten noughts!

With our inherent capacity to integrate and juggle multiple billions of bits of data, it has become apparent to those involved in brain research that adequate training of our phenomenal biocomputer (which can calculate in one second what it would take the Cray computer, at 400 million calculations per second, 100 years to accomplish) will enormously accelerate and increase our ability to problem solve, to analyse, to prioritise, to create and to communicate.

Mental Abilities and Ageing

'They die!' is the usual chorus from people in response to the question: 'What happens to your brain cells as they get older?' It is usually voiced with extraordinary and surprising enthusiasm. However, one of the most delightful pieces of news from modern brain research comes from Dr. Marion Diamond of the University of California, who has recently confirmed that there is no evidence of brain cell loss with age in normal, active and healthy brains. On the contrary, research is now indicating that, if the brain is used and trained, there is a biological increase in its interconnective complexity, ie. the person's intelligence is raised.

Stop your timer now and record the current time, to the nearest half minute.

How long did it take you to read this piece of text? …….

Divide 1,437 (the number of words) by the time it took you to read this text.

My reading speed for this piece of text – First reading	

My reading speed for this piece of text – Second reading	

Reading Speeds

Reading speeds are not static, and your own pace will vary considerably even within the same document. This will be influenced by a range of factors, including:

- The technical level of the document versus your own level of knowledge
- How interested you are in the material, combined with your motivation for reading
- The document's typography including font, font size and layout
- The writer's style and use of language
- The quality of your reading environment
- Your personal level of concentration and energy levels.

Adult Reading Speed

Whilst there is no official guide to adult reading speed, the following ranges are often suggested:

50-100	Very slow
101-200	Slow
201-275	Average
276-350	Fast
351-470	Very fast
471+	Exceptionally fast

Studies carried out in the UK suggest that the most common adult reading speed is in the region of 250 words per minute (wpm).

It is misguided to fixate on wpm as a measure of reading ability, because speed does not necessarily equate to absorption and understanding.

You may find that you read the sample text slowly, however you may have retained a greater percentage of information than others in the room who completed the activity in much less time.

Applying Reading Speeds to Different Documents

Using the principle that we would not drive a car everywhere in third gear, our reading speed should move up and down. This should become a conscious decision based on a range of factors including the importance of the text, our motivation for reading and the complexity of the document.

As a guide:

To study a document A typical studying speed for reading a document would be between 80 and 150 wpm. A reader will take their time, stopping to absorb key passages and perhaps making notes or highlighting various passages.

Slow reading Slow reading is usually between 150 and 200 wpm. This is an inefficient and time-consuming style.

Rapid Reading Rapid reading runs at between 300 and 550 wpm and involves the reader skipping across text to isolate key words and themes.

Whilst it sounds counter-intuitive, this sort of speed can actually help comprehension when it is combined with good concentration. Themes and patterns are easier to identify when words are read in blocks rather than looked at in isolation from each other.

Speed Reading This is the fastest "gear"– with speeds of 550 plus. Words are hardly read at all in favour of identifying the document's main points. Comprehension is much lower than for the other reading styles, but this technique is very useful for gaining an overall idea of a document's contents.

This is the gear to use for previewing and reviewing.

Speed reading can never replace careful study, although research suggests that it is better to read a document quickly twice, than to read it slowly, once.

Different Reading Styles

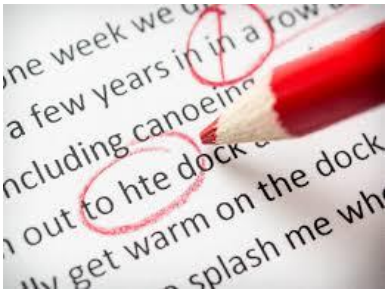
There are a number of different styles of reading, which can be grouped into five main areas:

1. Light Reading

This is when the reader does not read each word or sentence in detail and dips in and out of text. Many of us will adopt this style when reading a novel, although this technique can be applied to business documents.

2. Proof-reading

This is a specific style of reading which is motivated by searching out errors and omissions. Accomplished proof-readers use a number of techniques including leaving a piece of work for a while before reviewing it and printing text out in double-line spacing so mistakes become easier to spot. Other methods include reading a document backwards to check each word for accuracy or printing the draft out on coloured paper so that the text appears different.



3. Scanning

This type of reading is used when a piece of information is needed very quickly, for example a name on a list. The skill of scanning is to ignore everything else in favour of the information being sought. Then, visualising this key information, and using a finger or pointer to guide the eye, scan through the list or text, not stopping until the relevant information is found.

4. Skimming

Skimming is a deliberate and structured process which delivers an overview of a document. Some readers confuse 'light reading' with skimming, but the two techniques are totally different. Skimming isolates key points quickly and efficiently and can sometimes eliminate the need to read a document in its entirety.

5. Careful reading

Careful reading is a slower style of reading which is motivated by the reader's need for comprehension, retention and recall.

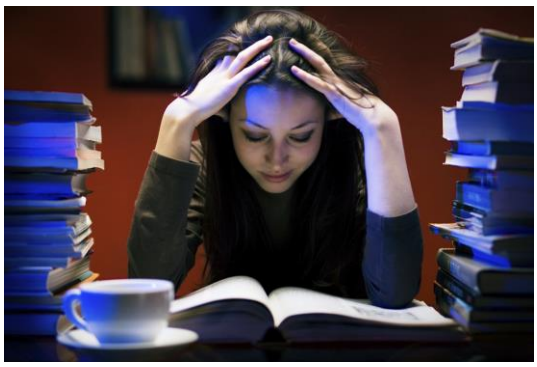
In spite of the need for depth, there are still a number of techniques that can be used which will make the process of reading more efficient and effective.

