

Free reading speed test.

© Dr Margaret Greenhall, author of Easy 4 me 2 Learn Speed Reading

Triple your Reading Speed On Screen and Paper

A training course with easy exercises for faster and effective reading on paper and computer.

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For information on other resources for speed reading please visit www.UoLearn.com/speedreading/speedreading.html

This should only take you 5 minutes to complete.

The reading piece is the one used during training sessions and you can compare your results to the graphs below.

Instructions:

1. Please don't read the following pages until you're ready to start the test.
2. Find a watch/stopwatch/phone/kitchen timer that can measure time in mins and secs.
3. Find a quiet place and ensure you won't be disturbed for a few minutes.
4. Sit comfortably and upright, get yourself ready to read the following page.
5. Time how long it takes you to read the following page at your normal comprehension speed.
6. Use the conversion table on the page after the piece to find out your current reading speed.

Notes: This piece has been carefully chosen to be at a level suitable for adults with a small amount of unknown vocabulary to make it a moderately difficult read (please don't look up the words until you've finished the reading).



<Start timer>

SMALL-BOAT SAILING

A sailor is born, not made. And by "sailor" is meant, not the average efficient and hopeless creature who is found to-day in the forecastle of deepwater ships, but the man who will take a fabric compounded of wood and iron and rope and canvas and compel it to obey his will on the surface of the sea. Barring captains and mates of big ships, the small-boat sailor is the real sailor. He knows, he must know, how to make the wind carry his craft from one given point to another given point. He must know about tides and rips and eddies, bar and channel markings, and day and night signals; he must be wise in weather-lore; and he must be sympathetically familiar with the peculiar qualities of his boat which differentiate it from every other boat that was ever built and rigged. He must know how to gentle her about, as one instance of a myriad, and to fill her on the other tack without deadening her way or allowing her to fall off too far.

The deepwater sailor of to-day needs know none of these things. And he doesn't. He pulls and hauls as he is ordered, swabs decks, washes paint, and chips iron-rust. He knows nothing, and cares less. Put him in a small boat and he is helpless. He will cut an even better figure on the hurricane deck of a horse. I shall never forget my child-astonishment when I first encountered one of these strange beings. He was a runaway English sailor. I was a lad of twelve, with a decked-over, fourteen-foot, centre-board skiff which I had taught myself to sail. I sat at his feet as at the feet of a god, while he discoursed of strange lands and peoples, deeds of violence, and hair-raising gales at sea. Then, one day, I took him for a sail. With all the trepidation of the veriest little amateur, I hoisted sail and got under way. Here was a man, looking on critically, I was sure, who knew more in one second about boats and the water than I could ever know. After an interval, in which I exceeded myself, he took the tiller and the sheet. I sat on the little thwart amidships, open-mouthed, prepared to learn what real sailing was. My mouth remained open, for I learned what a real sailor was in a small boat. He couldn't trim the sheet to save himself, he nearly capsized several times in squalls, and, once again, by blunderingly jibing over; he didn't know what a centre-board was for, nor did he know that in running a boat before the wind one must sit in the middle instead of on the side; and finally, when we came back to the wharf, he ran the skiff in full tilt, shattering her nose and carrying away the mast-step. And yet he was a really truly sailor fresh from the vasty deep.

Which points my moral. A man can sail in the forecastles of big ships all his life and never know what real sailing is. From the time I was twelve, I listened to the lure of the sea. When I was fifteen I was captain and owner of an oyster-pirate sloop. By the time I was sixteen I was sailing in scow-schooners, fishing salmon with the Greeks up the Sacramento River, and serving as sailor on the Fish Patrol. And I was a good sailor, too, though all my cruising had been on San Francisco Bay and the rivers tributary to it. I had never been on the ocean in my life.

<Stop timer>

JACK LONDON, On Board Roamer, Sonoma Creek, April 15, 1911, From Gutenberg.net

Time taken: to nearest 5 seconds

Free reading speed test results.

Please don't look at this until after you have completed the test.

