

4-3: Speed Reading Basics

So in this video, we are going to be talking about speed reading and in this an idea that is both extremely popular and is also something that is received a lot of scoring. So whenever I release a course or wherever I teach this idea, everybody wants to learn about speed reading because they think of it as a magical technique where you can read infinitely faster and understand everything perfectly where you could just flip through a book, just skimming to the pages and you will be able to understand everything perfectly. Now this is ridiculous. Lot of speed reading courses promise this kind of result, I don't know whether you can trust them. A lot of science shows that if you try to read really, really fast you are going to sacrifice comprehension, there's always going to have speed comprehension trade off. It's important to keep this in mind.

Now given that, given that sometimes you always have to sacrifice some comprehension to read faster, that doesn't mean that is not useful. There is lot of cases where you have a lot of material to get through and even if you sacrifice some comprehension, it still valuable because you can get through more of it. So if you were doing a research project and you have to read eighty to a hundred articles and each of them are forty to sixty pages, that's going to be the enormous task but maybe you don't need that much information from each one. Maybe you only need a few to important details. So whenever I'm doing speed reading or whenever I'm going to try to increase my reading rate beyond what is just the comfortable pace that I really have right now then I always tried to make extremely clear what is important that I'm trying to learn from this. What is, what I'm trying to get out of the article because then, when you're reading through it, you can slow down specifically when you notice oh this is something that is important, this is what I was trying to extract from this. And by doing that, you can go through a lot of information, a lot of ideas more quickly because you are orienting yourself to finding specifically the information you wanted to get of it. Consider speed reading a tool, not something that you should be using in all cases of blank approach. If I'm reading a mathematics textbook, I'm certainly not speed reading because I need to go very slow pace to understand all the ideas. I'm actually doing the opposite of speed reading, I'm reading very slowly to understand the ideas. Whereas if I'm just trying to read a lot of journal articles or if I'm trying to read news papers or if I'm on research or I have to go through thousands and thousands of pages of information and only some it is going to be relevant, using speed reading can be very powerful on this contest.

And so the basis for speed reading is broken down into two parts. One is practice reading. So practice reading is the idea that you going to keeping track of two metrics, your comprehension percentage and your words per minute. And you keep track of these two variables when you are practicing reading; you're not actually reading to get the

information you were reading to practice your reading techniques. And as you practice you're reading techniques if you work on the skill over a period of months, you can actually very good at selectively identified the information you want for a particular type of source and getting it very quickly. Practice reading is one way to do that.

And the other this is using the very speed reading techniques. I'm not going to go to many of them, there are tons of them but there a course that I went through is break through rapid reading but come to really interested in speed reading I recommend getting ample because it comes in mechanics on how you can use speed reading techniques, I'm going to discuss very briefly in this video the points or technique which is the way you can accelerate your reading process by using your finger to move slightly faster than your comfortable reading. So enforcing yourself to read better but also keep your visual attention to fix on the page without just blurring all the words.

This is what you are going to figure out how the book on how fast you can read and how much you can remember all your reading. Here's how it works, first you note down a starting point in a book that you haven't read before. If it's something that you've read before this drill won't work very well because you remember something, it has to be a new book. Then you use a speed reading technique we talked about. You can underline words with your finger using a pointer, that's it. Important technique for being able to change the pace of what you read more deliberately. There's other advance speed reading techniques that covered another courses. I founded be unlimited use I'm more stack in the pointers and even sometimes that's not strictly necessary it depends on the speed which you desired to be reading at. So I will go to this book and I'm going to set a 3 minute timer and read as much as I can at the desired speed reading rate that I want to be trying to hit and I'm going to keep this timer amount. And this is the first time you done this drill before then just try to read in72 a slightly fast way and not in a way that you don't understand anything because of course we are going to measure how much you remember later. You just try to push yourself to go a little bit faster and you feel comfortable but not so fast that you forget everything and you're not actually reading any of the material. So the first speed read this entire thing and then once the 3 minutes are up we're going to mark exactly where that stops, then stop right there. Now before we do anything else, we're going to do a little self quiz, this is the comprehension quiz where we shut the book and we write down everything that we found to be important in what we just read in the last 3 minute. So what is important is completely relative to your situation, now if you require extreme detail maybe having all the dates and figures are very important to you. If you just require general sense of what's going on, then maybe that's important to you.

