

# SUGGESTION FOR USING A SPEED READING PROGRAMME FOR UEH STUDENTS

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, studying English has become more important than ever before. English is one of the most important tools that help students to integrate into ASEAN community, TPP... . Reading quickly is an essential skill for students, and this skill can be improved through frequent practice.

Experiencing from practicing "speed reading" in each session at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, I realize that my speed of reading has been improved considerably. In this article, I would like to share my experience and suggest using a speed reading programme for the students of UEH. I believe that acquiring this skill will help students to read necessary materials to update their knowledge, and if they can read fast, they can instill a new passion for reading. This skill is extremely important to help students to cope with heavy reading requirements in their life studies.

The programme contains ten 550-word readings for each module, each with ten comprehension questions. The readings, based on business topics, are written within the 1,000 most frequently used words of English for module 1 and 2 and within 2,000 most frequently used words of English for module 3 and 4. The only exceptions are words that are explained in the text. In addition, the grammar should be simple. Speed reading programme can be used in the classroom, for self-study at home or in a self-access centre.

## 2. Speed reading programme

### a. Benefits of speed reading

The main point of using a speed reading programme is to increase the students' reading speed. A speed reading programme is only a small part of an overall reading programme, so it is important not to confuse the purpose of the exercise with increasing vocabulary, improving reading comprehension or anything else. Students can practice other reading skills and strategies at other times. Through speed reading programme students can grasp the method of reading quickly such as guessing from context, ignoring new words, avoiding word-by-word reading but meaning chunks. When they can read fast, they are likely to continue to read extensively on their own. Gaining confidence is also an important aspect of the programme, and confidence leads to enjoyment, motivation and more success.

### b. Principles of a speed reading programme

- Speed is the focus. The goal of speed reading is not to achieve perfect accuracy in answering the questions. The goal is the fastest time with about 70 percent accuracy. If students are getting all the questions right, they are reading too slowly.
- A speed reading programme should be intensive. The whole speed reading activity should take less than 10 minutes, including reading, answering the questions, checking the answers, recording progress on the graph and getting teacher feedback. Speed reading should be done every session.
- Speed reading should be an isolated activity. When the programme is being done in class, scripts should be handed out. As soon as the students have finished the activity, they should be collected back. Because students sometimes want to keep the scripts to write down the words they don't know, or try to understand the passages completely, this may reduce the value of the activity by paying attention too much on skills other than speed.
- It is important to record the time and score of the exercise in order to see students' progress. It is an effective way to motivate students and to monitor progress, give feedback and encourage, and set individual and class goals.

- Reading quickly encourages guessing from context and ignoring unknown words, so the method of reading is important. By reading quickly, students are training themselves to process meaning chunks but not word-by-word reading. While students read, teachers ask them not to use their finger or a pen or a ruler to trace the words because this will make them read more slowly.
- The readings should be easy. There should be nothing to stop the readers in their tracks. Therefore, there should not be unknown vocabulary and the difficult grammar points. Furthermore, the questions should test general understanding rather than detailed knowledge. Questions about specific details such as dates and figures will slow down reading.

### **c. How to use a speed reading programme at UEH**

For our students, with a vocabulary size of 1,000 English words from their high schools, the speed reading programme is appropriate. A group of teachers from UEH School of Foreign Languages for Economics will prepare four sets of 10 readings for four modules. For each module teachers photocopy a set of 10 readings and put them in plastic sleeves for preservation. Students are requested not to write on the papers because they will be reused for other classes.

At the beginning of the module, teachers should introduce the speed reading programme to the class, telling them that they are going to do a speed reading exercise in each four-period session, which involves reading a short passage and answering 10 comprehension questions. The goal of the speed reading programme will be to increase the speed of reading, therefore the main consideration is not the accuracy in answering the questions. Thus, 70 percent accuracy is acceptable. If a student's score is 8, 9 or 10 on the comprehension questions, teachers encourage them to read faster next time. On the first day there may be some confusion; however, on the following days students know exactly what to do.

### **d. How to conduct the speed reading programme in the classroom**

In order to use the speed reading programme effectively, careful planning and preparation are required. Teachers have to download the stopwatch (appendix 1) from [www online-stopwatch.com/countdown-timer](http://www.online-stopwatch.com/countdown-timer) so that students can calculate the time for reading the passage.