This includes using a pointer to read, and applying the SQRW principle, covered on page 24.

Using a Pointer to Read

This photograph illustrates how many of us tend to read, with papers lying flat on a desk and without anything to show our eyes where to look.

This approach places high reliance on the eyes to keep their place, resulting in slower reading speeds and a higher likelihood of muscle strain.



Although our brain and eye are designed to work together, our eyes are not always able to keep their place. It can feel natural to run a finger along the bottom of each word to guide our eye and many of us would have done this as children.

Using an eye guide is the fastest and most effective way to immediately increase reading speed. Many people report a dramatic 50% immediate increase in speed, just by running a stick under a document's text.

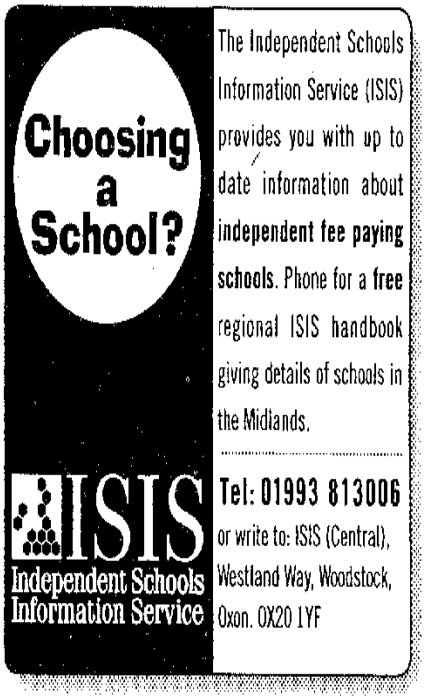
The best tool to use is a chopstick because it is long and pointed, without the ability to write. At this stage we are reading for speed, which means that we are not interested in highlighting or taking notes.

To use your chopstick:

- Hold it at its longest length so you can keep your hand still
- Start at the beginning of the text, and read at your normal speed, moving the chopstick under the line of each word as you read
- Allow your eye to follow the stick
- As your eye becomes 'calibrated' to the speed of the stick, gradually increase its pace
- Keep following the pointer and go at its new speed, not at your natural eye speed
- Once you are in tune with the stick again, move it slightly faster
- Keep repeating this until you hit your optimum speed
- When you see short bullet points or lists, run your stick down the middle (your brain will re-stitch them into the right order)
- If a paragraph has just one or two words on its last line, just run your stick backwards and, once again, these will automatically become re-ordered.

Scanning Exercise

Chiltern Training Group, Stoneygate Rd ..... Luton 493680



Church End Lower School, Church Walk, Marston Moretaine ..... Bedford 768271
Cockernhoe Endowed Jun.Mxd.Infants School, School House, Cockernhoe ..... Luton 732509
Codicote Primary School, Meadoway, Codicote ..... Stevenage 820255
Cold Harbour C of E Combined School, Highlands Close, Bletchley ..... Milton Keynes 270377
Collenswood School, Collenswood Rd ..... Stevenage 313011
Colmworth Lower School, Church Rd ..... Colmworth 376374
Cople Lower School, Willington Rd, Cople ..... Bedford 838827
Copperfield Middle School, Chapter Coffee Hall ..... Milton Keynes 679809
Cornhill First School, Jonathans Coffee Hall ..... Milton Keynes 679932
Cosgrove County Primary School, Bridge Rd, Cosgrove ..... Milton Keynes 562641
Cotton End Lower School, High Rd, Cotton End ..... Bedford 740100
Cranfield VC Lower School, Court Rd, Cranfield ..... Bedford 750261
Crawley Green Infant School, Beaconsfield Rd ..... Luton 724267
Dallow Infants School, Dallow Rd ..... Luton 614500
Dallow Junior School, Dallow Rd ..... Luton 616601
Datchworth Junior Mixed & Infant School, Hollybush Lane, Datchworth ..... Stevenage 812381
Daubeney Middle School, Orchard St, Kempston ..... Bedford 400111
Dell Farm Outdoor Education Centre, Dell Farm ..... Whipsnade 872666
Whipsnade 872143
Denbigh High School, Alexandra Avenue ..... Luton 736611
Denbigh Infant School, Denbigh Rd ..... Luton 493114
Denbigh Junior School, Denbigh Rd ..... Luton 571597
Denbigh School, Burchard Crescent, Shenley Church End ..... Milton Keynes 505030
Derwent Lower School, Hitchin Rd, Henlow ..... Hitchin 812047
Dovery Down Lower School, Heath Rd ..... Leighton Buzzard 377233
Downs Barn County First School, 69 Downs Barn Boulevard, Downs Barn ..... Milton Keynes 604430
Downside Infants School, Chaul End Lane ..... Luton 593460
Downside Junior School, Chaul End Lane ..... Luton 592592
Downside Lower School, Oakwood Avenue ..... Dunstable 661778
Dunstable 603583
Drayton Park Combined School, Drayton Rd, Bletchley ..... Milton Keynes 375137
Dunstable College of Further Education, Kingsway ..... Dunstable 477776

