

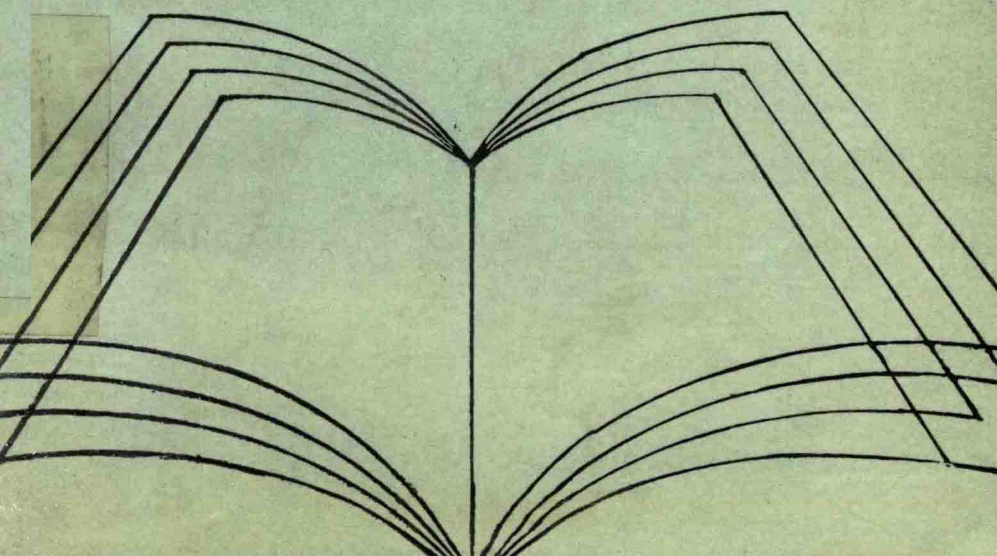
Effective Reading

Improving Reading Rates
and Comprehension

快速有效阅读 [英]

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Effective Reading

Improving Reading Rates
and Comprehension

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EFFECTIVE READING

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McGRAW-HILL COMMUNICATION SKILLS SERIES

Dr. Alton L. Raygor, Consulting Editor

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Raygor and Raygor: EFFECTIVE READING: IMPROVING READING RATES AND COMPREHENSION

Study Skills

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PREFACE

Effective Reading is part of a series designed to improve the basic skills of students in college and other postsecondary educational institutions. Reading, writing, spelling, vocabulary, and study skills are important elements in school success and need to be given special attention.

The main focus of this book is the improvement of reading skills. It includes all the necessary materials, exercises, and answer keys for a self-study program. It will be helpful to most students in reading programs and can be used in classroom settings as well as in clinics or individualized programs.

The skills emphasized are those that are important to school success and that cause trouble for students most often. The readings included have been especially selected for their relation to everyday life, including topics that have interest and utility for the average person.

The book is organized into four parts. Parts One, Two, and Three deal with various aspects of reading speed: rapid reading rates, skimming and scanning skills, and reading-rate flexibility. Part Four focuses on reading comprehension skills. Some students and teachers will want to use the parts of the book in sequence. Others may wish to work on the two kinds of reading skills at the same time by doing alternating units.

Like most authors, we have been influenced by many people. Outstanding among them are the professional colleagues and the graduate students that we have worked with over a period of many years. In addition, special appreciation is due to Michelle Patraw and Betty Ruth Raygor for their assistance in the development of the book.

Alton L. Raygor
Robin D. Raygor

INTRODUCTION

What Are Reading Skills?

The purpose of this book is to improve your reading skills. Let's stop first and think a few moments about what we mean by "reading skills."

Since the word "reading" can mean a lot of things, it is not easy to offer a simple definition. *A Dictionary of Reading and Related Terms* lists 4780 terms, all associated with reading.

In spite of the fact that we have many technical terms for the scientific study of reading, most of us have a good idea of what we mean when we use the word "read." We mean a process in which we look at words printed on a page and derive some meaning from them. However, to understand how to improve reading, we must look at it in more detail. Reading is really a set of skills. The efficient reader must be able to do many things:

- 1 Understand the author's main ideas.
- 2 Recognize how the material is organized.
- 3 Recognize and use the detailed, factual information given.
- 4 Retain the information gained in reading.
- 5 Recognize the author's purpose and tone.
- 6 Locate needed information in reference materials.
- 7 Distinguish between reliable, valid information based on good authority and unreliable opinions.