The teacher gives students the answer sheet (appendix 2) and the progress graph (appendix 3) and asks them to keep these sheets until the end of the module. And when everything is ready, the stopwatch is on the screen, the teacher gives out the reading (appendix 4) and asks them not to start until the teacher starts the stopwatch. When they finish reading the passage, they have to look at the watch in order to know the amount of time for reading. Then they turn over the page to answer the comprehension questions from memory. While they are answering the questions, they are required not to turn back to the passage.

When students finish answering the questions, they record their time by drawing an X in their progress graph and they can know the number of words they can read per minute on the right-hand side. Then students mark their own answers and write their comprehension score at the bottom of the graph. I believe that when students get into a routine, their score line will go up, and that means their speed of reading is improved.

### **3. Conclusion**

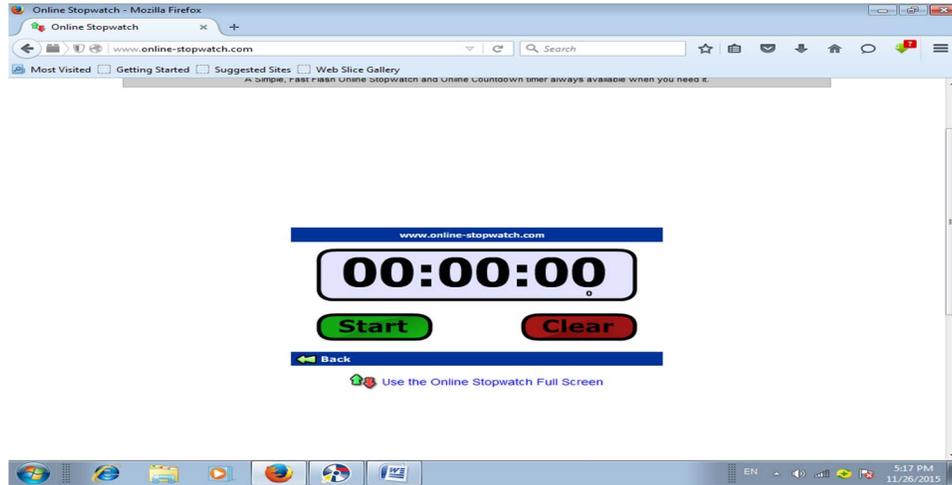
I strongly believe if the speed reading programme is offered to our students in English class throughout four modules, their speed of reading will be improved. It is crucial that students become familiar with the method of reading that encourages guessing from context and ignoring new vocabulary. With this skill they can meet the requirement to read the specialized books in English. The more they read the more knowledge they gain. When students can read faster, they can build their confidence, be motivated and have a passion to read more.

I hope this programme will be introduced soon. In order to make this program come true, I am willing to be a volunteer to join the program and hope some teachers will join and share the preparation for setting up the business English passages for the speed reading programme.

**REFERENCES**

1. Quinn, E., Nation, I.S.p. and Millett, S. (2007) *Asian and Pacific Speed Readings for ESL Learners*.(ELI Occasional Publication 24). Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University of Wellington, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies. [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz)
2. Jeremy H. (2013) *The practice of English language teaching*. (fourth edition)
3. *Regional experience and solutions in English teaching and learning for an integrated Asean community* (2015)

**Appendix 1:**



**Appendix 2: Answer sheet**

Reading # 1 Time: .... 1)..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) ..... 6) ..... 7) ..... 8) ..... 9) ..... 10) .....	Reading # 2 Time: .... 1)..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) ..... 6) ..... 7) ..... 8) ..... 9) ..... 10) .....	Reading # 3 Time: .... 1)..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) ..... 6) ..... 7) ..... 8) ..... 9) ..... 10) .....	Reading # 4 Time: .... 1)..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) ..... 6) ..... 7) ..... 8) ..... 9) ..... 10) .....	Reading # 5 Time: .... 1)..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) ..... 6) ..... 7) ..... 8) ..... 9) ..... 10) .....
Reading # 6 Time: .... 1)..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) ..... 6) ..... 7) ..... 8) ..... 9) ..... 10) .....	Reading # 7 Time: .... 1)..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) ..... 6) ..... 7) ..... 8) ..... 9) ..... 10) .....	Reading # 8 Time: .... 1)..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) ..... 6) ..... 7) ..... 8) ..... 9) ..... 10) .....	Reading # 9 Time: .... 1)..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) ..... 6) ..... 7) ..... 8) ..... 9) ..... 10) .....	Reading # 10 Time: .... 1)..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) ..... 6) ..... 7) ..... 8) ..... 9) ..... 10) .....