Grange School, Halsey Rd Kempston ..... Bedford 407100
Graveley Junior Mixed Infant School, Ashwell Common, Graveley ..... Stevenage 351377
Gravenhurst Lower School, High St, Gravenhurst ..... Hitchin 711257
Great Barford Lower School, Silver St, Great Barford ..... Bedford 870342
Great Linford Combined School, St. Leger Drive, Great Linford ..... Milton Keynes 605027
Green Park Combined School, Green Park Drive ..... Newport Pagnell 216389
Greenfield Lower School, Pulloxhill Rd, Greenfield ..... Flitwick 712426
Greenleas Lower School, Derwent Rd, Linslade ..... Leighton Buzzard 371735
Greenleys County First School, Ardwell Lane, Greenleys ..... Milton Keynes 314698
Greenleys County Middle School, Marron Lane, Wolverton ..... Milton Keynes 312551
Hadrian Lower School, Hadrian Avenue, Dunstable ..... Luton 618400
Halyard Mixed High School, Emerald Rd, Luton ..... Dunstable 601221
Hanslope Combined School, Long Street Rd, Hanslope ..... Milton Keynes 510245
Harlington Lower School, Westoning Rd, Harlington, LU5 ..... 01525 752500
Harlington Upper School, Goswell End Rd, Harlington, Dunstable, LU5 ..... 01525 755100
Harrold Lower School, The Green, Harrold ..... Bedford 720312
Harrold Priory Middle School, The Green, Harrold ..... Bedford 720346
Harrowden Middle School, Oak Rd ..... Bedford 305305
Hart Hill Primary School, Brooms Rd ..... Luton 417751
Hartsfield Junior, Middle & Infant School, Clothall Rd ..... Baldock 895267
Hastingsbury Upper School, Hill Rise, Kempston ..... Bedford 841500
Haversham First School, The Crescent, Haversham ..... Milton Keynes 312673
Hawthorn Park Lower School, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis ..... Luton 863859
Haynes Lower School, Foresters Close ..... Haynes 381225
Hazeldene Lower School, Staincliffe Rd ..... Bedford 300100
Heathfield Lower School, The Green, Caddington ..... Luton 725391
Heathwood Lower School, Heath Rd ..... Leighton Buzzard 377096
Heelands First School, Glovers Lane, Heelands ..... Milton Keynes 316306
Henlow Middle School, Church Rd ..... Hitchin 813733
Heronshaw First School, Lichfield Down, Walnut Tree ..... Milton Keynes 608380
Hexton JMI School, Hexton, Hitchin ..... Luton 881248
High Ash C of E Combined School, Pound Hill, Great Brickhill ..... Gt Brickhill 261620
Highbury Infant School & Nursery, Standhill Rd, SG4 ..... 01462 630500
Highfield School The, Highfield, SG6 ..... 01462 620500
Highover J M I School, Cambridge Rd, Hitchin, SG4 ..... 01462 622333
Hillborough Infant School, Hillborough Rd ..... Luton 725764
Hillborough Junior School, Hillborough Rd ..... Luton 613331
Hills Lower School The, Standcliffe Rd ..... Bedford 266498
Hillshots Infants & Nursery School, Ridge Avenue, SG6 ..... 01462 621212
Hitchin Boys School, Grammar School Walk ..... Hitchin 432181
Hitchin 455556
Hitchin Girls School, Highbury Rd, Hitchin, SG4 ..... 01462 621300
Hockliffe Lower School, Woburn Rd, Hockliffe ..... Leighton Buzzard 210330
Holmemead Middle School, Mead End ..... Biggleswade 318123
Holmwood First School, Dorton Close, Great Holm ..... Milton Keynes 260596
Holne Chase Combined School, Buckingham Rd, Bletchley ..... Milton Keynes 373640
Holywell School, Red Lion Close, Cranfield ..... Bedford 750381
Houghton Conquest Lower School, High St, Houghton Conquest ..... Bedford 740202
Houghton Regis Lower School, St Michaels Avenue, Houghton Regis ..... Luton 867487
Husborne Crawley Lower School, School Lane, Husborne Crawley ..... Ridgmont 280232
Ickleford Primary School, The Green, Ickleford ..... Hitchin 459150
Icknield High School, Riddy Lane ..... Luton 576561
Icknield Infant & Primary School, Archers Way, Letchworth, SG6 ..... 01462 620406
Icknield Infants School, Birdsfoot Lane ..... Luton 619800
Icknield Junior School, Birdsfoot Lane, LU3 ..... 01582 534000

