

**RAPID COMPREHENSION
THROUGH EFFECTIVE
READING**



SPEED LEARNING

1



RAPID COMPREHENSION THROUGH EFFECTIVE READING

by

RUSSELL G. STAUFFER, Ph.D.

Director Reading Study Center

University of Delaware

and

JEAN HORTON-BERG, B.S., M.A.

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Several articles have information that is dated. Your purpose in completing each exercise is to practice developing reading skills. Do not be distracted by the information included in the reading material. Dated information sometimes gives an added dimension to the reading-thinking process.

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Key People Who Have Researched, Developed, and Written This Program



Russell G. Stauffer, originator and research director of this program, is Professor of Education and recipient of the H. Rodney Sharp chair in the College of Education at the University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware. He has been Founder and Director of the Reading-Study Center at the University since he founded it in 1950.

The Center provides a testing unit and a laboratory school. Through the graduate program it offers a Master's degree in Education with a major in Reading and a Doctoral degree in the Behavioral Sciences with a major in Reading.

For the past ten years he has been editor of *The Reading Teacher*, one of three journals published by the International Reading Association. He is senior author of a series of basic readers.

He has published numerous articles in professional and trade journals, including a special pamphlet on "Reading, a Thinking Process" for *Reader's Digest*. He edited one

of the National Council on Research in English annual publications (*Language and the Higher Thought Processes*). Currently, he is heading a team for the National Council of Teachers of English engaged in preparing a publication. Two years ago he directed a team of nationally selected educators engaged to evaluate the National Defense Education Act reading institutes. He was asked by Eugene Youngert to help prepare for Dr. Conant a publication concerned with phonics. *Learning to Read*, a report of a conference of reading experts published by Education Testing Services, was the result. He is engaged in a three-year research study comparing the language-experience approach to reading instruction with the basic reader approach.

He has participated in numerous conferences and conventions across the country and has addressed many teacher audiences. He has led and participated in many activities concerned with the International Reading Association. He has served as reading consultant to the Maryland State Department of Education, and as consultant to many school districts of all sizes.

A native of Pennsylvania, he has his Master's degree from Duke University and his Doctoral degree from Temple University. For five years prior to coming to Delaware he served as assistant director of the Reading Clinic at Temple University.

He is a member of the International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council on Research in English (former president), American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. He belongs to Phi Delta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi and was also a member at one time of Kappa Delta Pi and Psi Chi.



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Courtney S. Adams, B. Music, M. Music, Consultant in Music.

FOREWORD



We live in an age when the sheer quantity of reading material which confronts us every day is almost overwhelming. Despite the assertions of some that the growth of television and other media reduces the need to read, the fact remains that success in most lines of endeavor is very closely related to the ability to read well. How can a conscientious person get through everything—or even a reasonable part of all that he must read each day for business or for pleasure? If he is the average reader, whether a college graduate, a high school graduate, or no graduate at all, he cannot unless he makes a conscious, concerted effort to improve his reading skills and habits, unless, in other words, he learns how to read more effectively, i. e., more rapidly and with greater comprehension. Unfortunately, most people need more than the desire; they need expert assistance.

The objective of this course is to provide

that assistance. It is a key which can unlock the door to a whole new world of reading for any person who is motivated to become a more effective reader. It is a carefully developed program designed by experts with many years of research and experience in the field of reading to lead any ordinary, inefficient reader step by careful step to the place where he learns to comprehend the printed word rapidly, with efficiency and flexibility.

It must be emphasized at this point that the objective in this course is rapid comprehension, and not merely the rapid recognition of words and the fast turning of pages. Certainly, you will learn to read faster—you must; but all the research in the field of reading leads to the conclusion that pure speed in reading is not important or even desirable, but that flexibility is of prime importance. Flexibility in reading consists of your ability to use those reading processes which are particularly appropriate for the style, the difficulty, and the theme of the reading material while, at the same time, being consistent with achieving your purpose at the most desirable level of performance. If you follow the program which this course very carefully outlines, you will become an efficient reader who is flexible and able to comprehend rapidly the printed page. You will be confident in the knowledge that you have become the master, not the slave, of the written word.

John Mellon, Ph.D.
Dean of Liberal Arts
Clarion State College
Clarion, Pa.

RAPID COMPREHENSION THROUGH EFFECTIVE READING

PRETEST

You have a sincere interest in increasing your ability to comprehend rapidly symbols appearing on the printed page.

There is no doubt that you can reach your goal of doubling, tripling, quadrupling your speed of comprehension if you will apply yourself honestly and follow directions carefully.

