

Warm up

Introduce the idea of reading speeds. You could start by asking students how long it takes them to read a book for pleasure. Some might talk in terms of days, while others need weeks. Although this is a different kind of reading, it will help introduce the concept.

Using the Factsheet

There are three possible ways to use the Factsheet:

- 1 Give students the **Factsheet** before the lesson, so they can read it at home and come to the lesson prepared to do the **Worksheet**. If you use this approach, start the lesson by checking that all students have read and understood the **Factsheet** and answer any questions.
- 2 Give students the **Factsheet** at the beginning of the lesson and start by working through it with the students.
- 3 Focus on the **Worksheet** in the lesson, then give students the **Factsheet** at the end of the lesson, so they can take it home and keep it as a reference or revision tool.

Theory to practice

Help students by asking them to start at exactly the same time and timing them for 30 seconds. Make sure they cover their texts after this.

Students' own answers

Students will have own answers, perhaps even expressed in their own language.

However, you may wish to mention the following when discussing their answers with them:


- 1 Point out how it is easy to forget to read the heading. Emphasize how this simple step can give you a good idea of what's in the text.
- 2 Explain that, if they have a general idea of what a *baseline* is, students have done what is necessary. They are now equipped to go back and find details *if* this is necessary.
- 3 The reason for this question is to see whether students reached the end of the text. If they didn't, they will only be able to guess the answer. But if they didn't reach the end, they probably read the text too slowly. Gently point this out, without drawing attention to any individual students.
- 4 Ask students if they think they could find enough information in 20 seconds. Maybe some of your students could get all the information they need with just ten seconds more. If they did manage to do it in 30 seconds, point out that the text is just over 150 words, so that gives them a reading speed of over 300 words per minute. Don't forget to point out that they might not have performed so well because of the extra stress caused by timing them. In addition, this piece of text is quite densely packed with information, so a slower speed is logical. Reassure students that they will gain confidence in this skill as they practise it.
- 5 The purpose of this question is to help students realize that they have developed a kind of mind map of the text. If you asked them about the information in the text, they could most likely locate it more easily having read it very quickly.

Using the Worksheet

Ask students to read the information at the top of the page. Explain that there are several strategies to help people speed-read and that they are going to practise the main ones. Check that everyone understands before moving on to the exercises.

Practice

Note: For the exercises on this **Worksheet**, it is helpful to have some form of timer or a watch/clock with a seconds hand.

- 1  You have 20 seconds. Look at the picture, read the heading, and read the first and last sentence of the text. Then cover the text and discuss with a partner what you learnt about it.

- This will work best if you just tell students they have 20 seconds to look at the picture, read the heading, and read the first and last sentence. Tell them to cover the text after that.
- Allow a minute or two for students to discuss in pairs what they found out. Instruct them to keep the text covered while they do this. Reassure them that there are no expectations of them – merely to see how much information they have gleaned.

- Finally, point out that they have just practised the strategy of predicting to help contextualize the text. Remind them to make good use of visual clues when they speed-read.

2 Read the whole text in Exercise 1, but use your finger to follow the words. Do not go back and reread anything, and try to avoid moving your mouth. How right were you in your assessment in Exercise 1?

- Explain that students are going to practise two more strategies: metaguiding to move more quickly through a text, and avoiding subvocalization (saying the words in our head, which makes us read more slowly). Point out that they should not go back to reread anything. Emphasize that they do not need to read or understand every word.
- Allow up to a minute for students to do the task. Ask them to compare their knowledge of the text now with what they predicted in Exercise 1.
- Finally, ask them to tell you how useful/difficult/practical they found the two techniques. Some students might benefit from trying them out individually, one technique at a time. Encourage them to share their experiences of trying them.

3 Read part of a transcript from C21 English for the 21st Century, Level 4, and time how long it takes you to find the following:

- Explain the task. Make sure students understand that they only need to circle or underline the information that is asked for. Tell them you will act as a 'speaking clock', and you will announce the time every 15 seconds.
- Tell students to start, and announce the time as above. Keep going until everyone finishes. Then ask them to tell you how long they needed.
- Finally, point out that they have just practised the strategies of skimming and scanning for specific information.

Possible answers

The three basic ideas behind mindfulness:
Living in the present moment/not regretting the past or worrying about the future/being aware of now. Noticing the thoughts going through your mind/not judging thoughts as bad or wrong. Paying attention to everything you are experiencing/tasting food/feeling your body's movements, etc.
The main benefits of mindfulness:
It improves concentration. It reduces stress and depression. It boosts the immune system/helps us fight diseases and infections.

4 Read the text below as quickly as you can. Use a piece of card or the edge of a book to cover each line as you read it. Then, with the text fully covered, see how well you can complete the table of information.

- Point out that this task practises a different kind of metaguiding – one where you make it impossible to go back and reread things. Explain that this forces you forward so that you don't get stuck on small details which are unimportant.
- Make sure everyone has something suitable to use as a guide (e.g. an exercise book or a piece of plain paper). Point out that one minute spent on this task is equivalent to about 300 words per minute. In reality they can probably read faster than this, but the task asks them to find a lot of information in a short text, which inevitably slows them down. Allow up to a minute for students to work alone and try to fill in the table.
- Check answers and ask how well the technique works for them.

Answers

- a** 1821–1831
- b** the Ottoman Empire
- c** 1832
- d** Britain, Russia and France
- e** publicize, finance or fight
- f** Bavaria
- g** 1947

Reflect

5 Based on the exercises you have done in this Worksheet, mark the following 1–6 according to how well they suit your speed-reading style (1 = the most suitable; 6 = unsuitable).

- Encourage students to think about the strategies they have covered on this **Worksheet**. Explain that this task is going to indicate what their best strategies are and what they could perhaps try to practise more. Make sure they understand that we all use slightly different strategies and that this is intended to help them focus on their own strengths.
- Allow a minute or two for students to assess the techniques by writing their numbers. When they finish, they can compare with a partner.
- Ask them to share their scores with the rest of the class. Clear up any misunderstandings.
- Remind students that they should use a combination of these strategies in their studies. If they gave a strategy a low mark, ask them if that is because they need more practice. Encourage them to time themselves when they read in future, and to remember that they rarely need to get *all* the information from a text.
- Finally, make sure students understand that the strategies are designed to help them. They should use what suits them best, but encourage them to practise different ones.