

ENGLISH

University Entrance Exam

کنکور زبان انگلیسی

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Passage 1

Faster effective reading

The comprehension passages on this course are designed to help you increase your reading speed. A higher reading rate, with no loss of comprehension, will help you in other subjects as well as English, and the general principles apply to any language. Naturally, you will not read every book at the same speed. You would expect to read a newspaper, for example, much more rapidly than a physics or economics textbook -but you can raise your *average* reading speed over the whole range of materials you wish to cover so that the percentage gain will be the same whatever kind of reading you are concerned with. 5 10

The reading passages which follow are all of an average level of difficulty for your stage of instruction. They are all approximately 500 words long. They are about topics of general interest which do not require a great deal of specialized knowledge. Thus they fall between the kind of reading you might find in your textbooks and the much less demanding kind you will find in a newspaper or light novel. If you read *this* kind of English, with understanding, at, say, 400 words per minute, you might skim through a newspaper at perhaps 650-700, while with a difficult textbook you might drop to 200 or 250. 15 20

Perhaps you would like to know what reading speeds are common among native English-speaking university students and how those speeds can be improved. Tests in Minnesota, U.S.A., for example, have shown that students without special training can read English of average difficulty, for example Tolstoy's *War and Peace* in translation, at speeds of between 240 and 250 w.p.m. with about 70% comprehension. Minnesota claims that after 12 half-hour lessons, one a week, the reading speed can be increased, with no loss of comprehension, to around 500 w.p.m. It is further claimed that with intensive training over seventeen weeks, speeds of over 1000 w.p.m. can be reached, but this would be quite exceptional. 25 30

If you get to the point where you can read books of average difficulty at between 400 and 500 w.p.m. with 70% or more comprehension, you will be doing quite well, though of course any further improvement of speed-with-comprehension will be a good thing.

In this and the following three passages we shall be looking at some of the obstacles to faster reading and what we can do to overcome them.

Think of the passage as a whole

When you practise reading with passages shorter than book length, like the passages in this course, do not try to take in each word separately, one after the other. It is much more difficult to grasp the broad theme of the passage this way, and you will also get stuck on individual words which may not be absolutely essential to a general understanding of the passage. It is a good idea to skim through the passage very quickly first (say 500 words in a minute or so) to get the general idea of each paragraph. Titles, paragraph headings and emphasized words (underlined or in italics) can be a great help in getting this skeleton outline of the passage. It is surprising how many people do not read titles, introductions or paragraph headings. Can you, *without* looking back, remember the title of this passage and the heading of this paragraph?

Ideas

Select the answer which is most accurate according to the information given in the passage.

- 1 A higher reading rate will help in other subjects as well as English
 - a) provided there is no loss of understanding.
 - b) only if we memorize well.
 - c) but not in any other language.
 - d) though not as a general principle.

- 2 You would expect to read a difficult economics textbook
 - a) as fast as you read a newspaper.
 - b) more slowly than you read a newspaper.
 - c) more quickly than you read these passages.
 - d) only very rarely.

- 3 You can expect to read the passages on this course
 - a) more quickly than you read your textbooks.
 - b) more quickly than you read a newspaper.
 - c) more slowly than you read your textbooks.
 - d) faster than any other kind of material.

- 4 The average untrained native speaker at the University of Minnesota
 - a) reads at 600 w.p.m.
 - b) reads at about 300 w.p.m.
 - c) cannot read difficult works in translation.
 - d) reads at about 245 w.p.m.

- 5 The University of Minnesota claims that in 12 half-hour lessons
 - a) it can triple a student's reading speed.
 - b) it can double a student's reading speed.
 - c) it can increase a student's reading speed four times.
 - d) no real increase in reading speed can be achieved.

- 6 Intensive training over seventeen weeks can
- triple an untrained student's reading speed.
 - increase an untrained student's reading speed four times.
 - double an untrained student's reading speed.
 - triple the students' comprehension scores.
- 7 You will be doing quite well if you can read books of average difficulty
- at about 450 w.p.m. with 70% comprehension.
 - at about 600 w.p.m. with 60% comprehension.
 - at about 300 w.p.m. with 70% comprehension.
 - at about 250 w.p.m. with 50% comprehension.
- 8 Reading words one at a time is bad because
- it hurts your eyes.
 - all words are equally important.
 - it is more difficult to get the general idea of a passage.
 - some words are longer than others.
- 9 It is a good idea to skim through a passage quickly first
- at about 350 w.p.m.
 - to get the general idea of each paragraph.
 - so that you can take in each word separately.
 - to make sure you get to the end at least once.
- 10 Titles and paragraph headings
- are more important than anything else.
 - are surprising to many people.
 - can easily be remembered without looking back.
 - can help us get the outline of a passage.

Vocabulary

Find the following words in the passage and select the meaning you think is *most likely* to correspond among the choices given.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 <i>rate</i> (line 2) | 3 <i>range</i> (line 7) |
| a) speed | a) distance |
| b) tax | b) variety |
| c) score | c) territory |
| d) awareness | d) farm |
| 2 <i>naturally</i> (line 4) | 4 <i>demanding</i> (line 14) |
| a) easily | a) difficult |
| b) unfortunately | b) questioning |
| c) without training | c) insisting |
| d) of course | d) asking |

5 *skim through* (line 17)

- a) read quickly through
- b) make smooth with
- c) concentrate on
- d) strain through

6 *native* (line 20)

- a) unsophisticated
- b) primitive
- c) taught from childhood
- d) uneducated

7 *obstacles* (line 34)

- a) prohibitions
- b) hindrances
- c) objections
- d) disadvantages

8) *take in* (line 36)

- a) understand
- b) adjust
- c) memorize
- d) say

9 *grasp* (line 37)

- a) grip tightly
- b) understand
- c) hold loosely
- d) avoid

10 *italics* (line 42)

- a) brackets
- b) margins
- c) sloping letters
- d) smaller print

Spot the topic

Which of the following choices a), b) or c), most adequately sums up the ideas of the *whole* paragraph?

1 *Para. 1* (lines 1-9)

- a) How to increase your reading speed.
- b) The advantages of a generally higher reading speed.
- c) The advantages to your English of a higher reading speed.

2 *Para. 2* (lines 10-18)

- a) The interest of the reading passages in this course.
- b) Newspapers can be read more quickly than textbooks.
- c) The speed at which you might expect to read different types of English.

3 *Para. 3* (lines 19-28)

- a) How native English speakers read faster than others.
- b) How speed reading courses affected students' reading speeds.
- c) How native English university students increased their reading speed to 1000 w.p.m. on average.

4 *Para. 4* (lines 29-32)

- a) A guide to the reading speed you could aim for.
- b) The point of reading books of average difficulty.
- c) Why further improvement is a good thing.

5 *Para. 6* (lines 35-end)

- a) Advice on how to get the general idea of a piece of reading quickly.
- b) The use of the title.
- c) The disadvantage of too careful initial reading.

Answers:

Passage 1: Faster effective reading

Ideas: 1a, 2b, 3a, 4d, 5b, 6b, 7a, 8c, 9b, 10d

Vocabulary: 1a, 2d, 3b, 4a, 5a, 6c, 7b, 8a, 9b, 10c

Spot the topic: 1b, 2c, 3b, 4a, 5a

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