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*By Malcolm Ayres*

Improving Your Reading and Retention

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## **About the Author**

Malcolm Ayres has felt the frustration caused by the ever-increasing amount of information which he had to deal with in his job and also as secretary of a local community group. He was almost to the stage of resigning from the honorary position because of the pressure.

Like many people, he took home a lot of work every night which meant less rest and genuine family time.

That often affects people’s health and causes friction with other family members.

Malcolm started to look for a way to help himself. He asked his manager to send him on a short, but expensive speed reading course.

Malcolm saw some immediate improvement and felt that he might be able to do even better. So, he looked into everything he could find about improving the results he got and he has never looked back.

He started to hear from friends and colleagues who had similar challenges with their own information overload.

Matthew asked them to try his methods, based on his own experience and his research.

Encouraged by the strong, positive feedback from everyone that he shared his methods with, he put everything he knew into this book.

Malcolm thinks formal classes and training courses are great, but believes that his book has some advantages too.

It is ideal for people that don’t want to pay the high cost of most courses or find it hard to schedule the time. Another advantage is that you can go through it at the pace which suits you best and no-one will criticize you.

Malcolm believes his book can help almost anyone, whatever their background or age, to reduce the time they need to deal properly with their business and light reading, giving them more time to enhance their family life or build their business.

## Introduction



This book is the result of my struggles with a flood of paper and electronic information when I was a junior employee in large firm. I felt the paper which was supposed to inform and help me was a major roadblock to my progress with the company.

I was determined to conquer the information overload so I could improve my value to the company and regain some time to enjoy with my family and friends.

I was lucky. My boss had faith in me and paid for a short, but fairly expensive, speed reading course.

The instructor was very good (another piece of luck!) and I made the most of the opportunity. The course got me enthusiastic about “speed reading” as it is called.

The best part of the course was the genuinely supportive atmosphere which the instructor encouraged among the students. The students were of various ages and from varied backgrounds. Although some made more progress than others (I was around the middle when we checked our results at the end of the course), everyone made some progress and planned to continue practicing the methods they had learned. I don’t know if they all did, of course.

The one problem with the course was that it was crammed into a few weeks after working hours. That was too short a time for some students to take full advantage of the information and it also put more pressure on our personal time and other commitments.

I’ve written this book to help other people that are finding it difficult to deal with the material they have to read. And, I’ll try to help you get more from your recreational reading too.

All you need to improve your reading, retention, and recall is this book, some varied reading material (I’ll supply some for the exercises in this book to get you started), some pencils and paper or a pocket notebook and some time you can set devote on a regular basis to practice the tips and techniques which I will explain.

You don’t need any sort of educational qualification.

It doesn’t matter whether you are in your late teens or much older.

All you need is a willingness to follow the steps and keep focused on the goals you set.

One person I showed the draft of this book to was very reluctant try it because she felt she would fail, but she made good progress in a fairly short time. The improvement in her reading skills boosted her confidence in other areas as well.

I recommend that you read through each section of the book separately and do it at your own pace, but try to avoid putting the book aside for several days between chapters.

The habits which this book helps you to develop will help you get more benefit from any kind of material which you have to deal with.

Let’s get started.

***Malcolm Ayres***



## Overview of This Speed Reading Course

I don't like the term "speed reading" and that's not exactly what you and I will focus on through this book.

The speed we read at is less important than how much benefit we get from the information. That comes from the amount and quality of the information we gather from the material which pours on to our desks or out of our computers, and the improvement we see in our ability to recall and use that information.

### **Will I understand less as I learn to read faster?**

That is something which I've been asked by a few people. It would be a poor trade-off, wouldn't it? Though your progress may slow down at times because you have to overcome the slow and limiting procedures you've been using for almost your whole life to date, I've set the exercises and techniques up in a way that helps you to read faster and also retain more than you probably have been able to do before.

You are learning a better way to do something which most of us were never taught or encouraged to do well the first time.

You probably have to overcome habits and mannerisms which have become ingrained over many years.

That will take time, but you will be surprised how quickly you start to see some improvement. Over time you will increase your comprehension well above what it is now.

Any dip during the early stages of your progress through the exercises in this book will be very small and very temporary.

No part of this course should cause you any anxiety or tire you out. Take it at your own pace.

That's one benefit that you get from an ebook over a formal course, apart from the lower cost.

First, you'll check your current reading and comprehension rates.

The second step is for you to set your goals which you want me to help you reach.

Then, I'll help you to start improving both speed and comprehension.

I'll explain various techniques which have helped many people like you to improve their reading and start to enjoy all parts of their life much better.

Some of those tips may be more relevant and interesting for you than others.

Please give each technique which you start to use enough time to have some effect before switching to something else.

As you go through the steps, you'll be able to check your progress and go back over any part which you feel the need to.

When you have gone through the whole book, I will give you some suggestions to help you continue to build on the progress you have already achieved.

You can continue to improve your reading and retention for years to come.

I suggest that you come back to this book in say, six months, and think about doing some or all of the exercises again. That is up to you.

I also have included some tips about improving your use of your memory in other areas. I'll explain why you don't really have a bad memory.

There are also some time-saving tips.

I'll leave it to you to decide how you'll use your newly found spare time and extra energy.

## Get Ready

To get the most benefit from this book, please read the chapters in sequence.

### The Exercises

I'll give you some short, easy to read exercises on a variety of subjects at various points in the text and also at the end of the book.

I include simple instructions how to work out the rate that you read each piece.

This will give you some idea of your reading speed, but it is no more than a guide because the speed will vary according to the type of material and whether the subject is interesting to you as well as other factors.

I've put a few questions after each piece which will show you how well you are absorbing the information which you read.

Your score for each set of questions is not that important.

Please understand that the answers I provide are not the only correct ones.

The important thing is whether you understand the points which the questions each relate to in the text, not whether you remember the exact form of words which the writer used.

I know that I used to be marked on whether I could remember the exact wording, but that's only important if you are reading poetry or if you are likely to be giving evidence about it in Court.

Don't make any special effort to remember particular points as you read because that will slow you down and it won't give you an accurate guide to how well you are doing. Just read the exercises the same way that you read the material that you get on your desk or in your letter box every day.

These exercises are only to show you that you are improving as you continue to apply the techniques I give you.

The speed and the number of questions which you can recall the answers to have just one purpose; they will give you some idea of how well you are understanding the unfamiliar material.

Improved comprehension (how well you retain and can apply the important points from what you read) is the real benefit that you will get from this book.

Your comprehension will vary according to the type of material, your level of interest in it and how well the writer presents it.

***How to get the Most Benefit from the Exercises***

I suggest that you use the supplied material as you go through the book. If you prefer, you can pick out some material from your own books.

But, don't use books which you have read recently or more than once.

The book is intended to help you with material that is new to you, because that is what usually slows people down the most and which they find it hardest to benefit from.

If you use your own books for practice, you will need to work out the number of words in a section so that you can record your reading speed and check your progress over time.

That's easy:

Count the words in ten lines of text.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Example**

**110**

Divide that by 10 to get approx. number of words per line

\_\_\_\_\_

**Example**

**11**

Count the lines on a page.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Example**

**50**

Multiply the first answer by the second

\_\_\_\_\_

**Example**

**550**

Multiply that by the number of pages you read \_\_\_\_\_

**Example (for 3 pages)**

**1650**

That last number is the number of words you read in the set time.

Divide that by the time you needed to read the selection (expressed in minutes) to get the reading speed in words per minute.

If you want to test yourself for the rate you achieve when reading a newspaper, you may have to estimate the number of words in the total number of columns that you read.

That’s easy, too.

Count the words in a one column inch (that’s the smallest practical measurement for this exercise - about two and a half centimeters).

**Example** 39

Measure the length of the column which contains the text in inches. Exclude any area which is taken up by an advertisement. \_\_\_\_\_

**Example** 10

Multiply the number of words by the by the number of inches \_\_\_\_\_

That gives you an approximate number of words per column

**Example** 390

Now, you check the number of columns per page.

**Example** 6

Multiply the number of columns by the number of words. \_\_\_\_\_

**Example** 2340

Multiply that by the number of pages that you read. \_\_\_\_\_

**Example** (for 2 pages) 4680

That last number is the number of words you read in the set time.

Divide that by the time you needed to read the selection (expressed in minutes) to get the reading speed in words per minute.

## **Give Yourself a Head Start**

This section lists several factors which you can address to give yourself better and faster results from the exercises in this ebook.

### ***Reduce Distractions***

Distractions are all around us. We need to remove those which we have control over and learn to minimize the effect of any that we cannot avoid.

