



Learning Lists for Science 2

How to Read Better and Faster

Contents Updated: Wednesday, 03 December 2003

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A. Reading Problems

1. Too slow
2. Can't concentrate
3. Don't remember.

B. Better Reading

1. Need for active reading: use POPQR³.
2. Look for main ideas—key sentence in each paragraph:
 - first sentence
 - last sentence
 - sometimes none, eg novels, general description.
3. Look for important details:
 - clarification, examples, evidence, proofs
 - at least one to each main idea
 - study all the illustrations, graphs, diagrams, etc.
 - ideas/evidence not mentioned in text
 - teach better than words—replace words
 - aid understanding
 - visual—help memory.
4. Guidance to main ideas/details:
 - visual signposts, bold type, underlines
 - italics, bold type, underlines
 - numbering and lettering.
 - verbal signposts
 - link words/phrases eg for instance, however.
5. Evaluate text:
 - Be skeptical:
 - are facts correct?
 - are facts and opinions distinguished?
 - any limitations?
 - any exceptions?
 - any contradictions?
 - any counter arguments?
 - does conclusion follow from evidence?
 - any equally valid conclusions?
 - do you agree with the argument?
 - Is it useful?
 - can you apply it?
 - does it tie in with experience?
 - any useful analogies?

6. don't ignore difficulties even if you skip them at first reading:

- Why not?
 - undermines confidence
 - hinders further learning
- Work on it:
 - read again
 - refer to other books
 - discuss with colleagues
 - make a note to ask tutor.

C. Faster Reading

1. Faster reading improves comprehension.

2. Five basic steps:

- do you need specs?
- stop saying words mentally
- force yourself to read faster
 - broaden recognition span
 - reduce fixations
 - don't look back
 - read twice at speed not once slowly.
- read in thought-units—related words
- improve vocabulary
 - read widely
 - look up new words
 - note their meaning
 - use them as soon as possible
 - make a glossary of technical words.

3. Practice

- 15-20 minutes each night
- start on light, short, magazine articles
- time yourself—find words per minute
- check, comprehension—recall main ideas
- keep progress chart
- read all study material faster—but vary pace:
 - faster for light material
 - faster in seeking main ideas
 - slower for complex arguments
 - slower in seeking details.

Reference

- D Rowntree, *How to Study*, chapter 5

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Ask your public library to order these books
Available through all good bookshops

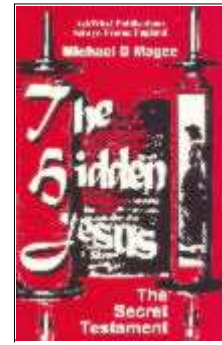
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