Oaks Cross ..... Stevenage 351086
Longmeadow Junior School, Oaks Cross ..... Stevenage 351087
Lord Grey Comprehensive School, Rickley Lane, Bletchley ..... Milton Keynes 379131
Lordship Farm School, Fouracres Manor Park Estate, SG6 ..... 01462 620550
Loughton Middle School, Bradwell Rd, Loughton ..... Milton Keynes 665971
Lovat Middle School, Avon Close ..... Newport Pagnell 610431
Luton Sixth Form College, Bradgers Hill Rd ..... Luton 412005
Maidenhall Junior School, Newark Rd ..... Luton 618303
Manshead School, Dunstable Rd, Caddington ..... Dunstable 608641
Maple Tree Lower School, Hawk Drive, Fallowfield Estate ..... Sandy 699806
Margaret Beaufort Middle School, High St, Risley ..... Bedford 708213
Mark Rutherford Upper School, Wentworth Drive ..... Bedford 290200
Markyate Village School & Nursery, Cavendish Rd, Markyate ..... Luton 840537
Marriotts School, Telford Avenue ..... Stevenage 351801
Marston Vale Middle School, The Crescent, Stewartby ..... Bedford 768224
Marsworth C.E Infant School, Vicarage Rd, Marsworth ..... Cheddington 668440
Mary Bassett Lower, Bassett Rd ..... Leighton Buzzard 373017
Mary Exton Junior Mixed Infant School, St. Michaels Rd ..... Hitchin 456997
Maryland College, Leighton St ..... Woburn 292900
Maulden Lower School, Church Rd, Maulden ..... Ampthill 402286
Meadfurlong Middle School, 1 Fishermead Boulevard, Fishermead ..... Milton Keynes 661952
Meads Primary School The, Sawtry Close ..... Luton 490905
Meppershall V.A Lower School, 107 High St, Meppershall ..... Hitchin 813293
Merebrook First School, Dulverton Drive, Furzton ..... Milton Keynes 522876
Middlesex University London College of Dance, 10 Linden Rd ..... Bedford 213331
Millvale Middle School, Wilbury Drive, Dunstable, LU5 ..... 01582 523000
01582 523010
Milton Ernest Lower School, Thurleigh Rd, Milton Ernest ..... Oakley 822079
Moggerhanger Lower School, Blunham Rd, Moggerhanger ..... Biggleswade 640270
Moorland First School, Maslin Drive, Beanhill ..... Milton Keynes 678888
Mossbury JMI School Nursery, Webb Rise, SG1 ..... 01438 222300
New Bradwell County Combined School, Bounty St, New Bradwell ..... Milton Keynes 312244
Newnham Middle School, Pothill Avenue ..... Bedford 303403
Newton Blossomville C.E.First School, Newton Blossomville ..... Turvey 881294
Newton Longville C.E Combined School, School Drive, Newton Longville ..... Milton Keynes 373428
North Crawley C of E First School, Church Walk, North Crawley ..... N Crawley 391282
North Hertfordshire College, Letchworth Centre Broadway ..... Hitchin 424242
Centre for The Arts Willian Rd ..... Hitchin 471000
Hitchin Centre Cambridge Rd ..... Hitchin 424242
Stevenage Centre Monkswood Way ..... Hitchin 424242
North Hertfordshire College Sports Centre, Cambridge Rd ..... Hitchin 424226
North Herts Education Support Centre, Briar Patch Lane ..... Letchworth 487207
Northfields Infant School, Burley, SG6 ..... 01462 623388
Northfields Upper School, Houghton Rd, Dunstable ..... Luton 619700
Northill V.A C of E Lower School, Bedford Rd ..... Northill 627215
Norton Road Primary School, Norton Rd ..... Luton 571169
Norton School, Norton Rd ..... Letchworth 682908
Oakley Lower School, Station Rd ..... Oakley 822104
Offley Endowed Junior Mixed Infant School, School Lane ..... Offley 768392
Oldbrook First School, Illingworth Place, Oldbrook ..... Milton Keynes 604689
Olney County Middle School, Yardley Rd, Olney ..... Bedford 711323
Olney First School, Spinney Hill Rd, Olney ..... Bedford 711388

CLASSIFICATION CONTINUED ➤

Skimming

Skimming is technique which enables us to gain an immediate overview of a document's main points. This style of reading will never replace a detailed study but will provide a quick and dirty overview.

To skim a document, read headings, sub-headings and the first part of each paragraph, stopping as soon as you have isolated its main point. You can read bullet points and lists by running your stick down the middle of each sentence, as shown by the arrow in the text below. Your brain will stitch both parts together.

The yellow highlighter below shows how this report could be skimmed.

Feedback from Visit to Barton Engineering

First Impressions

Barton Engineering is a friendly organisation and greets its customers well. This was demonstrated through a very pleasant and relaxed welcome by the Receptionist who smiled and made pleasant conversation during the signing-in process.

This warm welcome is blighted by an unsatisfactory reception area which sends a cold signal to customers and people entering the building.

There is a low turnover of staff and most people spoken to said that they considered Barton Engineering to be a good employer. Records show that staff tend to stay with the organisation for quite a long period of time.

The Managing Director has a good reputation throughout the organisation and the staff interviewed spoke of his management style and approach in a positive manner. The majority of employees felt that he has the best interests of staff and company at heart.

Staffing is made up as follows:

3 x Managers
2 x Supervisors
6 x Customer Services Representatives
4 x Warehouse staff.

The structure of the organisation is flat and lean and whilst obviously this has operational benefits, this is creating the anticipated problems of lack of career structures for some individuals who now feel that they have outgrown their current role.

Barton Engineering appears to be very good at recognising hard work and talent. A number of employees commented on this favourably during our meetings. The organisation has a history of "growing its own" talent - however the company's long-term challenge will be in keeping the talent it has discovered.

Once you have skimmed the document for its main messages, serpentine your stick through the text. This doublecheck will help you to identify any information which has been tucked away in the body of a paragraph. You can now judge whether this quick skim has provided enough information or whether you need to go back and read the document carefully.

Skimming Exercise

Skim the following policy to isolate its key points

Professional Boundaries Policy

These Policy guidelines apply to all employees in Supported Housing, including registered care homes for older people.

Supporting Policies:

a. Protection from Abuse Policy and Procedure
b. Confidential Reporting (Whistle Blowing) Procedure
c. Disciplinary Procedure
d. Grievance Procedure
e. Complaints Procedure for Service Users
f. Harassment Policy and Procedure
g. GDPR Policy
h. Schedule One, Gifts and Hospitality Policy

1.0 Definition of professional boundaries

1.1 "Professional boundaries" are the limits governing the working relationship between employees and service users. These limits are explained in the Policy Guidelines below.