Different people will be affected in different ways.

Many people are comfortable, and even enjoy, having music playing while they are reading, but other people find they get better results without it.

Reducing the number of things which are demanding our attention will improve our results.

If you have to give some attention to work colleagues, family members or even pets while we are trying to read, you're obviously not going to get the best results you could.

Sometimes, that's really unavoidable without causing upset to someone. But, there will be times when you can get around these distractions.

Try to negotiate with your family and your colleagues to get periods of time when you will be allowed to focus on your reading. The results will be much better.

Then, check your environment.

### ***Are You Comfortable?***

You need to create the best environment you can so that you can concentrate on the material you are reading.

You don't want to be so comfortable that you might fall asleep at any moment, just ensure that your body is ready to receive and absorb what you read.



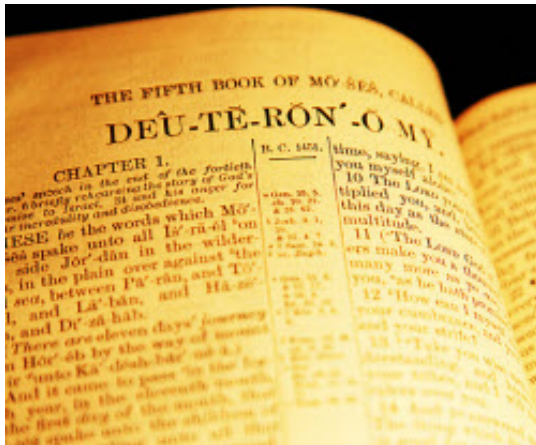
Your chair should support you so that your back is straight and your feet are flat on the floor or on a firm footrest when your knees are bent at ninety degrees. If your knees are bent more sharply, you may restrict the proper flow of blood to the lower part of your legs.

If your feet dangle in the air, they will be a source of distraction. That situation can also, over time, affect your health.

If you read while you have your legs stretched out on a couch, try to raise your ankles slightly with a cushion or something similar.

Hold your reading material firmly with one hand.

Then, you can use the other hand to mark your progress down the page and speed yourself up if you feel ready to do so.



Check that the main source of light is not aimed directly at what you are reading. This will cause you some discomfort.

Take regular breaks, at least every thirty minutes. They don't have to be very long, but it's important to walk around during these breaks so that you maintain good blood circulation

throughout your body.

If you are hungry or thirsty, fix that problem so that you can focus on your reading.

Drinking water rather than caffeinated drinks like coffee, tea or cola has several benefits. As well as reducing the effects of caffeine on your system, water is essential for proper brain function. Yes, the old maxim about “eight glasses of water a day” is true!

Getting enough rest is also important to ensure that you can handle your reading and have the energy to take action on what you read.

### *Concentration*

When we are young, we have very good concentration but most of us lose our ability to focus sharply as we grow older and more things compete for our attention.

You may think that you can focus well already. My question is, "How long can you maintain that focus?"

Most people cannot maintain focus on a particular subject for more than a few minutes!

It's easy to improve your ability to give your full attention to something and the results are well worth the effort.

The most effective ways to improve your concentration include removing distractions and consciously increasing your reading rate.

You can also set a time where you will consciously focus on the material to the exclusion of everything else.

Just start with a short period of no more than five minutes. That may seem too short, but you will probably find that your mind starts to wander and needs to be pulled back in even less time than that.

If you practice regularly, you will soon see improvements in your retention and you will develop a rare and valuable skill.



## **Rating Your Results**

### ***Checking Your Reading Speed***

It is very simple to gauge your reading speed with your watch, whether it is analog (numbers around the dial) or digital.

Start to read the selection when your watch shows a minute with no seconds and check the time when you finish the selection.

Write down the number of words you read (shown in the box at each end of the selection) and the number of seconds which you took to read them.

Divide the number of words by the number of seconds, and then multiply your result by sixty.

That result is your current reading speed for that sort of material in words per minute.

Your speed will vary according to your interest in the material and the quality of presentation.

### ***Checking Your Comprehension***

You will soon see how much your comprehension is improving with your regular reading as you get better results from your reading.

But, you will sometimes have to read and absorb material which will not be used for some time.

You can try listing the most important points you learned from the exercise just after you have read it.

This only takes a few minutes but you will probably find that your comprehension will be boosted after doing this a few times because you are training your brain to be more retentive and you won't need to continue doing the list.

When you are seeing some progress with your new tactics, you could start to set limits on the time you take to read a specific piece of text – make it less time than you have needed for similar material before.

There’s no great problem if you don’t make your target but you are likely to meet your target if you approach it confidently and stay focused.

## Setting Goals

The last step before you start to learn and practice the techniques to improve your reading and comprehension is to set some targets which you want to reach.

Make them reasonable but don't limit yourself too much and make them specific.

Some people say they will be happy with an “increase in their reading speed and a better comprehension rate”.

You'll get better results if, for instance, you aim for an 80% increase in your reading speed and a 50% better comprehension rate.

These improvements are achievable and I expect that some readers will get at least a 100% increase in their reading speed and an improvement in comprehension which is better than 70%.

Setting clear targets will improve your chances of meeting or even exceeding them. If you don't reach the goals you set by the time you have read through this book, it is likely that you will just need a little more time.

Please understand that, before you can start to get the full benefits from your adoption of these new methods and your more positive approach, you need time to overcome the bad habits which you have probably developed over the previous years.

It's very like the way a trainee musician starts fairly jerkily.

He or she probably stumbles a few times but gains experience and confidence from seeing some positive results.

Then, they begin to develop a smoothness which seems almost effortless and show no sign of all the work which they put into it.

## How We Limit Ourselves

When I started to try to improve my reading, I was surprised to find how much I was holding myself back.

Here are some of the most common factors which have a negative effect on our reading and retention.

### *Poor Eyesight*

If you need treatment for an eye condition or new glasses, get the help you need as soon as possible. These things don't fix themselves.

You will be under some stress while your body has adjust to the problem. You also may be doing yourself more damage by waiting.

You definitely will limit the results you get until you remedy the problem.



to

### *A Word at a Time*

Most people read everything at the same pace and mentally focus on each word one at a time.

Whatever we are reading, we can improve our rate without losing any comprehension just by making ourselves focus on a few words at a time instead of every word as an individual.

Save that process for highly technical and important material.

For the rest of your reading, try to grab a few related words at a time.

### *Don't Skip Words You Don't Know*

Some people are slow readers because they don't know a lot of words which they read. That's understandable because there are thousands of words that are created or have their meaning changed each year.

If you just skip the words you don't know, you cannot get the full meaning of what you read.

Get yourself a little notebook and write down each word if you don't have time to look it up when you first see it.

That's much easier if you are near your computer. Just type **define:word** into your favorite search engine and you will get the information instantly.

**Warning:** Please don't let yourself be sidetracked by all the extra links which the search engine throws at you.

Write the word in your notebook (that helps to reinforce your recall of it for the future) along with its meaning and an example of how you would use it in a sentence. Try out your new word at the earliest opportunity where it is relevant to the topic being discussed.

Then, get on with your reading. Otherwise, you will lose more time than you will save by using the Internet.

### ***Reading to Ourselves***

Many people talk to themselves but almost everyone reads to themselves. They speak each word silently as they are reading it.

You probably know that we think much faster than we speak, so this common habit limits our reading speed greatly.

As you learn to focus on groups of words rather than each word individually, which is the way most children are taught to read, you will start to notice a healthy increase in your reading rate.

### ***Self-doubt***

It's common for people to be unsure whether they can improve their reading or achieve any other task which they set for themselves.

Some people are bound by self-imposed limits that result from a lack of support and encouragement from those around them while they were growing up.

But, if you focus on your achievements, however small, rather than always thinking about past mistakes and disappointments, you will start to be more successful and these new achievements will help you to tackle future challenges, like improving your reading, more confidently.

### ***Re-reading***

This self-doubt is probably why many people go back and re-read sections they have already read.

It might take a conscious effort to stop yourself doing this at first because you may think you will not be able to remember all the points that you should. But, a little practice will make up for any actual loss of comprehension and you will also get a boost in confidence as you see that you are capable of exceeding your own expectations.

## **Change Gears to Suit What You Are Reading**

You may be reading everything right through at the same rate.

You can save some valuable time and also get more value from your reading when you throttle up when the material is familiar or less important for your purposes and take it more carefully when reading the important stuff.

Before you start to read something new, skim through it to check how important it is to you. Reviewing the material will help you to focus on those points which are most useful to you as you go through it at your regular place.

You might try a technique which I learned from a friend who never attended any course – he developed it and has stuck with it because it works really well for him.

