

# Reading for Speed, Comprehension, & Retention

Let's face it – time is a big factor for most students. Studying both efficiently and effectively will play a key role in your success. How you approach reading different types of text as part of studying and researching can drastically increase your effectiveness and decrease the time it takes to do it. Yet, reading for retention and comprehension is a skill that people often neglect to practice beyond secondary school; reading for speed is a skill few ever practice. So, how can a student learn to read more efficiently and effectively?



## Speedreading

Speedreading is a learned skill that requires practice. Yet, even a few practice sessions can make a huge difference. Realistically, some students can double their reading rate – while understanding and remembering what they read – within just a few hours of practice. Thus, this small investment of time will yield significant results. Visit [www.regent.edu/csd/speedreading](http://www.regent.edu/csd/speedreading) for step-by-step instructions, audio, and video training.

## Comprehension

While understanding material certainly requires students to employ effort and experience, there are ways to be effective and efficient in doing so. Some of the best ways (use a combination) to facilitate comprehension include:

- “Layer” the information in multiple ways and at various times. A little at a time is much better than cramming.
- Read textbooks (and some popular press books) using the SQ\*R method. The asterisk can represent a three, four, or five-step process. Check out the [SQ5R](#).
- [Take effective notes](#) and review them periodically to help reinforce concepts.
- Learn to capitalize your [preferred learning styles](#); study according to those styles.
- [Plan your projects](#) well and make your coursework a [missional priority](#) as a way of honoring God.
- Consider your [energy patterns](#) and uses and create [good habits](#) to reinforce them.

## Retention

For many students, this is the most challenging. Young children have minds like sponges, because they soak up everything. Yet, as people get older, their minds act more like damp or wet sponges. So how do you soak it all up? Well, here's a little secret – you don't have to soak up *all* of it, but you do need to know what is important, both in the short-term for practical reasons (e.g., tests, discussion, and layering) and in the long-term for your career and service to the Lord's kingdom. Knowing why you forget and ways to improve memory can help tremendously.

Reasons why we forget	Ways to improve our memory
<b>Pessimism</b> – self-negativity destroys memory	Confidence – give yourself a fighting chance and be <a href="#">optimistic</a> ; believe the Lord will give you the ability to do it.
<b>Lack of Understanding</b> – we did not know how to begin	Gain a clear picture of what is expected so you can prepare your mind to learn toward a specific goal.
<b>Psychology</b> – hard to remember positive things and harder to remember uninteresting concepts	Association memory – the most solid memories are those connected to other memories, feelings, situations, etc.
<b>Lack of use</b> – memory requires revisiting	Like a muscle, you must use your memory intentionally for it to work when under duress. Practice with <a href="#">mnemonics</a> and other learning techniques daily.
<b>Interference</b> – more “stuff” (e.g., stress, distractions, etc.) gets in our way	Declutter your mind by focusing only on top <a href="#">priorities</a> . <a href="#">Organize</a> your work according to your <a href="#">goals</a> .
<b>Lack of intentionality</b> – passive reading, inattention	Read actively and with a purpose ( <a href="#">SQ5R</a> ). Think and reflect about how the information affects your world.