

Speed Reading Tips

As a college student, you will need to read tons of textbooks, novels, notes and other materials to help you through your classes. This can be exhausting for almost any student, however, if you can perfect the art of speed-reading, you can sail through almost any assignment and still learn and retain the information. Speed-reading is the process of reading faster than your normal rate, while at the same time, still comprehending what you read. Speed-reading can be done by almost anyone willing to take the time to learn some simple techniques and tricks.

SKIM

The most popular form of speed-reading is skimming the material. The most important problem in skimming is that people tend not to actually retain the information, so the trick is to learn what to skim and actually remember the information. If you are speed-reading a textbook, then skim through terms and their definitions as well as the first few sentences of each paragraph. These are where the important information is usually located. Also read the summary at the end of each chapter. Doing this will decrease the amount of time reading, while still learning everything that you need from the text.

DO NOT READ EVERY WORD

Believe it or not, your brain is programmed to be able to understand words without actually reading the whole word. For example, your brain will easily transform misspelled words and missing letters from words correctly. The best thing to do is while reading, try to skip over basic words such as: the, as, it, be, etc. Although these are words that tie sentences together, if you skip over them, you will still understand the main idea of the sentence you are reading.

ASSESS YOUR METHOD

Some people retain information better when they read out loud whereas others learn when reading silently. When speed-reading, determine which way of reading suits your learning style better and apply it to your studies. Although studies show that reading aloud reduces your reading speed, there are students who prefer this way to silent reading.

ASK QUESTIONS

The best way to determine if you are actually learning what you read is to ask yourself questions. Speed-read a few pages and then stop and question yourself on the material. Grab a few terms and see if you can define them, or go back and really make sure you understand the main ideas of the chapter. If you are not grasping the information, then speed-reading is not doing you any favors.

Finally, when you are finished reading your material, write down the main ideas that you just read. This will not only test if you actually comprehended the information, but it will also provide you with quick notes that you can refer to later. Remember, the average college student reads about 300 words per minute, however if you can learn to speed read, you may be able to increase that to about 700-1000 words per minute. Do not stress yourself if it is something that you can not achieve, however if you can, it is very useful tool during your college years and beyond.