1. He reads through the material, just grabbing the main points.
2. He often discards much of the material at this point because he believes the material is not good value for the time it will take to read and review it thoroughly.
3. Then, he reads it almost as quickly as he did the first time, but he knows the parts which he needs to focus on.

Use these tips to help you take less time to read your recreational material. That will give you more time to enjoy what you read and your other interests.

### ***Remember the Tortoise***

Aesop’s fable of the tortoise and the hare is worth remembering.

You will get the best results from doing the exercises and trying the various techniques over a period of time.

Keep moving forward.

If you have to delay the next step for a few days, you may need to review the previous material.

But, it won’t take as long this time anyway!

### *Set Your Own Pace*

Don't push yourself too fast, especially if you are inclined to become tense under pressure.

As you start to improve the results you get, you will probably find that you will handle pressure a little better too.

You might find it worthwhile to use any relaxation techniques which work for you before you start your exercise.

You could try some gentle music, a few minutes meditation or a brisk walk around the block (or even just your office).

It can really help a lot.



## Starting Today

Take your time with this first exercise.

### Exercise 1 – Where You are Now

This exercise will give you an estimate of your reading speed and comprehension now.

**Please read this article in the way you normally approach unfamiliar material.**

**Start your reading when your watch is showing a minute with no seconds and note the time when you finish the exercise.**

#### Exercise 1

**700 Words**

#### *Goal Setting*

What are your goals? Really, what are your goals? Do you want to lose 10 pounds, have shinier hair, catch a giant barracuda or land a better job?

Goals are important for everyone. Identifying them is the first step to achieving them. It helps you keep your eye on the prize.

Why set goals? Life has tremendous number of options. There are thousands of things you could choose to do at any given moment.

When you're driving, you could turn left, turn right, speed up, slam on the brakes, stop for lunch, stop for gas or decide to drive to Disneyland.

But, what is it that keeps you from ending up in Florida every time you get into your car?

Why don't you end up at random locations all the time?

It's because you got into your car with a clear idea of where you wanted to go.

Life is the same way. If you know at the beginning where you want to go, you'll probably get there eventually, even if you have some delays.

But, if you don't plan where you are going you'll probably never get anywhere good!

It might help to divide your goals into time frames; immediate goals, short-term goals and long-range goals.

You don't have to have firm answers about what you want to be or do when you're ten years older to make this work.

Your goals are likely to shift and change over time anyway.

Just think of a few of goals to get started.

C'mon, write down your goals now before you read any further.

Look at your list of goals.

What can you do today that could contribute to your accomplishing the goals you set for yourself?

Are you actively working on these goals or will you put them off for a later, maybe better time?

What would you have to change in your life to make it easier for you to work on these goals?

Sub-dividing your goals into smaller, more manageable pieces can help. Set them out in smaller pieces which may not be so hard to imagine you reaching.

Doing this to your goals encourages you to start on those first small steps and reduces procrastination.

Consider the goal you think of being most important. Try breaking this goal down into smaller sub-goals.

These sub-goals can be further broken down into monthly and even weekly chunks.

Each week can be further sub-divided if you need to.

Thinking of your goals in this way helps to keep you motivated. You can see a path linking the actions you take today and the successful completion of your goals.

Seeing these connections can help you monitor your own progress and whether you are on track or not.

Think through the goals you've set.

Break them down into their smaller constituent parts.

Now that you have a list of goals, pre-experience them in your mind. Visualizing the steps you will take to obtain the goal increases the probability of actually reaching it.

Successful athletes pre-experience how they are going to perform in a game in “mind movies” which helps them to be at peak effectiveness when the game begins.

We need to enjoy the process of getting to our goals. That will make the effort and time easier to bear.

We will enjoy life more when we find satisfaction in our immediate efforts rather than only focusing thinking of the deferred pleasure we hope to experience when we finally arrive at our distant goal.

For example, we enjoy a trip more if we take an interest in the landmarks along the way rather than just enduring the ride until we get to our destination.

Don’t make unrealistic goals or list so many that it is impossible for you to believe you could reach them. You would soon be discouraged when you find you don’t have the time or energy to accomplish all your goals.

Recognizing our physical, mental and emotional limits is an important component to realistic goal setting.

Now that you have your goals firmly in your mind, you are ready to start walking the road to achieving them.

Good Luck!

**Exercise 1      Words: 700      Your Time: .....**

**Please write down the number of seconds to read the segment: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Divide the number of words by the number of seconds: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Multiply your result by sixty: \_\_\_\_\_**

**The result is your reading speed in words per minute for this type of material.**

**Try to answer as many questions as you can, without going back to check.**

**1]** When can you start doing something to help toward your goals?

.....

**2]** What are the three types of goals?

.....

**3]** Can you change your goals after you write them down?

.....

**4]** What is a good first step toward reaching your goals?

.....

**5]** Why not select a lot of goals when you start?

.....

**6]** What is a “mind movie”?

.....

**7]** Who else uses “mind movies”?

.....

**8]** Should we only focus on our ultimate goal?

.....

**9]** Should we put limits on the goals we set?

.....

**10]** Where might you go if you don’t plan?

.....

**Check your answers and write down the number you answered correctly:**

       / 10

**1]** When can you start doing something to help toward your goals?

.....Today.....

**2]** What are the three types of goals?

Immediate goals, short-mid-term goals and long-range goals

**3]** Can you change your goals after you write them down?

.....Yes.....

**4]** What is a good first step toward reaching your goals?

.....Write them down.....

**5]** Why not select a lot of goals when you start?

Hard for you to believe that you could reach them.

**6]** What is a “mind movie”?

A visualization in your head of reaching your goal...

**7]** Who else uses “mind movies”?

Champion athletes.

**8]** Should we only focus on our ultimate goal?

No – enjoy the journey as well

**9]** Should we put limits on the goals we set?

Yes, we should realize our limitations.....

**10]** Where might you go if you don't plan?

...Disneyland.....

## **A Confidence Booster**

### **Exercise 2 – Instant Improvement**

This exercise will help to show you that you really can boost your reading speed and the value which you get from it. The results may surprise you. You may, like many people, be able to improve your reading speed and comprehension just by consciously reading faster!

Try for maybe a ten percent improvement, but some readers might get as much as twenty-five percent with little effort!

**Tip:** Please don't push too hard as you will make yourself tense and that will produce a worse result than if you treat this early experiment more like a game than a challenge.

This exercise, like all the others, is only for your own information. There's no pressure except what you make for yourself. Advancing in small, regular steps will prevent you from becoming discouraged before you have given yourself time to achieve the results you may not even realize that you are capable of.

**Please read this excerpt in this section but try to read it faster than your normal pace. Don't push too hard or you will lose any potential benefit because your comprehension will get too low.**

**Start your reading when your watch is showing a minute with no seconds and note the time when you finish the exercise.**

## **Exercise 2**

**250 Words**

### **Building the Relationship with Your Customers**

It has been said that a loyal customer is worth much more just the money he or she spends with us.

If you are in business, you must understand that getting and retaining business here requires your very best efforts.

You may compete on either price, service or quality. Few companies get top rank in their industry for 3 out of 3 of these criteria.

If the price is fairly standardized among you and your competitors and your products' qualities are similar, you must ask yourself, "Why would the customer buy from you and not from someone else down the street?"

You have to differentiate yourself from the others.

Giving good service to a customer doesn't just mean bending over backwards or driving miles just to service them (although it might be necessary in some situations).

The most important thing is to have a good knowledge of your products and relate it to your customers' needs.

Don't just be a 'walkie-talkie', that repeats what's in your company's sales brochure.

Build a strong relationship with your prospect based on mutual respect and not just dollars.

Give your recommendation of your product once they are open to you. Share your own experience and focus on building a bond with the customer.

Testimonials from people that your customer knows (if you have their permission) can be very powerful.

Don't just show your catalog. Impress your customer with fair dealing and your enthusiasm.

If you are taking your business online, use newsletters and email to keep in touch with your prospects and customers. That is the best way to develop your relationship with them.

**Exercise 2**

**250 Words**

**Please check and write down the number of seconds to read the segment:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Divide the number of words in the exercise by the number of seconds:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Multiply your result by 60:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**The result is your reading speed in words per minute for this type of material.**



**Try to answer as many questions as you can, without going back to check.**

**1]** How much is a loyal customer worth?

.....

**2]** What are the factors businesses may compete on?

.....

**3]** What is the most important thing you need?

.....

**4]** What sort of relationship is best?

.....

**5]** What might impress your customer?

.....

**6]** What is needed to get and retain business?

.....