2.0 Background

2.1 Supported housing employees are in daily contact with service users as part of providing services to our vulnerable clients. These services include providing housing management, support (including intensive 1:1 emotional and practical assistance) and, in our registered care homes, personal care.

2.2 Service users have a right to expect that employees will observe professional boundaries at all times and to receive the highest quality of service.

2.3 The Lidlington Care Group expects employees at all times to deliver the highest quality of services with integrity and sensitivity. The observation of appropriate professional boundaries is critical in enabling them to do this. The Lidlington Care Group expects employees to be highly motivated to assist service users within the framework of the job description and behaviours for their job role. Employees may have very good intentions but must not be tempted to cross professional boundaries.

2.4 Overstepping professional boundaries will risk the development of problems and behaviour that:

a. Compromises the employee's ability to perform their duty effectively.
b. Undermines the service being provided to the service user.

2.5 Observing professional boundaries will protect both service users and employees against such problems.

2.6 Understanding and observing professional boundaries allows for the development of safe and healthy working relationships between employees and service users, in which all service users have equal opportunity to receive support. Working within professional boundaries means there is the best chance that employees can deliver the highest quality of services and help service users achieve

positive outcomes. In order to achieve professional working relationships with our service users, all staff must understand and behave within the Policy Guidelines.

3.0 Policy Guidelines

3.1 Employees will remember that at all times they are employees in a working relationship with service users. They are not friends or acquaintances of service users. Situations employees encounter during their work must therefore be dealt with in a professional manner, not in a way in which they may choose to respond in their personal lives.

3.2 Employees are in a position of power in relation to service users, as they have control and management of the supported housing scheme. Employees must not abuse this power by crossing professional boundaries. Employees are required to constantly be aware of behaving appropriately in their role as service providers.

4.0 Personal relationships

4.1 Employees will not develop any kind of personal relationship with a service user – this is entirely inappropriate.

4.2 It may also be inappropriate for employees to develop any personal relationship with a former service user. Employees will consult with their line manager first if there is potentially such a situation.

4.3 There may be occasions when an employee is acquainted with a service user before they start using The Lidlington Care Group's service. In this situation the employee will inform their line manager of the existing relationship and assess the potential impact of this on the service user.

5.0 Setting up Boundaries - *"start as you mean to go on"*

5.1 Employees will actively set out the boundaries that service users can expect in the earliest meetings between employees and the service user. Employees will explain to service users what their role is and what they can expect of the employee.

6.0 Buying/selling

6.1 There must be no buying or selling of personal or private goods or services between employees and service users at any time, or for any reason. In addition to breaching professional boundaries, any form of transaction with a service user could mean that the employee is in breach of the Lidlington Care Group's Schedule One, Gifts and Hospitality Policy and could have serious consequences for both the employee and the Organisation.

7.0 Loans

7.1 Employees must never borrow money or accept money from service users. Nor must employees ever lend or give money to service users. Whilst it may seem helpful to assist a service user who asks for a small temporary loan, there is a clear risk of not recovering it. These difficulties are avoided if no loans are made and the professional boundaries are stuck to. In such a situation, the employee will resort to any legitimate crisis funds available from any social agency for the purpose of assisting service users.

8.0 Gift giving - *"thank you, but I can't accept"*

8.1 The Lidlington Care Group's Schedule One, Gifts and Hospitality Policy should be referred to for guidance. In principle gifts should be declined, though small inexpensive gifts (eg. a box of chocolates) can be accepted where to do otherwise would really cause offence, but such gifts must be shared between the members of the service team.

9.0 Personal information - *"that's private"*

9.1 Employees will not share personal information about themselves or their personal situation with service users. Particularly, information about any current personal difficulties of an employee must not be shared under any circumstances with a service user.

9.2 It may seem helpful for an employee to give general information about a past personal experience which has been constructively overcome, but this can only be shared with a service user if there is a clear and definable benefit to the service user. In any event the intention to share information and the details must first be discussed with the employee's line manager. Extreme caution must be exercised about imparting such information and attention given to what impression it may give the service user. Service users' sense of trust and security must be preserved to ensure they feel sufficiently supported and professional boundaries must be observed. If these points might be compromised, information must not be shared. Employees must never under any circumstances disclose their home address, personal e-mail address or telephone numbers to a service user.

9.3 Employees must at all times avoid personalising the working relationship with a service user - ie. making themselves the only employee who can help the service user. Some service users may prefer to seek support from a certain employee, but it is unacceptable to give the impression that that employee is the only person who can help them. Employees will be clear with service users that they all work as part of the team, that they share information accordingly to provide a high-quality service and that they can each help. Employees must not try to deal alone with the personal difficulties of a service user and must always seek support from their line manager and peers.

10.0 Employee training and supervision

10.1 The Lidlington Care Group recognises that preserving professional boundaries is essential to the successful provision of housing management, care and support services, especially to vulnerable people. The Organisation also recognises that employees motivated to help vulnerable service users may be challenged to keep to professional boundaries. In view of these points, managers will ensure that employees are coached to understand and observe these Policy Guidelines. This will be done routinely during the day to day work and by including the discussion of appropriate behaviour by employees in one to one supervisions and team meetings. Employees are responsible for taking the initiative and raising queries or concerns promptly.

11.0 Disciplinary Action

11.1 Employees are required to follow The Lidlington Care Group's policy and procedure at all times, otherwise they could be subject to the Organisation's Disciplinary Procedure.