There were a total of 605 words to read

wpm = words per minute

Time	wpm
5 min 35s	108
5 min 30s	110
5 min 25s	112
5 min 20s	113
5 min 15s	115
5 min 10 s	117
5 min 05s	119
5 min	121
4 min 55s	123
4 min 45s	125
4 min 40s	127
4 min 35s	132
4 min 30s	134
4 min 25s	137
4 min 20s	140
4 min 15s	142
4 min 10s	145
4 min 05s	148
4 min	151
3 min 55s	154

Time	wpm
3 min 45s	158
3 min 40s	161
3 min 35s	169
3 min 30s	173
3 min 25s	177
3 min 20s	182
3 min 15s	186
3 min 10s	191
3 min 05s	196
3 min	202
2 min 55s	207
2 min 45s	214
2 min 40s	220
2 min 35s	234
2 min 30s	242
2 min 25s	250
2 min 20s	259
2 min 15s	269
2 min 10s	279
2 min 05s	290

Time	wpm
2 min	303
1 min 55s	316
1 min 45s	330
1 min 40s	346
1 min 35s	382
1 min 30s	403
1 min 25s	427
1 min 20s	454
1 min 15s	484
1 min 10s	519
1 min 05s	558
1 min	605
55s	660
45s	726
40s	807
35s	1037
30s	1210
25s	1452
20s	1815
15s	2420

If your reading speed was between 150 and 350 words per minute you're reading at a usual adult speed, you should be able to triple your reading speed, whilst retaining comprehension if you follow a speed reading course.

If it was above 450 words per minute you're already a very good reader and usually you would see a doubling of your reading speed with further training. (Although exceptionally I did have one person who went from 570 to 2590 wpm.)

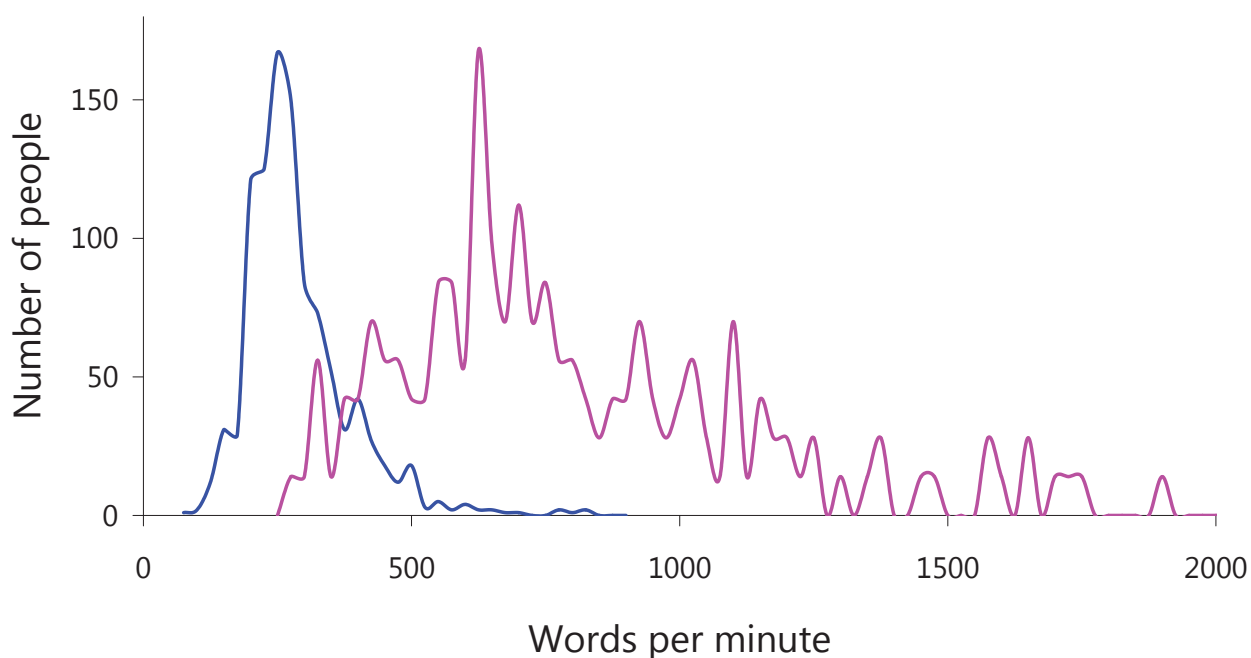
If your reading speed was above 1000 words per minute you are an exceptional reader and are probably using most of the techniques without having been taught.

So you now have a starting point. The data below was gathered from 1020 people over several years reading the same piece you've just read. The blue line is their starting speeds and the pink line shows the results after 3 weeks of practising using the techniques in my book (see www.UoLearn.com).