**7]** Does good service require that you always go to extreme lengths?

.....

**8]** What must you do with your products?

.....

**9]** What does a “walkie-talkie” do?

.....

**10]** What testimonials can be very powerful?

.....

**Check your answers and write down the number you answered correctly: \_\_\_\_**

**1]** How much is a loyal customer worth?

More than they spend with us.

**2]** What are the factors businesses may compete on?

Price, Service, Quality.

**3]** What is the most important thing you need?

Good knowledge of your products

**4]** What sort of relationship is best?

A strong one built on mutual respect.

**5]** What might impress your customer?

Fair dealing and enthusiasm.

**6]** What is needed to get and retain business?

Your best efforts.

**7]** Does good service require that you always go to extreme lengths?

No.

**8]** What must you do with your products?

Relate them to your customers' needs.

**9]** What does a "walkie-talkie" do?

Repeat what's in the company's brochure.

**10]** What testimonials can be very powerful?

From people the customer knows.

## Stretch Your View

### *From Words to Phrases*

During our early schooling, teachers tell us to spell every word and encourage us to give each one equal importance.

As we grow older, we continue to focus on and absorb just one word at a time.

That’s not necessary unless the text is highly technical.

You can improve both your speed and retention by grabbing a few related words together instead of each individually.

“**The boy stood on the burning deck**” can be read a word at a time. But, if you learn to grab it as “**boy**” and “**stood on**” and “**burning deck**”, you won’t lose anything, will you?

That simple example also shows that you don’t need “the”. Dropping the qualifying words like “the”, “and” and “a” usually doesn’t lose any of the meaning with most of the reading which we do.

If you are consciously pushing yourself to read faster as I suggested in the previous section, your brain will accomplish that partly by dropping some of those words anyway.

Some people divide the area which the text occupies on the page into thirds with two vertical lines. Then, they swing their eyes from the left section of the first line to the middle, then quickly on to the right section of the line.

If that works for you, great!

If you give it a try but decide to try something else, this is a good alternative.



Start with a fresh page that has no vertical lines down it.

Put the index finger of your free hand at the beginning of the first line and jump your finger from the first few

words on the left of the first line to the next phrase in the middle and then briefly to the right.

Then, sweep to the left end of the second line and so on down the page.

Give this a try. It works well for some but other people cannot work well with it.

I found it easier to just try to grasp the phrases without putting my finger on the page – it got in my way!

**Please take your time with this exercise.**

**It’s not a race, but a learning experience**

Please take your time with this exercise.

### **Exercise No 3**

This exercise will give you an estimate of your reading speed and comprehension now.

**Please read the excerpt in this section in the way you normally approach unfamiliar material.**

**Start your reading when your watch is showing a minute with no seconds and note the time when you finish the exercise.**

**Exercise 3**

**510 Words**

#### ***Making Gourmet Homemade Chocolate***

Most people like the idea of making their own homemade chocolate. But, they think it probably takes too much work.

And they think they might make some chocolate that is okay, but not really a high end chocolate that you would want to offer your friends or family.

It is actually fairly easy to make great chocolate at home. Even better, it doesn’t have to cost you a fortune but your friends will think it did!

If you or the people you want to gift some chocolate to have a sophisticated palate and only eat and enjoy gourmet chocolate, you can make something comparable to their favorite gourmet chocolate bar easily at home.

I think some people only judge their chocolate by the name on the wrapper but it is the quality of the ingredients which you choose determine the results you get with your chocolate making.

That’s the same with whatever you are baking or cooking: **the quality of the ingredients that you use really make the difference.** You and your friends can usually taste the difference when the cookies are baked with butter instead of margarine.

Using real vanilla extract rather than imitation vanilla will give you a different result.

That principle also holds when you make your own gourmet chocolate at home.

Using the best quality ingredients you can afford when you are making chocolate that your friends and family will think you bought.

Some compromises are necessary on the grounds of cost or availability.

If you don’t want to order cacao beans and then have to roast and grind them, you can buy high quality melt and pour chocolate bases from a specialty candy store instead of your local store which only caters for hobbyists.

You can contact many retailers online that supply high end gourmet chocolate making materials to home based chocolate makers.

It is really important when you’re making gourmet chocolate that you only put quality flavors, fruit and other ingredients in your chocolate.

One simple trick to saving money on some of these is to get to your local farmer’s market or grocery co-op soon after they open so that you get to buy the best of their organic ingredients and the prices are likely to be not much more than the supermarkets.

You might buy organic nuts to make your own peanut butter blends.

Remember to check whether the people that you want to give your creations to suffer any allergies – some people have serious problems when they eat anything that has even slight traces of any kind of nut in it.

You might also be able to buy organic or luxury syrups, sugars and oils as well as freshly cut herbs like lavender and rosehips to put in your gourmet chocolate.

Making your gourmet chocolate might take more practice than making regular homemade chocolate because the flavors in gourmet chocolate need to be very subtle but if you love gourmet chocolate you can learn to make it at home and have a lot of fun making your own gourmet chocolate flavors.

**Exercise 3      Words: 510      Your Time: .....**

**Write down the number of seconds to read the segment: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Divide the 510 words by the number of seconds: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Multiply your result by sixty to get your reading speed in words per minute for this type of material: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Try to answer as many questions as you can, without going back to check.**

**1]** Can you make quality chocolate at home?

.....

**2]** What is the most important factor in making the best chocolate?

.....

**3]** Do cookies made with margarine or butter taste different?

.....

**4]** Do you have to grind your own cacao beans to make great chocolate?

.....

**5]** What is a possible problem if you give people nutty chocolate?

.....

**6]** What stops many people making chocolate at home?

.....

**7]** Do you have to spend a fortune to make good chocolate?

.....

**8]** Will imitation vanilla give you just as good results?

.....

**9]** Why might you need to make compromises?

.....

**10]** How do you improve your home made chocolate?

.....

**Here are the answers to the questions for Exercise 3.**

**1]** Can you make quality chocolate at home?

Yes

**2]** What is the most important factor in making the best chocolate?

Quality ingredients

**3]** Do cookies made with margarine or butter taste different?

Yes...

**4]** Do you have to grind your own cacao beans to make great chocolate?

No...

**5]** What is a possible problem if you give people nutty chocolate?

Allergies...

**6]** What stops many people making chocolate at home?

Amount of work and concerns about quality ...

**7]** Do you have to spend a fortune to make good chocolate?

No...

**8]** Will imitation vanilla give you just as good results?

No...

**9]** Why might you need to make compromises?

Cost and availability...

**10]** How do you improve your home made chocolate?

Practise...



## Phrases to Lines

The next step is to take in a full line at a time!

It will take a while to get the full benefit of this technique but it won't cost very much to get started.

Just get a blank postcard or a piece of plain cardboard which is about the same width as the text on your page.

Put it on the page under the first few lines of text.

Use a ruler and pencil to put a mark, as accurately as possible, in the center of the top edge of the card.

Hold the card by pressing your fingers of each hand onto its short sides.

Now, start to draw the card slowly but steadily down the page.

Focus your eyes on the center of each line of text as they appear above the top of the card. You will need to move your eyes (not your head) slightly to each side so that you take in the whole line. But, the amount of movement will probably decrease as you get used to the technique.

Pace yourself.

There's no need to rush, but you do need to increase the rate that you move the card down the page after you have done several pages.

You should try this technique with a couple of books or some magazines with varied content.

Just one or two pages won't be enough for you to train yourself to use it properly and you will get more benefit if you practice with more than one type of material.

The more you do it, the better results you are likely to get.

An alternative to the card is to use a pencil. Only do this with books that you actually own and which you don't mind if the pages are marked.

Just put the pencil's point at the center of the first line on the page and start moving it down the center of the page.

It's important to keep your focus on the center of each line as far as possible and just flick your eyes to the sides when you need to.

You might want to try the card and the pencil for a week each to see which is most comfortable for you.

### **Exercise No 4**

This exercise will give you an estimate of your reading speed and comprehension now.

**Please read the excerpt in this section in the way you normally approach unfamiliar material.**

**Start your reading when your watch is showing a minute with no seconds and note the time when you finish the exercise.**

**Exercise 4**

**460 Words**

#### ***Taking Your Dog to the Vet***

Taking your dog to the Vet is not always easy for a lot of owners or their dogs. For best results, you need to prepare the dog before you get to the vet service so that you can keep it as calm as possible.

You should get your pet used to the leash which you will put on it for the trip to the vet and its muzzle if you use one. Some Vets insist on them to minimize any problems for themselves, their staff and also any other animals which your dog may encounter in the waiting area before or after its examination

When you get to the surgery, give the receptionist your details.