Careful Reading

To improve your own in-depth reading:

Before you read

- Is it the right time and the right place to be reading this?
- Do I need to break the document into manageable chunks?
- What are my reasons for reading it; what do I hope to gain from the document?

As you start to read

- Preview the structure of the document by looking at its Contents page and skimming through the key chapter/sub-headings
- Skim the document to ensure that you have an overview of its contents. Be prepared to do this several times so that you have a clear idea of the text's key points before you start reading
- Choose the order you read the document: you don't have to read A-Z

Whilst you are reading

- Keep your mind involved by reading actively by taking notes or mindmapping the contents
- Vary your reading speed
- Try reading the document very quickly. Be prepared to read it 3, 4, 5 times very quickly rather than reading it just once, slowly
- Summarise the contents of one section, either mentally or in writing, before moving on to the next part of the document
- Make margin notes and highlight key passages
- Use a pointer under the words to keep your eyes moving forward

If you experience "reader's block":

- Leave the passage and go back to it later
- Skip the section and move on. You may be able to 'back-fill' after you have read the next part of the document
- Ask the author for their interpretation
- 'Phone a friend!

Careful Reading and SQRW

Reading for detailed comprehension requires a different technique and will usually involve a slower reading speed. It is recommended that you continue to make use of your chopstick so that your eye can keep its place within the document. The stick will also help to reduce eyestrain.

SQRW

SQRW is a four-step strategy for reading and analysing written information. Each letter stands for one step in the process:

- **S** kimming
- **Q** uestioning
- **R** eading
- **W** riting.

Skimming

Skimming involves gaining an overview of a document before reading it in detail.

To skim a document, follow the advice given on page 19. Make sure that you read the contents page and any introduction or summary before you dive into its body. Take time to examine any visual information including pictures, tables, maps, and graphs and read the caption that goes with each one.

Once you have a feel of the document's key points, you can make a decision on how best to approach your reading. This may mean choosing to read the document out of order or selecting certain sections to return to later for careful study.

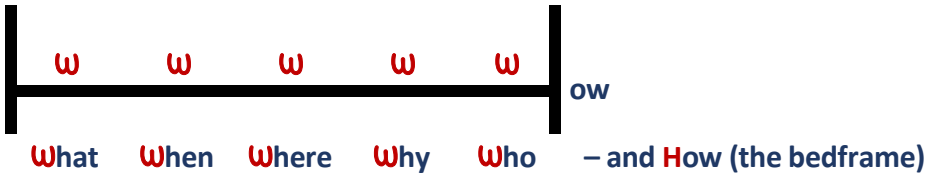
Questioning

As you survey and skim, develop questions that you need the document to answer. A clever trick is to turn every heading into a question. For example, if you were reading a planning document which has a heading "Impact on Street Scene" – your questions might include: "What is the impact on the Street Scene?" and "What analysis of current Street Scene was carried out by the author"?

Questions give you a purpose for reading and help you to stay focused on the reading assignment.

You will not usually need to form questions for the report's introduction, summary or conclusion.

Use the “five bottoms on a bed” model to build your questions:



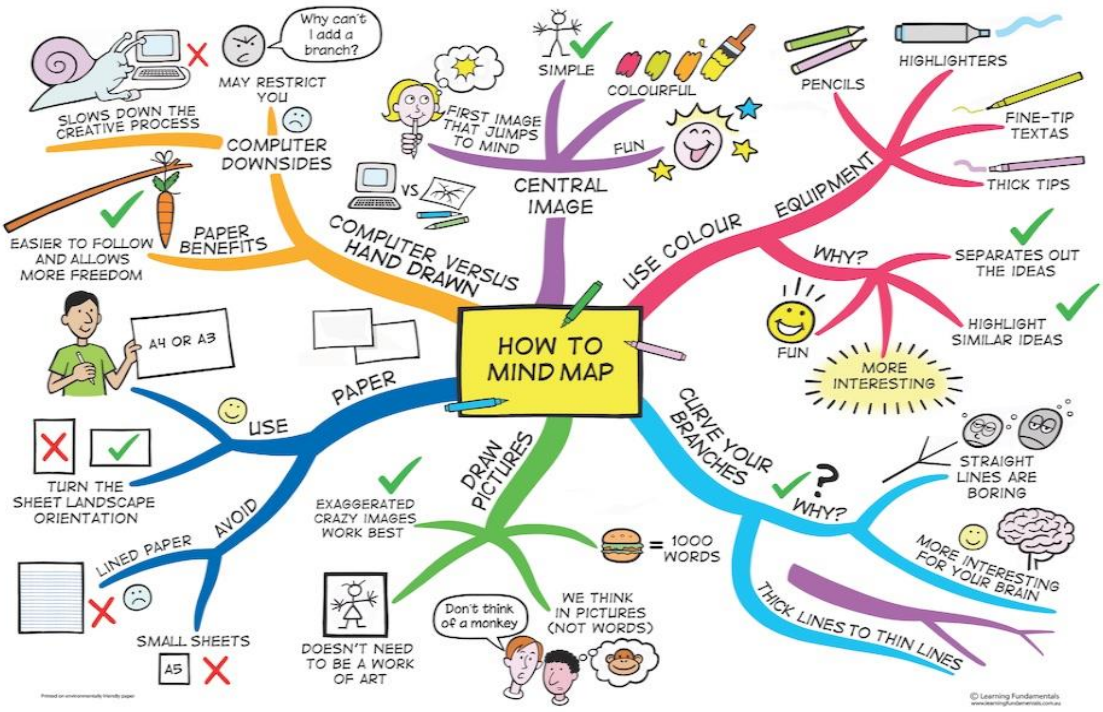
Reading

Now that you have your questions, read the document to find the answers to these. As you do this, you may decide you need to change a question or turn it into several questions to be answered. Stay focused and flexible so you can gather as much information as you can. You may find that some of your questions are not answered. You can make a note of any omissions and these may form points for questioning or scrutiny.

