Reading Rate Sample

There are many theories of reading. Some regard reading as a skill which relies 14
heavily on our visual perception and ability to recognize words, letter shapes, 26
sound patterns and so on. Other theories regard reading much like looking at a 40
picture, where we read to get the whole message and the bits and pieces, like the 56
separate brush strokes of a picture, are not singularly important. 66

Reading instruction often focuses on items of knowledge - words, letters, 76
sounds. Most people respond to this type of teaching. They search for links 89
between the items and they relate new discoveries to old knowledge. They 101
search for relationships and link old knowledge with new. So, there are many 114
things which go on inside a reader's head when reading occurs. 125

People who fail to progress in reading do not approach print in this way. The 140
skills which they have tried to carry out have not brought order to the 155
complexity of the text and they have often become passive in their confusion. 168
This confusion involves losing track of what they read, which usually results in 181
three things - regression, vocalization and faulty fixations. 187

Regression occurs to most readers. Have you ever had the experience of 199
thinking you were reading and suddenly realized you haven't taken a word in for 213
ages? Usually we go back and re-read what we missed. We spend as much as a 228
third of our time going back. The second problem most readers have involved 241
saying the words, they are reading, either in their minds - where a little internal 255
voice says the words, or under their breath. Some very slow readers read out 269
loud. A common solution for' this is to place a pen or pencil in between the teeth 286
so, talking becomes rather difficult, or chewing on gum often works. The third 299
problem some readers experience involves fixating on every word. The brain 310
only processes the images from the eye when the eye is actually stopped for that 325
split second when it fixates on a word. This means that your brain processes 339
these images by relating them other information to make meaning. The more 351
words you take in when your eyes stop the more information your brain can 365
process. Where you limit your brain to processing one word at a time, you obviously 380
work harder than is necessary. Reading dynamically, in word groups, or dimensionally 391
down the page using a pacer, you have fewer and fewer fixations. This has the 405
potential to increase your comprehension and reading rate at the same time. 417
You simply take in more! 422

Reading is like any other skill we learn. For example, when we first learn to 437
walk, we tend to move quickly, but with not much stability. The more 450
confident and stronger we become, the slower and steadier we are until we 463
learn how to control our speed. So, when we decide to run, we can usually 478
control the pace, so we avoid falling over. Sometimes we can increase the 491
speed at which we run, other times we purposely reduce the speed, when we 505
realize that if we don’t, we could come to harm. When we learn to speed 520
read, we use the same technique. When we read the newspaper, we might 533
fly through at 1000 words per minute. A magazine or journal article might 546
require us to read at about 800 words per minute while a highly technical 561
report and drawings may require that we read at about 500 words per 574
minute. Speed reading then is a tool. It is your choice how you use it. 589

This passage on reading is from "Speed Reading: How to read faster and more effectively" a booklet produced by Student Services at the Sunshine Coast University College, Queensland, Australia.