Then, you will probably be asked about any problems or conditions which you want the Vet to check during the examination.

You will also have to arrange to pay for the visit. Most surgeries require that payment at the time of the visit.

Then, you will have to put your dog on the scales so that its weight can be recorded.

Then, you'll wait with your pet in the waiting area until the Vet is ready to examine your dog.

Walk your dog into the examination room, remove its lead and muzzle. Then, place the dog on the table.

While your dog is enduring its examination by the veterinarian, just try to keep it calm. It is very important to stay calm yourself during all visits to the vet because any sign of anxiety or other strong emotion from you will be picked up by your dog and probably cause it to become more agitated.

That will make the vet’s task of a thorough examination much harder.

Of course, your dog may be an obedient one that takes the examination and strange surroundings in its stride.

But, dogs like that are very rare in my experience

Controlling the dog is important so your Vet can focus on their examination of the dog.

I think they have a harder task than doctors do with most of their human patients because the animal cannot tell the vet what hurts or what might have caused that strange bump on its shoulder.

Regular check-ups are very important to guard against problems which slowly develop.

You, as the owner might miss some warning signs because you fail to notice gradual changes in the dog’s appearance or the way it walks.

If the dog has any signs of illness, then don’t wait for the regular check-up. Make an appointment with the veterinarian immediately.

You also need to ensure that your pet has the necessary vaccinations against canine distemper, parvovirus, corona virus, rabies virus, hepatitis virus and any other conditions which might occur in your area.

**Exercise 4      Words: 460      Your Time: .....**

**Write down the number of seconds to read the segment: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Divide the 460 words by the number of seconds: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Multiply your result by sixty to get your reading speed in words per minute for this type of material: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Try to answer as many questions as you can, without going back to check.**

**1]** What do you give the receptionist?

.....

**2]** Are leads and muzzles a good idea?

.....

**3]** What else do you do while waiting for the vet?

.....

**4]** Do you remove the leash when you walk into the surgery?

.....

**5]** If you notice any sign of injury or illness when the dog is at home?

.....

**6]** Do dogs need vaccinations?

.....

**7]** When do most surgeries require payment?

.....

**8]** Why do vets insist on leads and, sometimes, muzzles?

.....

**9]** Should you mention any concerns you have about the dog?

.....

**10]** Should you hide the dog's lead until you need to go to the vet?

.....

**Here are the answers for Exercise 4**

**1]** What do you give the receptionist?

Your details

**2]** Are leads and muzzles a good idea?

Yes...

**3]** What else do you do while waiting for the vet?

Weigh the dog...

**4]** Do you remove the leash when you walk into the surgery?

Not until you are in the examining room...

**5]** If you notice any sign of injury or illness when the dog is at home?

Call the Vet without delay...

**6]** Do dogs need vaccinations?

Yes...

**7]** When do most surgeries require payment?

At the time of your appointment...

**8]** Why do vets insist on leads and, sometimes, muzzles?

To avoid problems for staff and other animals...

**9]** Should you mention any concerns you have about the dog?

Yes...

**10]** Should you hide the dog's lead until you need to go to the vet?

No, get the dog used to it in advance...

==== **End of Exercise #4** ====

### ***Now, Try This***

The technique above will work well for many people.

When you have started to get good results with it, try to grab two lines at a time.

This works for some people better than others.

It's not as difficult as you might think at first. The two lines mostly will contain just one or two related sentences, so your mind will probably work out what is coming next when you see the first line.

**Note:** This technique will not work for every reader.

Do not become frustrated if you cannot get the knack. It does not mean that your ability is impaired in any way.

### **Exercise No 5**

This exercise will give you an estimate of your reading speed and comprehension now.

**Please read the excerpt in this section in the way you normally approach unfamiliar material.**

**Start your reading when your watch is showing a minute with no seconds and note the time when you finish the exercise.**

**Exercise 5**

**400 Words**

### ***Choose Happiness***

If you sometimes wonder why you aren't getting as much happiness in your life as other people, it's not because of any problem with your upbringing or your job. The most common factor is that you choose not to be happy.

That really is a choice you can make.

You just have to take more control over your life and the decisions that you make.

Decide what you believe will make you happier. There are as many ways by which people measure their level of happiness as stars in the night sky.

Some people think that more money will bring them more happiness.

But, they may absolutely miserable doing whatever way they try to get that money.

Possessions and position do not direct what level of happiness you have.

If you look at many famous people who are always in the public eye, you may be surprised to find that, while they have wealth, possessions and status, they still suffer from family problems just like many of the people you know.

Things don't create happiness. Happiness is a choice.

Happiness comes from within.

Of course, if they are miserable, they can suffer in comfort.

The first important point I want to make is that happiness can mean very different things for each and every one of us.

You might find immense joy being thrilled on a hurtling roller coasters or even bungee jumping. But, this may feel more like torture for someone with a more placid nature.

Everyone of us must find happiness in our own way. Just remember that you deserve to be happy and there is nothing wrong with those things that you find joy in provided they don't affect anyone else in a negative way.

You may be told you are crazy but that is just somebody judging your desires on their point of view.

Are you naturally happy?

Some people are naturally set in a happy frame of mind. This may be a genetic trait or just a product of having a supportive environment through their formative years.

If you did not, that doesn't mean that you must be miserable. Your happiness is influenced by genetics but you can determine your own state by your attitude and your actions.

If you are not a happy person, focusing on your future rather than past disappointments or failures is the first step to a new happier you.

**Exercise 5      Words: 400      Your Time: .....**

**Please check and write down the number of seconds to read the segment:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Divide the number of words in the exercise by the number of seconds:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Multiply your result by sixty: \_\_\_\_\_**

**The result is your reading speed in words per minute for this type of material.**



**Try to answer as many questions as you can, without going back to check.**

**1]** What is the most common cause of not being happy?

.....

**2]** Does money always bring happiness?

.....

**3]** Should your position and possessions rule how happy you are?

.....

**4]** What is happiness?

.....

**5]** How do rich, unhappy people suffer?

.....

**6]** Is happiness the same for everyone?

.....

**7]** Do you deserve to be happy?

.....

**8]** Must you be miserable if you aren't "naturally happy"?

.....

**9]** How can you start being happier?

.....

**10]** Should past disappointment and failures rule how happy you are?

.....

**Here are the answers for Exercise 5**

**1]** What is the most common cause of not being happy?

Choosing not to be happy...

**2]** Does money always bring happiness?

No...

**3]** Should your position and possessions rule how happy you are?

No...

**4]** What is happiness?

A Choice...

**5]** How do rich, unhappy people suffer?

In comfort...

**6]** Is happiness the same for everyone?

No...

**7]** Do you deserve to be happy?

Yes...

**8]** Must you be miserable if you aren't “naturally happy”?

No...

**9]** How can you start being happier?

Focus on your future...

**10]** Should past disappointment and failures rule how happy you are?

No...

==== **End of Exercise #5** ====

## **Don't Go Back**

This technique will help to eliminate the tendency many of us have to retrace our steps and re-read material which we have just read.

This is easy to do though you will probably need to use it for up to a week to get the best results. But, the results will be worth it.

Just get another blank postcard or a piece of plain cardboard about the same size and put it on the page above the first line of text.

Hold the card the same way that you did for the previous technique. Press the fingers of each hand on to its short sides.

Now, you start to draw the card down the page as you read.

Cover each line as soon as you finish reading it, so that you cannot look at the material you have already seen.

This is just a prop to get you into the habit of trusting your own brain and having confidence in your power of recall.

I've found that people recheck what they have already scanned because they lack confidence in their own ability.

Going back to check up on yourself will actually lessen any self-confidence you have because you will reinforce the thought that you are not able to recall the material.

You can stop using the card whenever you are ready to.

Take your time with this sixth exercise.

### **Exercise No 6**

This exercise will give you an estimate of your reading speed and comprehension now.

**Please read this excerpt in the way you normally approach unfamiliar material.**

**Start your reading when your watch is showing a minute with no seconds and note the time when you finish the exercise.**

**Exercise 6**

**700 Words**

***Protect Yourself from Phishing***

You have probably heard about the danger of Identity Theft?

It can take many forms.

This article will show you some things that you can do about it. Knowledge is power and here is where you become EMPOWERED!

Thieves could steal your mail from the garbage or even from your own mailbox to get your personal information.

Take some basic precautions to make it much harder for them.

Shred every bit of mail which has any of your identifiable personal or business information on it before you dispose of it.

Ripping it into pieces is not enough protection. The thief just needs patience to solve a fairly basic jigsaw puzzle and his reward could be every cent you have!