Writing

Write each question and its answer in your notebook. Re-read each of your written answers to ensure that they are legible and contain the important information needed to answer the question.

If you like the idea of mind-mapping the document, start with a coloured image in the centre of your page. Next, without trying to order or sequence information, randomly throw down ideas, concepts or solutions that link to the central theme. It is important to print words as this gives a clearer and more photographic image. Each word should have its own line. Eventually you may show a linkage between each line.



Colours should be used throughout the mind map as this will enhance memory, delight your eye and tickle your brain. Do not worry about order or organisation as you can look at this later when sequence, patterns and groupings become obvious.

Reading from your Tablet or Computer

Although many people say they prefer to read from a piece of paper, the modern trend is to deliver documents electronically. This means that we are spending more time reading from computer, tablet or telephone screens.

Whilst some of us miss the kinaesthetic experience of holding or annotating paper documents, the major issue of "e-reading" tends to centre around eye fatigue. When we work at a computer, our eyes have to focus and refocus all the time: they move back and forth as we read and are constantly reacting to minute changes. Unlike a book or piece of paper, the screen adds contrast, flicker, and glare, which challenge our eyes, which is why it is so important to take a break every 15 minutes or so.

Screen Brightness and Background Tint

A simple fix is to decrease the brightness on your device's screen to the lowest setting you can, based on your reading environment. This will allow you to read with more comfort.

Dedicated e-readers which have "ink" screens are specially formulated to reduce light emissions and are designed for prolonged reading, but if you are using a tablet computer, it is worth looking through the settings to see if you can change the background tint to something more sympathetic. If you are reading a Microsoft Word document on a computer or laptop you can change its background colour by clicking on "Design" and then selecting "Page Colour".

Some tablets, and Apple iOS and Google Android mobile telephones, have a built-in blue light sensor which reduces the impact a screen's glow on the brain's production of melatonin. You can choose to have this setting automatically applied within the hours you specify, eg. between 10.00pm and 8.00am. The control for this will show as an option within the device's settings, usually under "display". Apple refer to this as "Night Shift".

Document Layout and Typography

If the document you are reading is long and/or complex and you are able to change its formatting, you might consider making a number of changes before you start reading. This takes less than a minute to do, and will make your reading experience more comfortable and effective:

	Original	After re-formatting
Font	Many texts, especially MS Word documents are written in Times New Roman font, but this is not the best typeface for speed reading. Test results have proved that it is faster to read text which has been printed in a "sans serif" font, such as Arial or Abadi.	Many texts, especially MS Word documents are written in Times New Roman font, but this is not the best typeface for speed reading. Test results have proved that it is faster to read text which has been printed in a "sans serif" font, such as Arial or Calibri.
Font Size	Decide whether the font size is too small or too big and adjust accordingly. If text is too small you will strain your eyes; if it is too big you will constantly need to scroll from line to line.	Decide whether the font size is too small or too big and adjust accordingly. If text is too small you will strain your eyes; if it is too big you will constantly need to scroll from line to line.

	Original	After re-formatting
Justification	For documents which have been constructed using long, dense paragraphs, consider changing a justified right-hand margin, to make it "ragged". This may help your eyes to keep their place within the document.	For documents which have been constructed using long, dense paragraphs, consider changing a justified right-hand margin, to make it "ragged". This may help your eyes to keep their place within the document.

On a PC/laptop, all of these formatting changes can be made in one go. In Microsoft Word, once you have opened the document you want to read, press the "control" and the "a" key at the same time. This will highlight the whole document. You can now easily change its font, font size and margins. For .pdf files, if you don't have access to an editing programme where you can make these adjustments, you may be able to copy and paste the text into an editable Word document.

Reading Distance and Conditions

The distance you sit away from your computer matters. Ideally your eyes should be a bit further from the text than in comparison to reading from paper. Work on the basis of your eyes being 50 cm or 20 inches away from the screen. If you want to read faster, then you should read from slightly further back so that you have more text in your field of vision.

Proper lighting conditions are also important and there should be enough background light in your room. If you are sitting behind your computer in the dark, there will be a big contrast between the screen and its surroundings, which will cause your eyes to tire quickly. This will slow your reading speed and cause your eyes to strain as they compete with the difference in light levels.

Although it may feel intuitive to read from a tablet in "landscape" mode, it is usually better to hold the device upright, particularly when reading reports and business documents which are usually formatted into "portrait". You can also take the same approach when using a hybrid laptop/tablet.

Using a Pointer

In the same way that a chopstick can be used to improve reading from paper, the same stick can also be used to guide your eye across the screen of a tablet. Some tablets are supplied with an e-pen, which can double as a highlighter.

On a desktop or laptop PC the mouse can be used for keeping track while reading from computer screen. To do this, place the mouse at the start of the piece of text you want to read. Press the left or right-hand mouse button and then drag the mouse across the line of text. The mouse will then highlight the text which keeps your eyes moving. This will improve reading speed and minimise eye strain.