### Appendix 3: Progress graph

Put an X in one of the boxes to show your reading time and words-per minute reading rate.

The write your score in the box under the number.

time											wpm
1.00											400
1.10											345
1.20											300
1.30											265
1.40											240
1.50											220
2.00											200
2.10											185
2.20											170
2.30											160
2.40											150
2.50											140
3.00											135
3.10											125
3.20											120
3.30											115
3.40											110
3.50											105
4.00											100
passage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
score											

#### Appendix 4: **The English Language**

The story of the English language is a story of change. Old English is very different from Modern English. Today Old English is a university subject. If we do not study it we cannot understand it because, while some of the words are the same, many of the old words are no longer used. The story of the English language began some time after the year A.D. 400 when many groups of people came to England from North-West Europe. They were called Angles, Saxons and Jutes and their languages helped to make up Old English. In Old English the ends of words were very important because they carried a lot of meaning such as past and present time. In Modern English most of these endings are gone. This is one of the biggest differences between Old and Modern English.

All languages change over time and this is often influenced by outside events. For example, when the church became important, Old English became a written language. Before this, only a few people could read and write. Latin, the old language of Italy, was used in the church and because of this, many Latin words entered the English language, for example the word *school* came from the Latin language. At that time most schools were a part of the church.

In the year 1066 France attacked England and for two hundred years French became the language used by English kings and queens and the rich people of the country. Everybody else continued to use English. However, slowly English became important again and many of the schools began to use English instead of French. Over this time, many French words came into the English language. Often there were two words for one thing, a French word and an English word. In Modern English, *ask* and *demand* have almost the same meaning but *ask* comes from Old English and *demand* comes from French. English has many words like this. The English language between 1066 and about 1500 is called Middle English. Some time after 1500 we have the beginning of Modern English. At that time the school system developed and more people went to school. English ships sailed all over the world and words from the new countries became part of the English language. While Latin was still used in the church, English was becoming more widely used. Writers, like William Shakespeare, used the language in beautiful and new ways.

Around 1750, many books were written about the English language. The writers of these books thought people were speaking English badly so they tried to show people how to use the language correctly. They thought that Latin was the best language because it used very long words and sentences and they wanted English to become more like Latin. At the same time correct spelling was beginning to be important too. Because of these books, the spoken language became different from the written language. When people wrote, they were very careful about the rules, but when they spoke, they just said what they wanted to say. Later another change happened and written English started to become like spoken English again. Sentences were shorter and people used easier words. The English language and all languages are always changing. When a language does not change, it dies.

Write the time and then answer the questions.

#### **The English Language**

1. Old English and Modern English
  - a. are almost the same.
  - b. are a little different from each other.
  - c. are like two different languages.
  - d. use the same endings.
2. In Old English the ends of words
  - a. were not spoken.
  - b. came from the French language.
  - c. were not very important.
  - d. had many meanings.

3. Before the church was important in England, Old English
  - a. was not written.
  - b. was not used very much.
  - c. was like a foreign language.
  - d. was the language of the church.
4. Many Latin words became a part of the English language, because
  - a. Latin was used in the church.
  - b. there were many soldiers from Italy.
  - c. Italy attacked England.
  - d. many English people went to Italy.
5. After 1066, the language used by rich people in England was
  - a. English.
  - b. French.
  - c. Latin.
  - d. German.
6. Many of the French words in English
  - a. are not used in Modern English.
  - b. are only used for speaking.
  - c. are only used for writing.
  - d. have almost the same meaning as some other English words.
7. When the French were in England, the French language
  - a. was spoken by everybody.
  - b. was not very important.
  - c. was not spoken by the poor.
  - d. was not used in the schools.
8. After the year 1500 many new words entered the English language, because
  - a. many foreign people came to England.
  - b. the Latin language was not important any more.
  - c. English sailors went to many parts of the world.
  - d. English was the school language..
9. Because many books were written about correct English,
  - a. people spoke better.
  - b. writing and speaking became very different.
  - c. new words entered English.
  - d. people were afraid to write English.
10. When languages stop changing,
  - a. they are beautiful.
  - b. they are dead.
  - c. they are correct
  - d. they are difficult.