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**SUBJECT: BUSINESS ENGLISH**

## **Origin of the word “Reading”:**

The English word “read” comes from the Old English *ræda*, which meant to advise, counsel, or guess.

## **Definition:**

Reading is a process that involves recognizing words, leading to the development of comprehension. According to research, reading is a process that negotiates the meaning between the text and its reader.

## **Purpose:**

The purpose of reading is to connect the ideas on the page to what you already know. If you don't know anything about a subject, then pouring words of text into your mind is like pouring water into your hand. You have a framework in your mind for reading, understanding and storing information.

## **Active reading Techniques:**

### **Active Reading:**

Active reading simply means reading something with a determination to understand and evaluate it for its relevance to your needs.

Simply reading and re-reading the material isn't an effective way to understand and learn. Actively and critically engaging with the content can save you time. Most OU study books and websites include in-text questions and self-assessed questions. Use these as built-in cues to make your study active.

### **Try these techniques to make your reading active:**

- Underline or highlight key words and phrases as you read. When you return to it later on, you can easily see which points you identified as important. Be selective - too much highlighting won't help.
- Make annotations in the margin to summarise points, raise questions, challenge what you've read, jot down examples and so on. You can do this in printed books or etexts. This takes more thought than highlighting, so you'll probably remember the content better. (Use sticky notes if you don't want to mark the text.)
- Read critically by asking questions of the text. Who wrote it? When? Who is the intended audience? Does it link with other material you've studied in the module? Why do you think it was written? Is it an excerpt from a longer piece of text?
- Test yourself by reading for half an hour, putting the text away and jotting down the key points from memory. Go back to the text to fill in gaps.
- Look for 'signposts' that help you understand the text - phrases like 'most importantly', 'in contrast', 'on the other hand'.

- Explain what you've read to someone else.
- Record yourself reading the module material or your notes, and listen to the recording while you're travelling or doing household chores.

## **Skimming:**

Skimming is the process of quickly viewing a section of text to get a general impression of the author's main argument, themes or ideas. There are three types of skimming: preview, overview, and review.

### **Types of Skimming:**

#### **1. Preview skimming**

Most often followed by a second skimming or a thorough reading, preview skimming is used:

In selecting a book.

In surveying a chapter before reading or studying.

In finding appropriate material for use in research.

In sorting through correspondence before answering it.

You preview in an effort to learn about the ideas presented and the structure of their development.

Method: Read the first paragraph, and the headings and first sentences of later paragraphs and sections.

#### **2. Overview skimming**

You use overview skimming to sample the reading material more thoroughly than you do in a preview, as you may not intend to read the material at a later time.

Method: As you do in preview skimming, you would read the first paragraph, the headings and first sentences of paragraphs and sections, but in addition, as you alternately read and skim, you alert yourself to the structure and content of the material through an awareness of paragraph patterns, thought transitions, and clue words.

This awareness will help you to understand the content, to recall more information, and to see relationships more clearly and quickly.

### 3. Review skimming

Your purpose with review skimming is to re-familiarise yourself with material you have previously read thoroughly or skimmed.

Method: Prepare yourself by trying to remember as many of the ideas and details clearly. It may be that you already have a good grasp of the main ideas and will be stopping primarily to note significant details - names, places, terms, etc. You may be trying to establish in your mind a sequence of events or a procedure, or you may be attempting to fill in a skeleton outline to clarify the structure of the whole.

Familiarity with the material will enable you to skim over a great deal of it, stopping only when necessary.

### **General & Careful Reading:**

Careful reading refers to different operations where the reader attempts to extract complete meanings within or beyond sentences right up to the level of the entire text so as to construct the text macrostructure

#### *How to read carefully:*

Pay attention when you read and read as if it really matters. Most people read in the same way that they watch television, i.e. in an inattentive, passive way. Reading takes effort and you must make the effort.

There are some simple methods that you can use to pay better attention and get more out of your textbook reading time. Different authors call it different things, but many researchers say that you will improve your comprehension if you somehow "preview" the passage before you actually sit down and read every word.

#### *To do a preview you:*

Take 30 to 60 seconds.

Look over the title of the chapter.

Look at all the headings, subheadings and marked, italic or dark print.

Look at any pictures or illustrations, charts or graphs.

Quickly skim over the passage, reading the first and last paragraph and glancing at the first sentence of every other paragraph.

Close the book and ask yourself:

What is the main idea?

What kind of writing is it?

What is the author's purpose?

**1.** You might not think that you could possibly answer these questions with so little exposure to the material, but if you do the preview correctly, you should have some very good general ideas. If you have a general idea of what the passage is about before you really read it, you will be able to understand and remember the passage better.

When you finally get to the point where you are actually slowly reading the passage, read in a "questioning" manner as if you were searching for something. It sometimes helps if you take the heading or title of a chapter and turn it into a question.

For example, if the heading of a section in the text is "The Causes of the Civil War", take that title and switch it into a question like: "What are the causes of the Civil War?" Now you have a goal; something to look for; something to find out. When you are goal-oriented, you are more likely to reach the goal. At least you'll remember one thing about the text which you have just read.

**2.** Stop talking to yourself when you read. People talk to themselves in 2 ways, by:

Vocalizing, which is the actual moving of your lips as you read, and

Subvocalizing, which is talking to yourself in your head as you silently read.

Both of these will slow you down to the point in which you find that you can't read any faster than you can speak. Speech is a relatively slow activity; for most, the average speed is about 250 WPM (words per minute).

Reading should be an activity which involves only the eyes and the brain. Vocalization ties reading to actual speaking. Try to think of reading as if you were looking at a landscape, a panorama of ideas, rather than looking at the rocks at your feet.

**3.** Read in thought groups. Studies have shown that when we read, our eyes must make small stops along the line. Poor readers make many, many more fixations (eyestops) than good readers. Not only does this slow you down, but it inhibits comprehension because meaning is easier to pull from groups of words rather than from individual words or even single letters. Try to read in phrases of three or four words, especially in complete clauses and prepositional phrases. Your mind may internalize them as if the whole phrase is like one big meaning-rich word.

**4.** Don't keep re-reading the same phrases. Poor readers habitually read and re-read the same phrase over and over again. This habit of making "regressions" doubles or triples reading time and often does not result in better comprehension. A single careful, attentive reading may not be enough for full comprehension, but is often more effective than constant regressions in the middle of a reading. It is best to work on paying closer attention the first time through. Do a preview first before the careful reading and try the tips I mentioned above. You'll remember better without the rereading.

**5.** Vary your reading rate to suit the difficulty and type of writing of the text. Poor readers always read at the same slow rate. An efficient reader speeds up for easier material and slows down for the hard. Some things were not meant to be read quickly at all. Legal material and very difficult text should be read slowly. Easier material and magazines and newspapers can be read quickly. Poetry and plays were meant to be performed, and if not acted out, then at least, spoken out loud orally. This obviously will conflict with good speed reading method which forbids vocalization. Religious writings and scripture were originally written to be recited and listened to by an audience which was likely to be intelligent, but illiterate. The "fun" of poetry, plays, or prayer is not really experienced if you "speed read" the text.