The measurement of an efficient reader is not how many words he can recognize per minute; it is his ability to comprehend rapidly and retain concepts. Research indicates that reading is 95 percent a thinking process and only 5 percent mechanical visual dexterity. Each individual in completing this course will be able to attain skills for rapid comprehension in reading that will apply to all areas of communication and form a solid foundation for continued improvement even after the course has been completed.

The increase in your reading efficiency, including speed, will be the practical measurement of your success in this course.

It will be encouraging for you to see your improvement when you have finished the assigned work.

The big question is, "How will I know whether I'm improving?" The answer is, you will take a test — we call it the **PRETEST** — which will show your beginning reading rate in words per minute and your comprehension of what you have read. When you have finished the program, you will take another test — the **POST-TEST**. Comparison of the results of the two tests will be one indication of what you have gained. You yourself will see improvement each week. You are ready to take the **PRETEST**. When you have finished, record the results on the front page of the test.

Now read the instructions for the **PRE-TEST**, take the test, and compute your **READING EFFICIENCY**. Remember, you are only taking an inventory of your present reading skills. Read in your usual manner.

PRETEST

HISTORY OF BRAZIL

Prepared by Wiley E. Peebles for the Reading Research Center, University of Wyoming.

Directions

The purpose of this test is to measure your ability to read effectively. You are to read the accompanying history selection in your usual manner of reading; after ten minutes of reading you will be asked to answer questions over the material read. These questions will be of the type generally asked in examinations on such material.

At the end of 10 minutes of reading "Stop". Note the line number of the line that you are reading when you stop and write it in the Rate - WPM space on this page. If you finish in less than 10 minutes, check your time in seconds and turn to the Rate Measurement Chart at the end of the comprehension questions.

Computing Your Reading Efficiency

IF YOU DO NOT FINISH READING THE TEST ARTICLE IN 10 MINUTES, your reading rate in WPM (words per minute) is the line number at the left of the last sentence you read. Circle this line number and place it in the Rate - WPM space below.

IF YOU DO FINISH READING THE TEST ARTICLE IN LESS THAN 10 MINUTES, record your total time accurately in terms of seconds. Turn to the RATE MEASUREMENT CHART and look down the seconds column until your total time in seconds appears. The number to the right of your total seconds is your WPM (words per minute). Place this number in the WPM space below.

Next, answer the Comprehension Test Questions at the end of the test. Answer only the questions down to the line number you entered below, in the Rate - WPM space. If you finished the test in 10 minutes or less, answer all the questions.

Record rate of WPM (words per minute) using either Line Number Finished if you didn't finish in 10 minutes, or the RATE from the MEASUREMENT CHART if you finished in less than 10 minutes

Rate - WPM

Comprehension (Accuracy) = the number correct answers divided by the number of questions tried, i.e.

_____	_____
(No. of Questions Tried)	(No. of Correct Answers)

Record Comprehension (Accuracy)

Your Reading Efficiency is:

$$\text{Rate (WPM)} \times \text{Comprehension (Accuracy)} = \text{Reading Efficiency}$$

From MAINTAINING READING EFFICIENCY by Lyle L. Miller, Professor, Guidance and Counselor Education, University of Wyoming.

PRETEST

HISTORY OF BRAZIL

By Wiley E. Peeples

CHECK YOUR TIME BEFORE STARTING (THIS IS A 10-MINUTE TEST)

Brazil Discovered

1 In the history of Brazil it becomes difficult to determine who
2 its exact discoverer was. Pedro Alvarez Cabral, a Portuguese
3 navigator, is generally accorded this honor. In any event it is
4 conceded that he was the first claimant.

5 It is said that in the spring of the year 1500, Cabral, in
6 charge of a fleet of ships presumably in route to India, first
7 sighted land in what is now the Brazilian state of Bahia. Some
8 speculation and mystery surround Cabral's voyage since his sighting
9 necessitated his being off course to India by several hundred miles.
11 This would seem to be a somewhat unreasonable assumption in view of
12 the commonly recognized high degree of competence possessed by the
13 Portuguese navigators and astronomers of that time. The assumption
14 has been made that his goal was, in fact, Brazil rather than India.
15 The strong probability exists, then, that this was the beginning of
16 an effort by King Manuel I of Portugal to counteract increasingly
17 widespread activity further north in the new continent by aggressive
18 Spanish rivals.

Brazil Named

19 The mountain first sighted by Cabral was named *Monte Pascoal*
20 (Easter Mountain) since the event occurred shortly after Easter.
21 The land itself was named *Terra de Vera Cruz* (Land of the True Cross).
22 The name given to the land arose from the circumstance of Cabral's
23 being a Knight of the Order of Christ, the emblem of which, a red
24 cross, was borne conspicuously on the sails of the fleet's ships.
25 Additionally, for some time, the stars of the Southern Cross had
26 been a prominent feature in the night skies and had much impressed
27 the voyagers.