So keep in mind, comprehension is not some objective measure that you have, 80% comprehension because it's entirely depending on what goals are. So keep that in mind when you're doing this that having a 90% comprehension rate is really all relative to what

you are trying to achieve. If you are not trying to get too much out of the text and there's a lot of material and you are only trying to extract specific amount of information then 90% comprehension could be possible the very highly rate. If you're trying to get word by word of what they say for everything then you might not be able to get even get 50% with the very low speed. So keep this in mind, write down what you felt was important in the last passages and later we'll going to go back and check and see how much you miss and maybe even how much you got long. Doing this quiz immediately is important because that was still fresh your memory and you have better sense on how you actually remembering it. If you wait a week or if you wait a couple of hours then you won't really have that comprehension fresh in your memory, you might forget some of it which you isn't really do your reading but just because you forget things just because of your memory.

Now we are going to move on calculating the words per minute, this is fairly simple formula. First you are going to take to total amount of time you did the drill for. So in this case it was 3 minutes. Then you're going to count the total amount of lines then you calculate the average words per line over a 3 line period and then you are going to calculate words per minute. So we are going to go back to our chapter and look between the 2 pieces we mark and count all the lines. For lines that less than half of the justified length, you don't count those for the lines that over half you count those as a whole line so in that way basically themselves. So I've counted all of the lines here and once you've counted all the lines then you'll going to calculate the average word per line. So the way to do that is you go to 3 of the lines and you count the total amount of words over 3 lines, 3 lines a text and once you calculate the total amount of words over 3 lines a text. You divide that at 3 and that is the average word per line and you figure out your average words per minute. All you have to do is to get average word per line times the total line and divide that by the total time. So here we are 14 on the 3rd times 92 divided by 3, now this gives us our total word per minute. In this case I was reading 404 words per minute. And we are not quite finished with this drill yet. The final thing we have to do to calculate the actual comprehension. Now in this case we have to go back over everything we read with the fine tooth comb. And in this case we're writing down notes. The way we did with active reading, everything that we covered. So we cover everything that was there you don't have to speed reading you want to read it very slowly so you make sure you don't miss anything.

And here the point is to see what you have missed when you're reading in a slightly faster pace when you're reading on extremely slow pace. And this will give you a rough sense of what percentage of the important ideas that you have to comprehend. Now this is a little bit of unfair test because when you are doing the first test you couldn't look at the book and everything just has to be in your memory. Here it doesn't have to be in your memory but it doesn't mean that reading very slow will give you a hundred percent comprehension. It still below a hundred percent comprehension even if you did it

extremely slowly simply because when you were doing this quiz you can't look at the book and you have to think over what was everything that you read. And so you might have to remember something but you just weren't able to put it on the quiz. So what I do is I go to the entire material and try to jot down all the important points. Once you've done that, you figure out how many you compared your initial quiz of recall to what you actually wrote down when you went down very thoroughly and you think calculated rough percentage of how much you remembering. Now a good percentage I would say is if you are getting over 50% for a fairly low density text, that's pretty good. I tried to strive for maybe over 75% if I'm really working towards a quiz or this is the material I really need to remember. And as I said, it's something you need to adjust yourself. If you have a lot of material to get through sometimes having a slightly lower comprehension rate might be justifiable because you can use that lower comprehension rate you can gist a lot of ideas and for the details, you might miss a few details but you can always cover those again later.

If we're talking about a lower amount of materials so it's smaller amount of materials, it's very important to get every single detail right then maybe you want to focus on having extremely high comprehension rate. The comprehension rate and the speed, the word per minute are both variables you can adjust to get the learning rules you want. So it's important to realize the speed reading isn't just about getting 20,000 words per minute and having perfect comprehension. On reality those trade off are always going to be there however if I'm reading hundreds of journal articles and I need a rough sense of what the sense is in academic field that's completely different than we memorizing a proof for a particular mathematical formula that I need to know with so much detail that I can read every single step. So understanding these differences and these goals will help you decide both your comprehension percentage you want and your words per minute. This drill that I've gone over with you today, this drill is very useful if you want to be practicing speed reading because it's by doing this practice reading and trying out different speed so try to push yourself to read of it faster or slowing down how much you reading that you can adjust how fast you reading different type of text to get the maximum effective.