

ACT Reading and English Test: Helpful Hints

Reading Improvement Tips

- **Increasing the number of words in each block:**
This needs a conscious effort. Try to expand the number of words that you read at a time: With practice, you'll find you read faster. You may also find that you can increase the number of words in each block by holding the text a little further from your eyes. The more words you can read in each block, the faster you will read!
- **Reducing fixation time:**
The minimum length of time needed to read each block is probably only a quarter of a second. By pushing yourself to reduce the time you take, you will get better at picking up information quickly. Again, this is a matter of practice and confidence.
- **Reducing skip-back:**
To reduce the number of times that your eyes skip back to a previous sentence, run a pointer along the line as you read. This could be a finger, or a pen or pencil. Your eyes will follow the tip of your pointer, smoothing the flow of your reading. The speed at which you read using this method will largely depend on the speed at which you move the pointer.

Improving Comprehension

- **Know the structure of paragraphs:**
Good writers construct paragraphs that have a beginning, middle and end. Often, the first sentence will give an overview that helps provide a framework for adding details. Also, look for transitional words, phrases or paragraphs that change the topic.
- **Anticipate and predict**
Really smart readers try to anticipate the author and predict future ideas and questions. If you're right, this reinforces your understanding. If you're wrong, you make adjustments quicker.
- **Build a good vocabulary**
For most educated people, this is a lifetime project. The best way to improve your vocabulary is to use a dictionary regularly. You might carry around a pocket dictionary and use it to look up new words. Or, you can keep a list of words to look up at the end of the day. Concentrate on roots, prefixes and endings.
- **Reading!**
Read anything and everything you can get your hands on: books, magazines, newspapers, blogs... The more you read, the better a reader you will become!

For More Information...

- <http://www.mindtools.com/speedrd.html>
- <http://english.glendale.cc.ca.us/methods.html>
- <http://www.marin.cc.ca.us/~don/Study/7read.html>
- <http://www.petersons.com/testprep/tips.asp?id=447&sponsor=1&path=ug.pft.act>

Good reading means building frameworks for connecting words to thoughts.