A small shredder for your home is a wise investment. Those which cut the paper in small jagged pieces are best and becoming less expensive.

Just consider how much that could save you in time, money and stress. You might be able to shred your mail at work, using the office shredder if you can't afford your own.

Putting a lock on your mailbox will not guarantee your protection from identity thieves, but it might help to deter a lazy thief to try the mailbox of someone who is not so cautious.

Look into purchasing a mailbox that has a slot in the top for the mail to be slid into but where you need a key to actually remove it. This way, if your mailbox is broken into you will at least know it right away and will perhaps be able to notify creditors, banks and other companies before any real damage is done.

You are likely to get your bills very close to the same day of each month like clockwork, so you should start to pay attention to the billing cycle. If a credit

card or utility bill does not arrive at the usual time, check with the company to make sure that it has not been intercepted or redirected.

Play it safe and when you use your PIN number and your ATM or Credit Card.

When you are just about to pay your bill by using your ATM card, it crosses your mind that you should probably use your free hand to cover the keypad so that no-one can see the number which you type in.

Many people don't do what they should because they think that the cashier or the person behind them will think that they're silly and over-reacting.

So what!

The risk is very real, as too many people are finding out every day.

What matters most is not what the other people think about your actions.

It is crucial that you protect that code.

It is the key which someone could use to rob you of the means to pay for your mortgage and bill payments, your children's education fund, your next holiday and even for the food and other supplies that are critical to your family's well-being.

Make sure you know where your ATM or credit card is at all times.

Is that precious piece of plastic ever out of your sight after you give it to the cashier or to the waiter at the restaurant?

Does it disappear under the counter while they have it, or does it stay in your sight on the counter while the transaction is approved?

You know the waiter probably needs to take your card with him to process it, but you can certainly be more cautious whether there is any opportunity for mis-use of your card in situations like this when they do occur.

To further protect yourself from having your ATM card skimmed, be more aware of machines which seem not quite right.

Avoid using any machine which looks as though it has been altered or tampered with in any way. If the machine you intend to use has a sign telling you that the ATM instructions have changed or to swipe your card “here” first

before inserting it into the reader, or anything like that, go somewhere else.  
Don't use that machine.

Don't give your PIN to anyone

Beware of people who offer to “help” you use an ATM

**Exercise #6      Words: 700      Your Time: .....**

**Please write down the number of seconds to read the segment: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Divide the number of words by the number of seconds: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Multiply your result by sixty: \_\_\_\_\_**

**The result is your reading speed in words per minute for this type of material.**

**Try to answer as many questions as you can, without going back to check.**

**1]** Is all phishing done the same way?  
.....

**2]** Do some thieves find value in people’s trash?  
.....

**3]** How do you protect your mail?  
.....

**4]** What do you do if a bill doe not arrive?  
.....

**5]** Is it really worthwhile to hide what you type into an ATM?  
.....

**6]** Should you watch how waiters and cashiers handle your card?  
.....

**7]** Could phishing happen to you?  
.....

**8]** Would you use your usual ATM if it looked different one day?  
.....

**9]** Who is it okay to give your PIN number to?  
.....

**10]** Should you accept a stranger’s help at your ATM?  
.....

**Here are the answers for Exercise 6**

**1]** Is all phishing done the same way?

No...

**2]** Do some thieves find value in people's trash?

Yes...

**3]** How do you protect your mail?

Lock mailbox Shred sensitive mail before discarding it...

**4]** What do you do if a bill does not arrive?

Contact the company immediately...

**5]** Is it really worthwhile to hide what you type into an ATM?

YES...

**6]** Should you watch how waiters and cashiers handle your card?

Yes...

**7]** Could phishing happen to you?

Yes...

**8]** Would you use your usual ATM if it looked different one day?

No...

**9]** Who is it okay to give your PIN number to?

No-one...

**10]** Should you accept a stranger's help at your ATM?

No...

==== **End of Exercise # 6** ====



## Improving Your Memory

Some people will tell anyone that listens that they have a bad memory. Usually, they mean that they have a good memory but don't know how to make good use of it.

There are some basic steps you can use to improve your memory which will be equally useful for other areas as well as making the best use of the information which you read.



to

**Attention:** Most of what we forget is lost because we don't make any effort to remember it. If you forget the name of someone you were introduced to at a party, you probably weren't very interested in remembering it or you were concentrating on somebody else in the room.

**Exercise:** If you want to remember something, repeat it.

At the party, you might focus on the person that you were just introduced to and use their name a couple of times while you exchange a few words with them. That will have the added advantage of giving them a better impression of you.

You might write a list of those points which are most important to you in something which you just read.

**Review:** Put a few minutes into reviewing what new information you have got toward the end of the day. If there are any possibly important points which you can't remember, either check them out or, at least, make a note in your diary to follow through the next day or the information may be lost.

**Pictures:** We usually remember pictures more easily than text. Can you make a picture from the information?

If so, you could go further and develop a diagram which shows how the various points which you read about link to each other.

This picture is often called a mind-map, and was popularized by Tony Buzan.

You can create these drawings with a pen and paper or use a computer program like Freemind, which is free for both personal and commercial use on Windows-based computers from

<http://www.freemind.sourceforge.net/>

Treepad from <http://www.treepad.com/> is another program for use on Windows-based computers. It is text-based program. You can store your information in a tree structure that you can change at will. There are free versions of Treepad for Asian and Western users and also some even more powerful commercial versions.

## Making the Most of Your Reading Time

As well as helping you to reduce the time which you need to read the material which you need to review, I have a few suggestions about reducing the pile which confronts you on your desk or in your letter box.

You want to keep up with developments in your industry and your company. You also have to keep in touch with customers, suppliers and other branches of your business.

So, you need to keep the material that gets to your desk to a minimum and be even more selective about what you fill your limited reading time with.

When you confront a new pile of papers, magazines, reports and other material, go through the pile and recycle or return to sender anything which you know is not worth reading.

If there is material which could be better handled by another person or section of the business, re-route it and attach a note asking them to contact the sender and get their address on the list instead of yours.

Find those items which are urgent and important.

Focus on them first.

Save time when you have to read a magazine by skimming the contents listing, select the items which are most relevant to your needs and forget the rest until later.

If you own that copy of the magazine, save time and space by extracting and filing those pages which have any lasting value for you and bin the rest.

Most newspapers and many magazines put the most important points about the story in their first paragraph and a round-up of them in the last paragraph. Sometimes, that might be all you need to look at. It will definitely give you the key points to keep in mind when you read through the rest of the material or discuss it with your colleagues.

Another standard practice with journalists is to answer the most important questions (**who**, **what**, **where**, **when** and **why**) in that first paragraph.

If you keep those questions which the five W's represent in mind as you read your business material, you will more quickly eliminate the fluff and focus on the important points which you need to retain.

Memos and emails are usually set out in a fairly standard way. You can usually find all the information you need by checking the sender's details, the subject and the main text.

Deal with it when you first see it if at all possible. Leaving it until later means you will be double handling it which is often slower and less cost-effective.

Don't hesitate to delegate some of the material which you get, where appropriate.

If you forward something to another person within your organization, make a note to check with them directly if you don't get an acknowledgement from them within a couple of days (or even hours, depending on the urgency of the matter).

If you leave it to them to follow up, they usually will. But, your reputation could be affected if your colleague does not follow up with your customer.

### ***More Fast Reading Tips***

I've mentioned skimming; giving important material a quick look before reading it with your full attention.

That can save you time by helping to weed out any material which you find not worth further review.

If you don't have to pass the material to anyone else, you can use a highlighter pen to mark parts which you need to pay most attention to, and that will also help you if you have to find the same material at a later date.

## More Exercises

Take your time with this exercise.

### Exercise No 7

This exercise will give you an estimate of your reading speed and comprehension now.

**Please read the excerpt in this section in the way you normally approach unfamiliar material.**

**Start your reading when your watch is showing a minute with no seconds and note the time when you finish the exercise.**

#### Exercise 7

**650 Words**

#### *Invest in Yourself*

You have heard this advice many times, “Invest in yourself!”

But, do you understand what ‘invest in yourself’ means?

Do you *have to* invest in a hundred dollar haircut or borrow the money to buy yourself a designer suit?

What does it mean to invest in yourself?

Well, it may help your attitude to get that haircut or buy that designer suit if you can afford it, but they’re not likely to give you as good a return as the kind of investment that we are talking about here.

Your new business has three essential ingredients; just you, your computer and your internet connection. You could actually operate your internet business from any secure computer anywhere on Earth that has an Internet connection.