28 The name of the land, however, was changed by the King of Portugal
29 to *Terra de Santa Cruz* (Land of the Holy Cross). Thus it remained for
30 half a century until finally and logically it became known as Brazil.

31 Mystical "Brazil" had been known in Europe for at least five
32 centuries as the source of *bresilium*, an East Indian redwood which
33 had come to be much prized for its qualities as a dye for cloth.
34 A similar wood was discovered in the new world and was included in
35 the first cargoes of the heavily laden ships on their return voyages
36 to Europe. Thus, the new Portuguese acquisition soon came to be
37 known by the name of one of its first products.

Brazil Becomes a Republic

40 Brazil finally severed her bonds with Portugal and attained
41 the status of a republic only as recently as November 15th, 1889.
42 The history of the Nation's long trek towards autonomy is in itself
43 unique in the hemisphere and well demonstrates the temperament of
44 the people which it reflects. The peaceful occurrence of the

History of Brazil—continued

45 independence of half a continent in an uneasy and volatile 19th
46 century would itself be noteworthy. Additionally, this vast and
47 varied land remained intact. Whereas the remainder of the continent
48 had also become independent of Spain, it had been sundered into a
49 multitude of minor and sometimes fractious entities.

50 Brazilian Empire

51 Had not Napoleon I come upon the scene in Europe so forcefully
52 in the early 19th Century, Brazilian history would undoubtedly not
53 contain some of its most interesting pages. It was out of fear of
54 France's approaching armies in 1807 that the Portuguese regent,
55 Dom Joao, hastily boarded the royal family and the entire court—
56 a party consisting of some 15,000 people—into a fleet of ships
57 and set sail under the protection of British war vessels for Brazil.
58 After an uncomfortable and trying voyage of almost two months
59 duration, the expedition reached Brazil and a final phase of its
60 history had begun.

61 During Dom Joao's 13 years sojourn there, notable improvements
62 were made in many of the nation's affairs. Under his influence
63 Brazil began its painful transition from a primitive to a more
64 modern way of life. Before returning to Portugal in 1820 he
65 granted a constitution for Brazil. Shortly afterwards his son
66 Dom Pedro was proclaimed emperor.

67 Dom Pedro I was ineffective as a ruler and chaotic conditions
68 were prevalent under him. Following his abdication, his son, the
69 enlightened Dom Pedro II, ruled the empire during its last 58 years.

70 An energetic, conscientious, and humane ruler, he produced
71 an internal stability that finally allowed Brazil's slow and
72 spasmodic growth to begin. A true business community began to
73 emerge. A railroad system, though inadequate, made its appearance.
74 Additional banks became available, and in 1850 a Commercial Code
75 appeared which with some modifications still exists.

75 The End of Slavery and the Monarchy

76 One of the most painful of the thorns in the flesh of the
77 emerging nation of those times was the problem of slavery. This
78 institution had come to be inextricably associated with the
79 national economy. Under Dom Pedro I, an agreement with England
80 was reached which theoretically was to have stopped the slave
81 trade by 1830. This contract was of little effect, however, and
82 the smuggling of slaves from that time on became a flourishing
83 business. In an attempt at progressive emancipation, in order not
84 to excessively disrupt the economy, an act was passed providing
85 that children born of slaves after 1871 were to be free. Also, at
86 that time all state slaves were to be freed. Additionally, an act
87 in 1885 granted freedom for all slaves at the age of 60.

88 At a time when emancipation was imminent, the land holders
89 made no provisions for continuing without slaves. Following the
90 signing of the emancipation proclamation on May 13, 1888, by a
91 regent in Dom Pedro's absence, the land owners, to a large extent,
92 changed loyalties from the monarchy to the increasingly active
93 movement for a republic.

94 One year later, November 15, 1889, the monarchy was overthrown.
95 The Republic of Brazil had become a fact. The revolution came about
96 as a result of certain restless military factions. It had not been
97 anticipated by the population in general.

98

Bahia the Capital

99

100 The first capital of Brazil was Bahia. It is located on the
 101 coast some 800 miles northeast of the present city of Rio de Janeiro.
 102 The location was discovered in 1501 by Amerigo Vespucci, the navigator
 103 of a Portuguese fleet. Since the initial activity in the new land
 104 centered in the area around Bahia, the town flourished and grew
 105 wealthy. During the peak of the lucrative sugar industry in the 17th
 106 and 18th Centuries it came to be an immensely wealthy capital and
 107 seaport. The city continues to expand but the older sections remain
 108 largely intact and retain their original appearance since their
 demolition has been prohibited.