- 8 Apply different concepts and skills, depending on the area of study.
- 9 Skim over unimportant or unnecessary material when total comprehension is not necessary.
- 10 Vary the reading speed and approach, depending on the purpose for reading and the difficulty of the material.
- 11 Draw inferences and conclusions from the author's presentation.
- 12 Have a broad knowledge of the meaning of words.

In addition to being able to do the things listed above, the good reader operates in an efficient manner, doing all of these things quickly and effectively. This brings up the topic of reading speed. It is important to be able to read rapidly when it is appropriate to do so, but difficult, complicated material needs to be studied carefully, not skimmed. One of the most important reading skills is knowing *when* to read rapidly and when to read slowly and carefully.

If you wish to improve your reading rate, the way to do so is to practice reading rapidly. If you want to improve comprehension, then you need to focus on the reading skills that are involved in comprehension. This book will enable you to do both. It focuses on rapid reading, skimming and scanning, reading for main ideas, important facts, or details, and the organization of materials. In addition there are sections devoted to using reference materials, critical reading, and reading in particular content areas. There are many subskills in reading; a much longer book would result if a section were devoted to each. However, we have chosen to emphasize the skills that are most useful for studying because we see so many students who need help in this area.

Are You a Good Reader?

It is sometimes hard to evaluate your own reading skills. One way is to look for some of the symptoms of poor reading in the following list. You can make some of these observations yourself, but items 2 and 3 are best observed by someone else when you are unaware of it.

- 1 Do you read very slowly and cautiously, uncertain of your ability to get the full meaning?
- 2 Do you move your lips and tongue as you read?
- 3 Do you move your head back and forth along the line as you read?
- 4 Do you constantly go back over material you have already read?

- 5 Do you read everything at the same rate?
- 6 Do you have trouble with the meanings of many of the words you read?

If the answer to any of the above questions is yes, then the chances are good that you do need to improve your reading quite a bit. If you answered yes to more than one or two items, it would be wise to seek help in finding out more about your reading. Most schools have someone who can give you a standardized reading test that will give you good, reliable information about where you stand. The person in the reading program can probably also give you suggestions about where to get remedial help if your problems require serious attention.

The materials in this book are designed to help people who wish to improve their reading skills. They are not designed to be the total answer for people who have major reading problems or severe learning disabilities. Such people need special, personal, expert help.

Developing a Reading Vocabulary

One of the most important skills in reading is the knowledge of words. Since "Vocabulary Building and Word Study," another book in this series, is devoted to vocabulary development, we are not going to deal with this skill directly, but you should be aware of some basic facts. The number of words you know determines the difficulty and complexity of the material you can read and understand. If you have an extremely limited reading vocabulary, you will be able to read only very simple material. For example, children just beginning to read in first grade must use books that only have a few dozen words in them. As they progress through school their reading vocabulary keeps increasing until they are adults. Adults typically have reading vocabularies of over 50,000 words.

Failure to develop an extensive reading vocabulary will definitely hold you back in your efforts to improve comprehension. Most people learn new words by encountering them in reading or conversation, where the meaning is usually clear from the context. A few words are learned by looking them up in the dictionary.

A good way to expand your vocabulary is to read a lot, especially in different areas. That way you will find many new words, which are often explained by the author. One of the main purposes of a beginning textbook is to explain the language of the field about which it is written. Thus you can expect to increase your vocabulary a lot if you read a textbook in a field that is new to you.

If you feel that vocabulary is a problem for you, you may wish to do something systematic about it. There are many good books designed to help develop vocabulary, including the one in this series.

How to Use This Book

This book can be used as a textbook in a course or it can be used individually for personal improvement. If you are using it in a course, it is a good idea to have periodic conferences with the instructor to be sure that you are getting the maximum benefit from it. You or your instructor may find that there are certain types of errors that you often make, or some parts of the book may give you special difficulty. A teacher can be a great help when special problems come up.

Each part of the book focuses on a specific skill area, and each part has an answer key in the back of the book to enable you to check the correctness of your work. If you are in a class, the teacher will probably tell you how fast to move through the book. If not, we suggest that you spread out your efforts over at least a month. Learning that is spaced out in time is more effective in producing long-term results.

How Much Time Will It Take?

There are 33 Units in this book. Each one will probably take you about half an hour to complete. Thus the total time spent on this book will be about 10 to 20 hours, depending on how you read now and how much you improve. The total amount of time you spend improving your reading will depend on how much you read beyond the material in this book. Actually, almost all the reading you do in the future could be thought of as part of your reading improvement plan. You will continue to improve long after you finish this book if you put into practice the things you learn. Most people do improve their general reading skills over a lifetime, if for no other reason than that they constantly learn the meanings of new words.