Basically, your business’ main asset is really you. Your business depends on your own knowledge, your ability and your actions. They are the ‘company’ assets which you need to nurture and grow steadily to help your internet business thrive.

A good rule to ensure that your internet business has its best chance of ongoing success is to **“Invest a minimum of 5% of your time and income to improve yourself”**.

“Expand or Die!” is a basic law which applies to all businesses.

You can’t stand still or you will be flattened by the rush of competitors overtaking and overwhelming you.

But, if you remain focused on securing your assets and investing in growth, you can succeed. To ensure the survival and expansion of any business, online or not, means expanding and growing the knowledge of the person running the company – that’s YOU.

Five percent of your time and your income per year is really only a tiny investment in yourself which can have a great impact on how you continue to see positive monetary returns for many years into the future.

If you are sitting there shaking your head and asking, “What does this ‘5% time and income investment per year in myself’ really mean?”, it means that you must keep expanding your knowledge and taking action on what you learn.

You must set aside the time that you need to stay on top of new technological advancements.

You need to learn how to absorb more information in less time so that you can more easily expand your knowledge base about your own area of business.

Things are changing faster than ever. New ideas and information is revealed about something relevant to your business or personal life almost every day of the week.

You probably realize how very easily you could fall behind.

In business, as in most areas of life, second prize is nothing like first prize and the difference between first and second may just be a few seconds.

When you consciously and consistently make the effort to stay on top of things, you will get ahead of those who put things off until tomorrow.

Keeping up takes only a little more effort and it is much easier than having to catch up all the time.

**When you make keeping up a habit, you often find simple ways to leap ahead.**

Even if you are so busy now that you really could use 48 hour days, try taking, say, just one hour per day out of the 24 that is all any of us get and only \$5 out of every hundred you earn to invest in yourself. That small sacrifice now could increase your future earnings a hundred fold.

What are the best ways to invest in yourself?

Should you buy more newsletters, webinars, teleseminars or real brick and mortar seminars that can give you the information and techniques you can use to grow and expand your business more rapidly with less effort.

They can all help but the most important factor is to apply it to your own business.

The best advice I ever got was "Attitude is nothing without A-C-T-I-O-N!"

**Exercise 7      Words: 650      Your Time: .....**

**Please check and write down the number of seconds to read the segment:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Divide the number of words in the exercise by the number of seconds:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Multiply your result by sixty: \_\_\_\_\_**

**The result is your reading speed in words per minute for this type of material.**

**Try to answer as many questions as you can, without going back to check.**

**1]** Do you have to wear the latest fashion to be successful?

.....

**2]** What are the 3 essential ingredients of a new Internet business?

.....

**3]** What is the most important of the 3 essential ingredients?

.....

**4]** Where can you operate your Internet business?

.....

**5]** What is the minimum percentage you should invest in yourself?

.....

**6]** Will you succeed just by standing still?

.....

**7]** “ ..... or Die!” Fill in the .....?

.....

**8]** “ ..... Your Knowledge!” Fill in the .....?

.....

**9]** Take ..... on what you learn?

.....

**10]** Is Second Prize really almost as good as First Prize?

.....



**Here are the answers to the questions for Exercise 7.**

**1]** Do you have to wear the latest fashion to be successful?

No...

**2]** What are the 3 essential ingredients of a new Internet business?

You Your Computer Your Internet connection...

**3]** What is the most important of the 3 essential ingredients?

You ...

**4]** Where can you operate your Internet business?

From any secure computer with a secure Internet connection...

**5]** What is the minimum percentage you should invest in yourself?

5%...

**6]** Will you succeed just by standing still?

No...

**7]** " ..... or Die!" Fill in the .....

Expand ...

**8]** " ..... Your Knowledge!" Fill in the .....

Expand ...

**9]** Take ..... on what you learn?

Action...

**10]** Is Second Prize really almost as good as First Prize?

No...

**==== End of Exercise # 7 ====**

## Exercise No 8

This exercise will give you an estimate of your reading speed and comprehension now.

**Please read the excerpt in this section in the way you normally approach unfamiliar material.**

**Start your reading when your watch is showing a minute with no seconds and note the time when you finish the exercise.**

### Exercise 8

**700 Words**

#### *Success is just Outside Your Comfort Zone*

We all have a comfort zone which we are very fond of.

I know that it is very tempting to just sit in our personal rut.

But, doing the things that we have always done in the same way that we always did them will never get us more than we get now.

And, if you were really satisfied with that being the high point of your life's achievement, you probably wouldn't be reading this book right now.

Staying there and ignoring any opportunity to expand your mind and your potential could cause you to fall backward instead of achieving the success you deserve!

You and your business will fail if you don't keep focused on improving both.

You know the old saying, "If it isn't broke, don't fix it."

That was probably the best excuse ever for people that are afraid to try new things.

But, success can come from improving things even if they aren't broken.

Candle light wasn't broken but we are all better off that Thomas Edison failed hundreds of times but kept trying until he succeeded with the incandescent bulb. It wasn't necessary ... or maybe it really was.

Electric light is just another form of light but it is certainly a big improvement over candlelight.

New ideas come along every day in the business world.

If you want to get the best benefits from them, you'll sometimes have to go outside of your own personal comfort zone. Otherwise, you will be dependent on what others provide for you and have to pay whatever they ask.

In order to improve your life, you must be willing to leave your own comfort zone.

You can become more successful only if you refuse to be satisfied with what has worked even if it is still working.

You must be ready to find or even create newer, better and more efficient ways of doing things.

Yes, I believe that everyone, even you or me, can be creative. Continuing to learn and use new ideas will help us develop our own unique methods.

Nobody believes that new is *always* better but you'll never know if you stick in your rut and refuse to investigate new ideas yourself to locate and adapt the best ones that can help you to your business.

Invest in yourself, increasing your knowledge and never be afraid to try new things and new ways of doing what you have done in the past.

These really are the secrets of success, not just in the world of business; they apply to all areas of our lives.

But, overconfidence can be as big a problem as “fear of the new”. So many people think that they can quit their jobs, open a business and just relax and enjoy life.

They expect instant success and instant wealth without having to invest anything (even time and effort) to earn that success.

Some really believe that they can sleep until noon, work only when and if they want to and steadily achieve ever-growing sales and profits.

This attitude probably accounts for at least half of all of the failures of new businesses.

Making any business successful probably takes more time and even more work than many new business owners realize.

That old real world job demanded that you be on the job for probably 40 hours each week. Your own business could need about twice that many hours each week while you are developing it if it is to be successful.

If you are willing to invest the time and effort, the rewards can be much better than almost any J-O-B.

If you are not, stay with the job or you might become one of the people in the 90% whose new businesses fail every year.

Please don't expect instant success.

But, it will come along sooner than you expect if you apply yourself and don't let any minor glitches deter you.

For me, a “minor glitch” is one that you can recover from with more effort and time.

A “major glitch” is something that you can't overcome at all.

Success is hard but is within your reach just outside your comfort zone!

**Exercise #8      Words: 700      Your Time: .....**

**Please check and write down the number of seconds to read the segment:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Divide the number of words in the exercise by the number of seconds:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Multiply your result by sixty: \_\_\_\_\_**

**The result is your reading speed in words per minute for this type of material.**

**Try to answer as many questions as you can, without going back to check.**

**1]** What is another term for RUT?

.....

**2]** How do I know you want to improve your life?

.....

**3]** If it isn't broke, don't "fix" it. What can we do instead?

.....

**4]** Where is success waiting for you?

.....

**5]** Is something that is new always better?

.....

**6]** What is a "minor glitch"?

.....

**7]** What do people in ruts get?

.....

**8]** What do they have to pay?

.....

**9]** How often do new ideas come along?

.....

**10]** Can you succeed just by standing still?

.....

**Here are the answers to the questions for Exercise 8.**

**1]** What is another term for RUT?

.....Comfort zone.....

**2]** How do I know you want to improve your life?

...Because you are reading this ebook

**3]** If it isn't broke, don't "fix" it. What can we do instead?

Improve on it

**4]** Where is success waiting for you?

Just outside your comfort zone

**5]** Is something that is new always better?

No

**6]** What is a "minor glitch"?

A glitch that can be overcome with effort and time

**7]** What do people in ruts get?

Only what other people let them

**8]** What do they have to pay?

Whatever they are told

**9]** How often do new ideas come along?

Every day

**10]** Can you succeed just by standing still?

No

**==== End of Exercise # 8 ====**

## Exercise No 9

This exercise will give you an estimate of your reading speed and comprehension now.