Scrolling text can waste time and distract your attention, so to reduce the need to move a document around make use of the full screen mode when you are viewing a longer document. A larger sized monitor can make reading faster and more comfortable, so if you carry out most of your reading on your main PC, you could consider trading up to a larger screen when you next upgrade.

Useful Apps for Speed Reading

Spreeder (Apple iOS)

This is a guided speed-reading course which includes a machine assisted tool which uses flashed text to improve visual/gap speed. There is also a social media sharing platform where users can track their progress and share this with friends.

The application is free but upgrading to Spreeder Pro adds extras such as video lessons.

ReadMe! (Android, iOS)

ReadMe! is an e-book reader with premium speed-reading features powered by Spritz's technology, allowing subscribers to blaze through free e-books with minimal fuss. The app can be set to read up to 450 words per minute, or up to 1,000 when logged in to a Spritz account. Other features include a variety of colour themes, bookmarks and everyday e-book reading functionality. Spritz requires users to be connected online, though subscribers can set books for offline speed reading.

Acceleread (iOS)

Less an individual speed reading app and closer to a speed reading course, Acceleread comes with a range of tutorials, training tools and exercises to build up your skills in a variety of ways, with the app claiming results in as little as 10 days.

A particularly useful feature of the app is the ability to import your own copyright-free e-pub books into the app for use as a training tool or to be read with any of the app's speed-reading tools. Acceleread provides a limited selection of tools in the free version, with an in-app purchase unlocking the entire feature set.

Accelerator (iOS)

Formerly known as Velocity, Accelerator is an iOS speed reading tool that embraces the RSVP technique of flashing single words to users in quick succession. Where Accelerator shines is its ability to grab text, rich text and word documents from various sources, such as Mail, saved Web articles, your device clipboard and various 'read it later' services such as Pocket, Instapaper and Readability.

Users can save Web articles in Safari straight into Accelerator, and a specialized typeface is designed to help readers who are dyslexic.

SpeedRead with Spritz (Android)

SpeedRead is an Android speed reading tool that allows you to speed read content from a wide variety of Android apps that use "Text to Speech" (TTS) mode. Simply create and log in to your Spritz account, then configure your Text to Speech settings, and you're good to go.

You can speed read from a variety of apps, such as Pocket, Google Play Books, Moon+ and more. As long as your favourite reader app can read it in TTS mode, SpeedRead can then Spritz it for you.

As with the other Spritz-powered apps, SpeedRead does need you to be online for Spritz to process the speed reading, so that's something to consider.

ReadQuick (iOS)

ReadQuick's free version uses the RSVP technique, flashing words one at a time at anywhere from 250 to 1,000 words per minute to avoid eye movement and sub-vocalisation. Users can read text taken from clipboards, URLs, services such as Pocket, Instapaper or Feedly, and ReadQuick's partners such as LongReads.

Upgrading to premium provides users with the option to flash groups of words for speed reading, multi-device sync and a full article viewer mode.

Reading Trainer (Android, iPad, iPhone, WP)

Another app which is less a speed reading tool so much as a comprehensive speed reading course, Reading Trainer is available for users of Android, iPad and iPhone telephone devices.

The app comes with a variety of speed-reading courses and exercises to improve your natural reading rate, complete with statistics tracking, retention tests and mini games.

Its premise is that it builds up reading skills for physical and electronic documents by exercising brain power.

Some Final Tips

Make use of your natural body clock

We can maximise our reading speed and maximise concentration by working with our natural Circadian rhythm. Whilst research suggests that most people are at their peak first thing in the morning, others amongst us will be "night owls" who are at their perkiest long after other people are tucked-up asleep in bed.

Have your eyes tested regularly

An eye test only takes about 45 minutes but can include a comprehensive battery of tests relating to eye health or wider health issues including high blood pressure. In our 40s, our eyes lose their elasticity and reading glasses become a necessity for all but the most fortunate of us. You should have an eye test at least every two years, or more if you have an underlying condition which requires closer monitoring. Any employee who uses Display Screen Equipment (DSE) is entitled to ask their employer to pay for an eye test and to provide glasses if these are needed exclusively for DSE work.

Prioritise your reading

Create three piles for your reading material: Important, Moderately Important and Least Important. Read items in their order of importance. This will improve your reading comprehension by concentrating your attention on the most important documents first. Take care not to let your reading pile up!

Read in the proper environment

Prop your book or tablet using a bookstand. Angling your reading material at 45 degrees improves your reading speed and reduces eye strain. Avoid reading difficult or important material in bed, where your mind and body tend to relax. You'll be more alert if you sit properly at a desk. Whilst some people say that music helps them concentrate, spoken word radio stations can be a competing distraction.

Take care with highlighting

Although some readers believe that highlighting certain parts of a piece of text improves their reading speed and comprehension, the reverse may be true. Highlighting can be a deferral technique which means that some readers use it as a way of avoiding deeper thinking around an idea or topic. Highlighting can also mean that a reader may end up reading the material twice, which is not necessarily a bad idea – but can sometimes waste time.

Be flexible with your reading style

Some reading material must be read slowly and carefully: legal contracts, policies and technical reports are a few examples where a high level of attention is needed. Other reading material can be read at much faster speeds, for example magazines and novels. Adjust your reading speed to the type of reading material and your reading purpose.

Answers to Assumptions about Reading - Page 4:

All false, except number 1, which is true.

Answer to Reading Exercise - Page 6:

All unknown, except number 3, which is false.

The Baikie-Wood Consultancy provide a range of learning and development programmes, including:

- Effective Meetings
- Personal Safety and Lone Working
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- Professional Boundaries
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