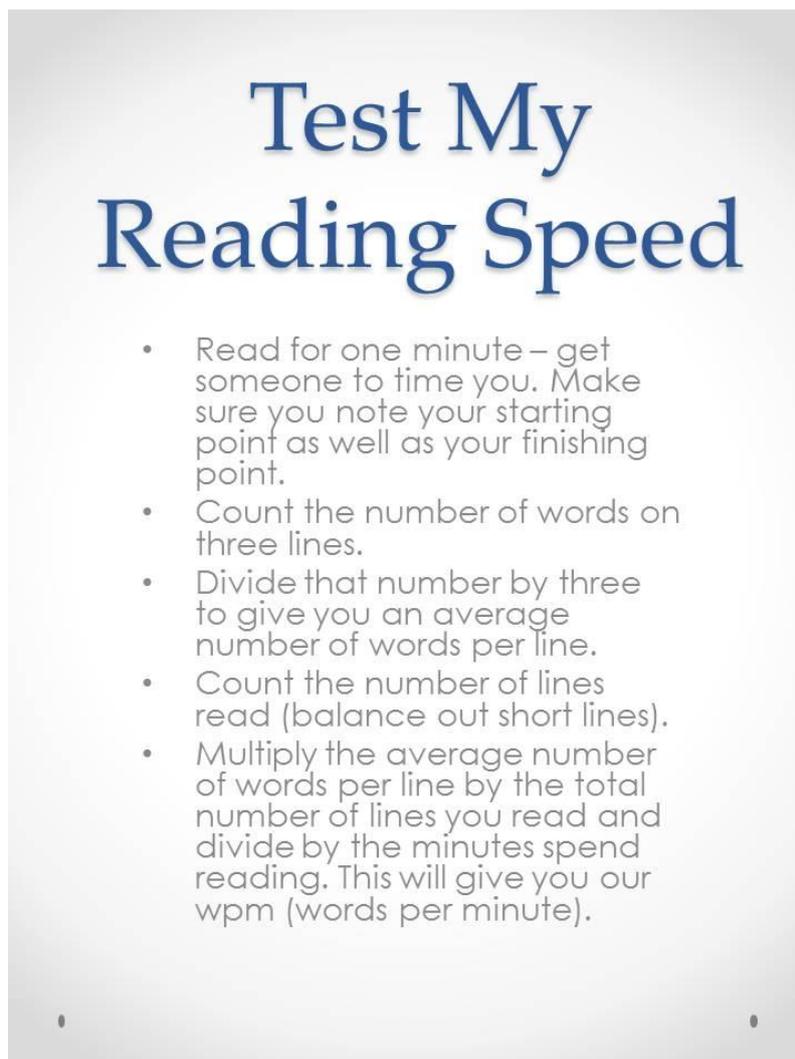


### Day 3 – Speed Reading, Representational Systems and Memory

Speed reading is not for everyone; however it has been proven to help your study capability. We all have different reading styles and speeds. Some people read line by line, some people back skip (keep going back to words), some people speak each word (out loud or in their head), and some people don't concentrate and have to re-read whole paragraphs or pages.

Most of us read at a rate of between 200 – 250 words per minute. Some systems and techniques available tell us that we can push that past the 1000 words per minute mark. I would **not** suggest you do this as you will miss out important information. What we are looking for as part of Study Smart is to push your reading speed up slightly and to help with concentration and technique.

Before we look at a few techniques we are first going to get you to test your current reading speed. There are a few simple steps to doing this:



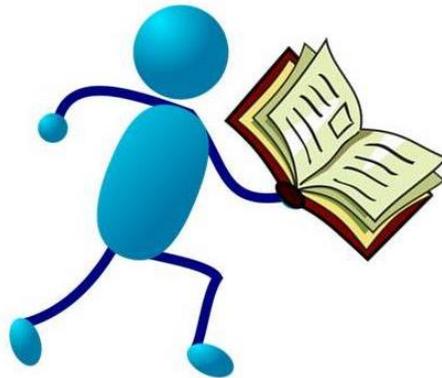
## Test My Reading Speed

- Read for one minute – get someone to time you. Make sure you note your starting point as well as your finishing point.
- Count the number of words on three lines.
- Divide that number by three to give you an average number of words per line.
- Count the number of lines read (balance out short lines).
- Multiply the average number of words per line by the total number of lines you read and divide by the minutes spend reading. This will give you our wpm (words per minute).

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Now you have a benchmark. Once you try one or a few of the techniques we are going to explain next you can retest your reading speed.



**META GUIDING** - Use a device to help push your reading speed. It can be a ruler, a pen or even your finger. The point of doing this is to decrease distraction and focus on the specific words to increase your reading speed. Our eyes tend to jump, pause and fixate when reading. For example we tend to pause on a word we may not understand, or fixate on a certain sentence reading it over and over. Our eyes also tend to jump (or back skip) on words. These practices (or habits) take up at least 30% of our reading time. Guiding our eyes helps us maintain focus and rhythm.

Another great technique with meta guiding is to use a sheet of paper. Start at the top of the page and use the paper as a guide hiding the text that you have already read. This will stop you from jumping, pausing and fixating on text. You can train your eye to make fewer movements by using these simple techniques.