**Please read the excerpt in this section in the way you normally approach unfamiliar material.**

**Start your reading when your watch is showing a minute with no seconds and note the time when you finish the exercise.**

### Exercise 9

500 Words

#### *How to Prepare for an Emergency*

There are many things we can do to plan for an emergency situation.

This can an immense difference to how well we handle the situation when it occurs and will, hopefully, decrease the amount of damage and injury resulting from any disaster.

Make yourself aware of the type of disasters that may occur in your state or country.

Learn the warning signs, both natural and public service, and become thoroughly familiar with all procedures recommended by your local authorities in the event of an emergency.

When you have acquired that knowledge, you can begin your own emergency preparations for the disasters relevant to you.

That knowledge will also guide you when you get together you disaster supplies kit.

Start by researching some of the disasters that may be relevant to the area in which you are living. You may find information online, but you should also contact the relevant weather bureau to find out how they issue their warnings.

Talk with neighbors and friends who have been in the area longer than you, to get the benefit of their experience.

These are some ideas which you could take into consideration when you start your planning:

You need to decide on the best escape routes from where you are to areas which are less likely to be damaged in the emergency. Start by tracing your house including a floor plan so that you can choose the best exit points for different situations.

Try to arrange two exits from each room.

In an emergency, each family member might leave from a different room. To ensure everyone evacuates safely, decide an appropriate area for everyone to gather so that you can check that no-one is left behind or may be injured.

Communications will be vital if a disaster strikes.

Be prepared with a simple means of communication. Discuss with all your family how you will communicate in a variety of different situations.

Check what emergency procedures are set up in your work place or your children’s school. The, you can organize everyone much better.

Create a disaster supplies kit and check it regularly so that you are fully prepared in the event of a disaster. This will mean you don’t have to search for and obtain necessary items that will be in short supply and high demand.

You might not be thinking effectively due to the stress, anxiety and may even have to cope with injury yourself.

If possible, find out how to safely turn off the water or gas supply to your home. This might be very useful in the event of an evacuation.

Some people have to take shelter in a disaster. It is always beneficial to plan ahead of time and designate what are the safest rooms in the house to go to for a variety of situations.

It is also wise to plan external shelter like staying with a relative or in a hotel in case you are required to leave your home.

**Exercise # 9    Words: 500    Your Time: .....**

**Please check and write down the number of seconds to read the segment:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Divide the number of words in the exercise by the number of seconds:**



\_\_\_\_\_

**Multiply your result by sixty: \_\_\_\_\_**

**The result is your reading speed in words per minute for this type of material.**

**Try to answer as many questions as you can, without going back to check.**

**1]** Should you do all the planning yourself?

.....

**2]** Is planning worthwhile?

.....

**3]** Who might give you good advice?

.....

**4]** How many exits should you look for in each room?

.....

**5]** Should your family meet in one place or get away as far as you can?

.....

**6]** Why?

.....

**7]** Should you learn how to turn off the water and gas in your house?

.....

**8]** Why would you need to store supplies before a disaster?

.....

**9]** Should you learn first aid?

.....

**10]** What are suitable means of communication during a disaster?

.....

**Here are the answers to the questions for Exercise 9.**

**1]** Should you do all the planning yourself?

No – involve the whole family...

**2]** Is planning worthwhile?

Yes, it's essential...

**3]** Who might give you good advice?

Neighbors, Weather Service Emergency Services...

**4]** How many exits should you look for in each room?

At least two...

**5]** Should your family meet in one place or get away as far as you can?

Meet in one place...

**6]** Why?

Check no-one is left behind or injured...

**7]** Should you learn how to turn off the water and gas in your house?

Yes...

**8]** Why would you need to store supplies before a disaster?

Hard to find and in high demand...

**9]** Should you learn first aid?

.....

**10]** What are suitable means of communication during a disaster?

Mobile phones, amateur radio...

**==== End of Exercise # 9 ====**

## Exercise No 10

This exercise will give you an estimate of your reading speed and comprehension now.

**Please read the excerpt in this section in the way you normally approach unfamiliar material.**

**Start your reading when your watch is showing a minute with no seconds and note the time when you finish the exercise.**

### Exercise 10

**630 Words**

#### *Barriers to Your Success*

Money is a huge barrier which deters a lot of people from moving forward toward their goals.

But, the money problem can usually be overcome.

The first thing you can do is begin cutting costs in your life. Drop things which you don't really need.

You can start cutting costs by not buying take-out food for lunch at work every day. Pack a lunch.

Take the bus and don't drive in everyday to save the costs for gas and parking.

Think about any other additional expenses you have that you really don't need. Do you buy extra things at the grocery store you don't even eat?

Every time you save money you would have normally spent on something like a lunch at work, you must put the money away.

Open a savings account or keep a lock box at home and put the money in it. Don't count the money or ever touch it. Remember that every time you add something to the box you get closer to achieving your passion.

Try being creative with your life and you will find other ways you can make additional money to put aside for your endeavor.

You also may find a way to start your dream business without any startup costs. Maybe you could start your own business in your home first.

If you love making aromatherapy candles and always dreamed of owning your own shop, you might start a business online and make everything at home until you are established.

Make sure that you check local zoning regulations about running a business from your home. You may even find your online business is more successful than a brick and mortar store would ever be.

Money is an obstacle that can be overcome, but it is the most common excuse people use for why they cannot live their dreams.

You should never fear for your survival. Do you have a supportive spouse that would help with the financial burden while you are getting started so you can live out your dreams?

In most cases, the financial payout in the end will be much better.

Another reason many people do not live out their passions and make them happen is because they say they do not have the time.

This could be a big factor if travel for hours commuting to and from and get home late at night. Many people in that situation never have time for their family or friends. This makes them feel selfish when they want to take time out for themselves to live out a passion.

If time is a problem you must find a way to start making time in your life to do what it is that you want to do. You might wake up an hour or two earlier every day, or stay up little bit later.

Remember that sleep is very important for happiness and health so you cannot cut too much into your sleep.

You might get an hour for your lunch hour and bring crafts or your laptop with you to work on then. This way you can work on your passion an hour each day. Finding the time is very important.

Time wasting is very common for people who claim they do not have the time to live out their passions.

Do you spend hours every night watching television? This time might be your relaxing time but television doesn't relax you, nor does it help you reach your goals.

Start cutting out all of the time wasted in your life. Cut down going out with the guys after work and cut out watching television and doing other unproductive things.

You do have time to get started. You just need to manage the time you do have better.

**Exercise # 10    Words: 630    Your Time: .....**

**Please write down the number of seconds to read the segment: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Divide the number of words by the number of seconds: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Multiply your result by sixty: \_\_\_\_\_**

**The result is your reading speed in words per minute for this type of material.**

**Try to answer as many questions as you can, without going back to check.**

**1]** What are the to Barriers discussed in the article?

.....

**2]** What is the first step to fixing the money barrier?

.....

**3]** Can buying a take-out lunch at work save you money?

.....

**4]** What must you do with the money you save?

.....

**5]** What must you check before starting a business at home?

.....

**6]** What is the most common excuse for not pursuing a goal?

.....

**7]** Should you work through the night sometimes to catch up?

.....

**8]** Is watching TV good for you?

.....

**9]** If you don't buy lunch at work, should you buy yourself something nice instead?

.....

**10]** What's a good alternative to buying lunch at work?

.....

**Here are the answers to the questions for Exercise 10.**

**1]** What are the two Barriers discussed in the article?

Money and Time...

**2]** What is the first step to fixing the money barrier?

Cut un-necessary expenses...

**3]** Can buying a take-out lunch at work save you money?

No...

**4]** What must you do with the money you save?

Leave it to grow...

**5]** What must you check before starting a business at home?

Check local regulations about home businesses...

**6]** What is the most common excuse for not pursuing a goal?

Lack of money...

**7]** Should you work through the night sometimes to catch up?

No. Lack of sleep affects your health and ability to pursue your goals...

**8]** Is watching TV good for you?

No...

**9]** If you don't buy lunch at work, should you buy yourself something nice instead?

Take a cut lunch...

**10]** What's a good alternative to buying lunch at work?

.....

**==== End of Exercise # 10 ====**



## **You Never Stop Learning**

I believe that we should keep learning though all our lives and that Speed Reading (or whatever you want to call it) is one aid that can help almost everybody do just that.

I hope my suggestions, which are all based on the experience of myself and people I know of all ages, will help you to realize your highest ambitions and also to enjoy every day more than those past.

The most important thing is that everybody has a different pace which they learn at. So, don't worry if the exercises take you a bit longer than you expected or if you don't pick up one technique as easily as some others.

If you persist, you will prevail.

Good Luck and Great Success in all your endeavors,

***Malcolm Ayres***

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