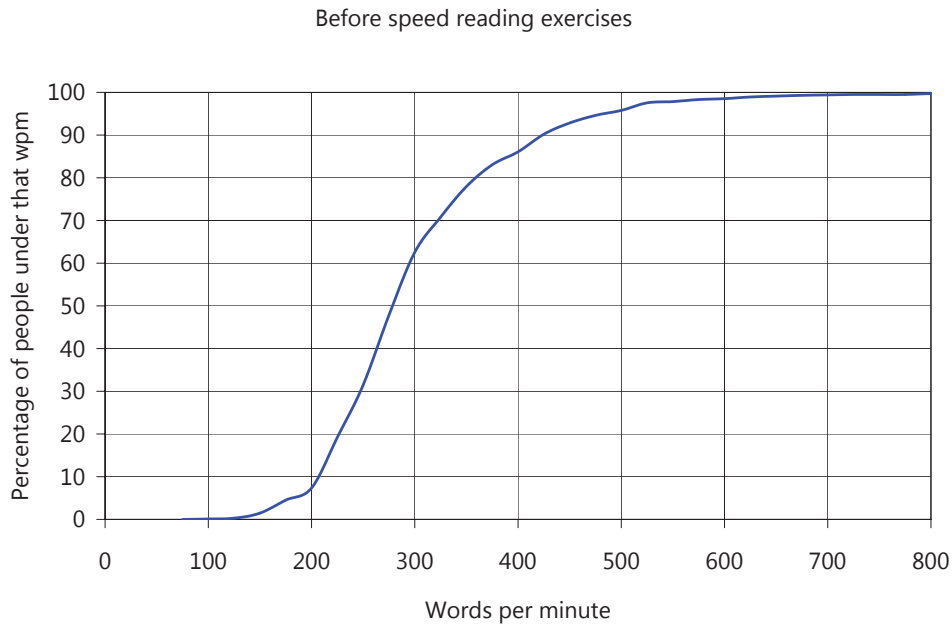
The starting average is **274 words** and you can see from the graph that the biggest group of people start at 250 words per minute.

After practicing for about 10 minutes a day for 3 weeks the average is now **810 words per minute** (the curve is normalized to show it on the same scale). In fact some people are even too fast to show on this scale - 8 people read at over 2000 words per minute, and one at 3132 words per minute.

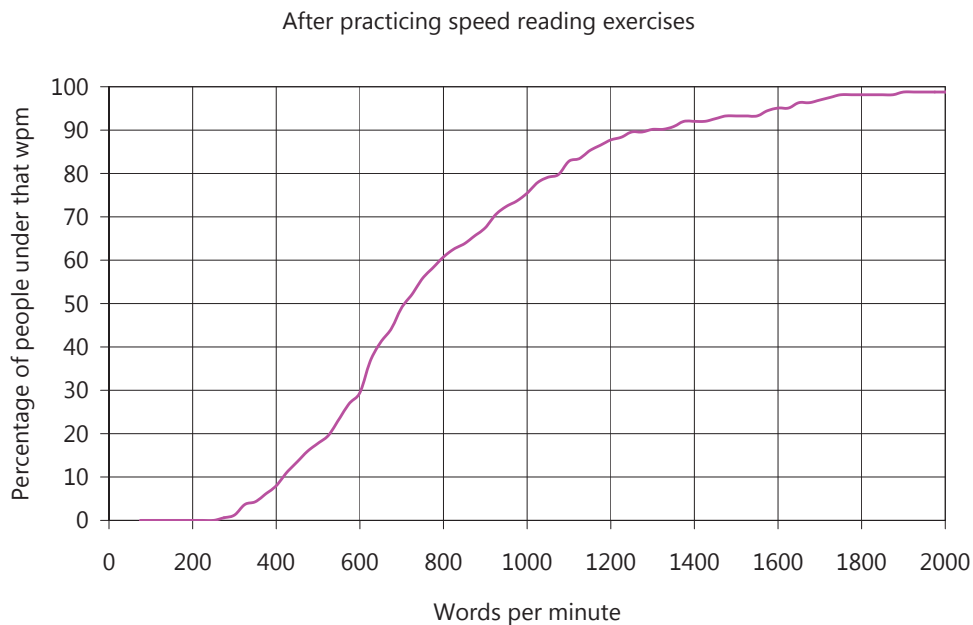
Speed reading changes over time



You can find out what percentile your reading ability comes in. Here is the graph of the group before the speed reading course:



So at the start only 14% of people were reading faster than 400 words per minute. After regular practice 92% of the people were reading faster than 400 words per minute.



To order a copy of the book please visit www.UoLearn.com/speedreading/speedreading.html

Notes: The data shown was collected using the Small Boat Sailing piece, which has a Flesch-Kincaid grade of 7 (suitable from 12 years upward). It is however harder to read than this would indicate as most people have little knowledge of sailing terminology. All of the participants were adults who work in large organisations (more than 500 employees).