**SKIMMING** - Skimming is to glance through text to find important parts to read. Although this is usually considered a speed reading method, you're not teaching yourself to read faster. You're just learning which parts you can skip over. Skimming is a method you should only use when sampling text – more on this during Day 4.

**PERCEPTUAL EXPANSION** – If you focus centre of a page you will still be able to see the sides, top and bottom of the page. Many people have the capacity to read using peripheral vision as well as central vision. You can combine them both with this simple technique:

- Choose a particular sentence and miss out the first two words and last two words. Let your peripheral vision (and your brain of course) pick up the missing words.

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Here are some additional hints and tips for you when sitting down to read any study material:

- Better to study in natural light, when that is not possible make sure that you have a lamp bright enough to illuminate the material being read. It should come over your shoulder, the opposite shoulder you write with
- Material should be approximately 20 inches away from your eyes to lessen eye strain
- Be comfortable, however not so comfortable you fall asleep
- Make sure you are in the right frame of mind (we went through this on Day 2)
- Increase your vocabulary. Learn a new word each day
- Practice, practice, practice! You won't become a proficient speed reader in just one day; you need to make sure you practice. It will take time to improve your reading skills.

Were you aware that we all have our own preferred representational system (also known as sensory modalities and abbreviated to VAKOG)? Our representational system is an assumed model from NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) and it explains how the human mind supposedly processes and stores information. The VAKOG system (V = Visual, A = Auditory, K = Kinaesthetic, O = Olfactory, G = Gustatory) will play an important part in how you should study.



- If your primary representational system is **visual** then you may prefer to see words written or pictures drawn
- If your primary representational system is **auditory** then you may prefer to hear the words – so you may speak them out loud, sing them and listen to them
- If your primary representational system is **Kinaesthetic** you may need to get a feeling for what you are learning before it beds in, you prefer hands on or tactile interaction

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- **Olfactory** means smell and **Gustatory** means taste. Both of these senses are used less with learning, however you may associate a smell with a certain topic, for example Biology or a taste with a certain subject, for example Home Economics.

We have attached our representational system test for you to try out. You can also then read about your results in the representational systems PDF.

[http://media.wix.com/ugd/fec33e\\_b67a7b53e02040b2b07b6f95b77df8c0.pdf](http://media.wix.com/ugd/fec33e_b67a7b53e02040b2b07b6f95b77df8c0.pdf)

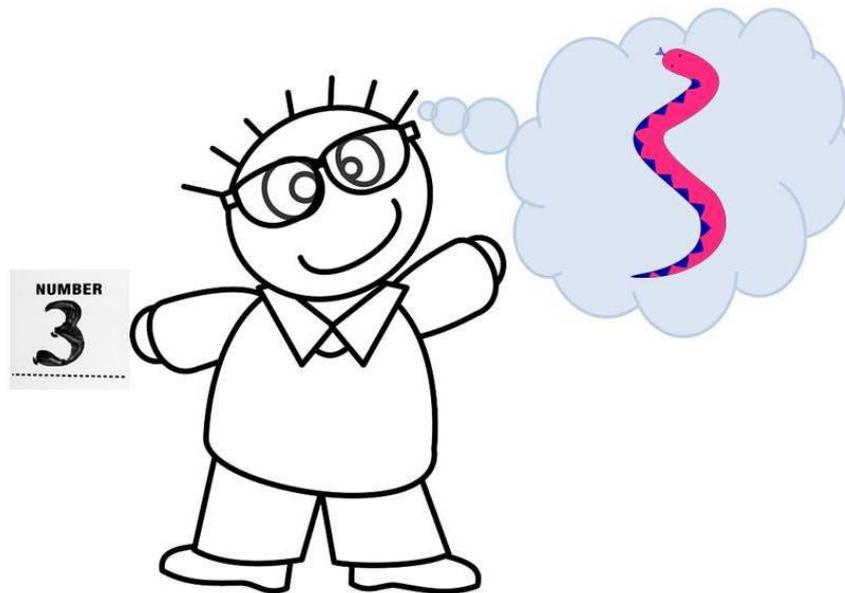
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Remember on Day 1 we talked about the left and right brain? Well, this will also have a bearing on the way your brain processes information:

- Our left brain works on logic, words, numbers, lists, lines and analysis
- Our right brain work on colour, imagination, completeness, rhythm and special awareness

Another great technique for increasing your memory retention is association. We also tend to learn if we associate or link things which is why we would suggest using methods that work with you and why we went into the detail of planning and using mind mapping yesterday. An example of an association would be to use a picture from a book rather than a text to remember something – if you lean toward the visual – or add a tune or rhyme (mnemonics) to words that you are finding difficult to embed. Maybe you associate a person with something learned. If you can find an association or a link then use it to your advantage.

Another great trick with association is to amplify the sense, whether it is a picture a sound, a word, person etc. Make the association louder or brighter or more focused. These associations become the key to you remembering; whether they are key words, key images, or key noises etc.



### Today's Tasks:

- Test your reading speed and try out the different techniques provided to enhance your reading speed.
- Try the representational system test and find the study technique that works best for you.
- **PRACTICE** – I am sure I don't need to spell this out to you again. Practice makes perfect! Review what you studied again and again to make sure that you remember the information.