It is useful to schedule times to do the work in this book if you are not doing it in a class. Consistent, spaced practice is best. It also helps to develop good habits if you can have a regular place to practice where you are not likely to be disturbed.

RAPID READING

Effective Reading

Improving
Reading Rates
and Comprehension

Unit 17	Scanning for All the Information on a Topic	137
Unit 18	Skimming to Identify the Topic	153
Unit 19	Skimming to Identify the Author's Point of View	159
Unit 20	Skimming to Identify Facts	163
Unit 21	Skimming to Identify the Author's Style	170
Unit 22	Skimming to Discover Organization	174
Unit 23	Skimming to Understand the Content	184
Part 3	READING-RATE FLEXIBILITY	
Unit 24	Introduction	191
Unit 25	Reading Difficult Material	197
Unit 26	Reading Easy Material	200
Unit 27	Reading Difficult Textbook Material for Study Purposes	207
Unit 28	Scanning for Facts	215
Unit 29	Reading Moderately Difficult Material Rapidly	221
Part 4	READING COMPREHENSION	
Unit 30	Introduction	229
Unit 31	Reading for Main Ideas	231
Unit 32	Reading for Details	243
Unit 33	Reading for Organization	253
Unit 34	Using Reference Materials	260
Unit 35	Critical Reading	288
Unit 36	Reading in Content Areas	295
Answer keys		314
Progress chart		320
Acknowledgments		321

RAPID READING

The purpose of this part of the book is to help you become more efficient in reading by speeding up the process generally. Most people can learn to cover material much faster than they do now while retaining about 80% of comprehension.

Improvement in reading efficiency has several major benefits. For one, reading skills to harvest from the wealth of information that is now available in printed form. Most people get the rough outlines of their daily news from television and radio. However, the printed word still provides the in-depth coverage of topics that really produces well-informed people. Reading is also a great source of entertainment for many people. For students, it is the primary method of studying.

The time you now spend reading can be made much more productive by increasing your reading rate. For some people this will mean that they can obtain more information in the same length of time. For others it will mean that time now devoted to reading can be used in other more interesting and profitable ways.

Determining Your Reading Rate

To determine how fast you are reading material that is not in this book, you first have to get some idea of the number of words in a given passage. Then

Part 5

RAPID READING

Introduction

The purpose of this part of the book is to help you become more efficient in reading by speeding up the process generally. Most people can learn to cover material much faster than they do now while maintaining a high level of comprehension.

Improvement in reading efficiency has several major benefits. We need reading skills to benefit from the wealth of information that is now available in printed form. Most people get the rough outlines of their daily news from television and radio. However, the printed word still provides the in-depth coverage of topics that really produces well-informed people. Reading is also a great source of entertainment for many people. For students, it is the primary method of studying.

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Determining Your Reading Rate

To determine how fast you are reading material that is not in this book, you first have to get some idea of the number of words in a given passage. Then

you simply divide the number of words by the number of minutes it took to read. That will give your rate in words per minute.

If you are reading a short selection, you might want to actually count the words. Usually, however, you can make an excellent estimate of word length by counting the number of words in a ten-line segment of the passage, then dividing by 10. This will give you a good idea of the average number of words per line. Then you simply count the lines in a short selection and multiply by the average number of words per line to get the total length in words. For example, if the average number of words per line is eleven and there are sixty lines in the article, the estimated number of words in the article is calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Average number of words per line} &= 11 \\ \text{Number of lines in article} &= 60 \\ \text{Estimated number of words in article} &= 11 \times 60 \\ &= 660 \end{aligned}$$

If you are reading a long selection or a book, you can estimate the number of words per page, then count the number of pages read in a given span of time, and divide the total estimated number of words by the number of minutes. For example, you are reading a paperback novel. Using the method described above, you find that there is an average of eleven words per line. The book has forty lines per page. This gives the following calculation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Average number of words per line} &= 11 \\ \text{Number of lines per page} &= 40 \\ \text{Estimated words per page} &= 11 \times 40 \\ &= 440 \end{aligned}$$

If it takes you twenty-five minutes to read twenty pages, you can calculate your reading rate by multiplying the number of words per page by the number of pages read, then dividing the total by the number of minutes.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Number of words per page} &= 440 \\ \text{Number of pages} &= 20 \\ \text{Total number of words} &= 440 \times 20 \\ &= 8800 \\ \text{Reading rate} &= 8800 \div 25 \\ &= 352 \end{aligned}$$

This technique can be used on any reading material. If the book or publication contains a lot of pictures, charts, or diagrams, you may have to estimate the number of pages of reading material. In a typical paperback