110

Rio the Capital

111

112 The capital was moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1763. The name
 113 of the town was something of a misnomer but its change seems
 114 unlikely. Before the move to Rio, the French had attempted twice
 115 to settle in the location but had been successfully driven off.
 116 At the time of their second victory, the Portuguese named the town
 117 Sao Sebastiao de Rio de Janeiro in honor of Saint Sebastian as the
 118 victory had occurred on Saint Sebastian's day in January. What
 119 they had erroneously considered to be a river or *rio*, was subsequently
 found to be only a bay.

120

121 At the time of the flight of the Portuguese court to Rio,
 122 the town was little more than a village. Being the capital, the
 123 city grew, increased in importance, and became more attractive
 124 during the time of the empire. It was, however, only after the
 125 establishment of the republic that the city's growth became
 126 accelerated and Rio began to take on the appearance of a modern
 127 city. Unlike Bahia, older areas and structures have not been
 128 protected. As a result the city has lost many treasured landmarks
 dating from its past.

129

130 The pattern of Rio's growth and development highlights a
 131 problem that Brazil as a whole has faced. Because of the mountains
 132 to the back of it, the city has been confined in a narrow strip of
 133 land bordering the coast and any expansion has had to take place
 134 in this direction. Significantly, there is only one highway leading
 135 from Rio into the interior. This demonstrates how effectively the
 136 mountain ranges along the coast have impeded the nation's development.

136

137 Today Rio is a modern, rapidly moving city suffering from
 138 sometimes intense growing pains and possessing both the advantages
 139 and the disadvantages of a city of this nature. This cosmopolitan
 140 and modern city of some three and a half million people possesses
 141 one major and immediately ascertainable blemish. This is the
 142 presence of the *favelas*, those ever-present and never-to-be-forgotten
 143 slums which nearly three quarters of a million people call
 144 home. These crowded areas, rising without sanitation facilities
 145 or water supply to cover whole hillsides and vast reclaimed swamps,
 146 contain seething masses of the poor who have been drawn from rural
 147 areas to the north by the attractions of life in a big city. As soon
 148 as more favorable housing is found by some of the inhabitants,
 149 their emptied hovels are refilled by new immigrants. The *favelas*
 150 represent a serious and increasing problem which seems likely to
 become worse.

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Brasilia the Capital

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In a manner peculiar to Brazilians, a dream of a new capital has existed for years. And, as is the nature of dreams, this mystical new capital somehow represented a new start, a fresh beginning. This Aladdin's lamp was to bring with it solutions to the country's multitudinous problems. In imagination, the new capital was always located somewhere in the mysterious and largely unfamiliar interior region of the country. It came to symbolize the hopes and the future of the Brazilian people.

The dream has become a reality. Although the painful transition was fraught with misgivings and discomfort, the Brazilians have their new capital. Brasilia, as it is called, is located only some 500 miles inland from Rio but the difficulties encountered in the building of a city this seemingly short distance from the coast bring into sharp focus the country's serious lack of transportation facilities and the almost insurmountable problems associated with penetrating even short distances into the interior.

It was under President Juscelino Kubitschek, who went into office in 1956, that the enabling acts providing for the construction of the new capital were finally passed. Oscar Niemeyer, the well known Brazilian architect, was commissioned to design all the government buildings in the capital, and the remaining buildings had to meet his approval. Officially, the government was installed in the partially completed new capital in 1960. In reality this was just the beginning of a slow movement of governmental functions to the new location and it may be some years before the move is complete.

It is natural that a project of such an ambitious nature would generate some controversy. There are those who have criticized the wisdom of the move itself, the relative remoteness of the capital, or even the ground plan of the site. It is true that the move was not made without incurring certain liabilities. Brasilia, however, was conceived as a look into the future, an opening up of new frontiers, and as a vision of a greater Brazil. Undoubtedly, as the people become accustomed to it and as its newness and unfamiliarity begin to fade, it will grow within the nation and fulfill the vision that gave it birth.

Boom and Bust

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The Brazilian economy generally has depended upon the intermittent but profitable exploitation of a series of products. The national temperament seems to include an inability to foresee the decline of a lucrative activity. The result is that little or no planning is made for the future—a course that at times has proved to be disastrous.

The first important national product was sugar. During the 17th and 18th Centuries it brought enormous profits into the country. The town of Bahia, the capital at that time, became immensely wealthy. One may still see today large sugar cane plantations in certain of the states. Methods of cultivation and refining are largely outmoded, however, and sugar has long since ceased to be the major national product.

Large quantities of gold were discovered in 1698 in the state of Minas Gerais. This and other discoveries led to the appearance of numerous mining towns which in some cases were important for