

The Speed-Reading Championship Handbook for Competitors and Arbiters

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by

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Chapter 1: Speed-Reading

Background

Reading is our window into the world. It is a more vital skill today than ever with the explosion of printed and online text sources. Speed-Reading allows you to get to grips with the information in your life to make better-informed decisions.

The 21st century has revealed thousands and thousands of discoveries and new information to which we have unlimited access. Yet, it is also the era where the ability to concentrate has been reduced to 30 seconds of a TikTok story.

To improve our reading skills, we must measure speed and comprehension. This is exactly what the marking scheme does. We use questions the author sets, which require one or two sentences to answer (not multiple choice). These refer to specific events or facts revealed in the book and not the reader's subjective opinions.

Two arbiters mark each comprehension script as a verification check, making it robust and accurate. Our scheme can be replicated in any country to run competitions and find the winners!

The Tony Buzan World Speed-Reading Championship was the dream of Tony Buzan and is the culmination of 40 years of research into the brain and its potential. Tony Buzan said,

“Reading is to the mind as aerobic training is to the body.”

It was Tony's unassailable belief that the human brain knows no limits.

The Speed-Reading Championships are living proof that he was right.

Championship Structure

Competitors read an **unpublished** fictional text as quickly as possible, with a maximum of two hours.

Translations into different languages are available on request for the World Speed-Reading Championship.

After reading, competitors are given a comprehension test consisting of no less than 20 questions, set by the author, with a further 30 minutes to answer.

Notes may be made during the reading phase but not used when answering the questions. The book cannot be used after reading time has been declared.

‘Effective Speed’ is calculated as ‘Raw Speed’ multiplied by comprehension. The competitor with the fastest effective speed wins!

Speed-Reading Text

The chosen text must be an **unpublished**, fictional novel or film script (not anything factual), as it is important for the Competitors to have no prior knowledge.

The author or publisher should state the number of words in the book – ideally around 50,000 words. Books with fewer words can be used with approval from the Global Chief Arbiter appointed to the competition. This is usually the Global Chief Arbiter for Speed-Reading.

If possible, the author should be invited to attend the tournament to assist with marking queries, presenting awards, and signing books for competitors.

Comprehension Questions

The comprehension test must consist of at least 20 questions, ideally set by the author. The passages these refer to should be evenly spaced throughout the book. They must be detailed, require 1-2 sentences to answer, and **strictly not multiple choice**.

Questions should be specific to events or facts revealed in the book and not the reader's subjective opinions.

Model answers and the page number where the answer is located should be listed for consultation if necessary when marking.

The Competition Room

Ideally, the room should be spacious with lots of natural light. If not, the artificial light should cast an even light over all the desks. The room should be completely silent so competitors can concentrate on reading.



Room Layout

There should be a large, flat, stable table for each competitor. The table should be big enough so the reader can rest their arms to hold the text comfortably and have space to make notes on A3 paper.

All tables should be positioned facing forwards.

A clock should be clearly visible, or a timer projected or displayed on a video screen.

Supplies

Plentiful A4 and A3 paper supplies should be made available to the competitors for note-taking.

It is the responsibility of the Competitors to bring their own writing equipment. Printed comprehension question papers with space to write several sentence answers under each question. One copy per competitor plus a stock of spares.

Bottled water is allowed but not open glasses in case of accidental spillage.

Awards

A dedicated area for presenting the awards to the winners should be established. Facility for the Press and other photographs and videos should be made available. All Competitors, Arbiters and everyone who helped make the event a success should be celebrated.

Advice for Competitors

When finishing, the usual procedure is to close the book, push it away to the edge of the desk and raise a hand.

Competitors are permitted to make notes if they wish. The questions are concerned with specifics from the book, but the Speed-Reading Championship does not intend to test memory. Making notes during the comprehension test acts as a useful aid to their memory. Of course, the more time spent making notes, the slower the reading speed will be.

It is important to be aware that passages to which questions relate will be approximately evenly spaced throughout the book, so notes should reflect this.

Timing

Competitors have a maximum of two hours of reading time. They are given the comprehension questions immediately after finishing their reading and have the remainder of the two hours or 30 minutes, whichever is greater, to answer them.

During the reading phase, the following timing announcements should be made:

- "You have 1 hour remaining"
- "You have 15 minutes remaining"
- "You have 5 minutes remaining"
- "You have 1 minute remaining"

The Arbiter's Role in the Competition Room

Each arbiter is responsible for 3-4 competitors with a mobile phone app or stopwatch. If using a phone, this must be set to silent mode.

When a competitor has finished reading, their time is recorded, the book is taken away, and they are given the comprehension question paper.

After two hours, competitors must stop reading. If they still need to complete the book, their final page number is recorded, the book is taken away, and they are given the comprehension question paper.

The Arbiters' Room

A separate quiet room should be set aside for the Arbiters to mark the comprehension papers.

A plentiful supply of 'model answer' marking schemes and copies of the book to refer to should be made available for the Arbiters.

A computer to collate and record all marks should also be provided for the Arbiters Room, with the final score sheet forwarded to the Chief Arbiter.

Marking Criteria

Competitors' papers are marked against a set of model answers with a maximum of five points per question. Arbiters need to make a judgment of how many points to award. (Only work in whole numbers - no half points are permitted).

For non-native speakers, papers are assigned to an arbiter who speaks the relevant language.

Each question has a page number indicating the passage to which the question refers. The book can be consulted if there is any doubt about the correct answer. If doubt remains, the query can be referred to the author or the Global Chief Arbiter assigned to the competition. Two arbiters must mark each paper.

If a competitor has not completed the book, only the questions are marked to the point they stopped. It is important to remove the tendency to guess the answer.

Scores are converted to percentages, and papers are passed on for data entry.

Calculating Scores

Several calculations are performed when calculating the final score. The following numbers are required.

- **STEP 1. NUMBER OF WORDS READ** – This represents the number of words read in a specific time, represented as words per minute (WPM).
- **STEP 2. TOTAL TIME SPENT READING** – The amount of time, hours, minutes, and seconds spent reading during the allotted time.
- **STEP 3. COMPREHENSION TEST SCORE** – Represented initially as a percentage but divided by 10 to make the final score (effective score) easy to read.
- **STEP 4. EFFECTIVE SCORE** – This is a competition number and **NOT WPM**. This number is what arbiters will use to determine ranking. The higher the number, the better.

STEP 1: HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR WORDS PER MINUTE (WPM)

Let us use an example.

Number of words read (W): 55,231.

Scenario 1: If the competitor finishes the book, the number of words will equal the total number of words in the book.

Scenario 2: If the competitor does not finish the book, the Arbiter must immediately establish and note the page number. This will help calculate the number of words read.

Time spent reading (M): 58 minutes 21 seconds

The first step is calculating the Words Per Minute or WPM using the following formula.

$$\text{Formula: WPM} = \frac{\text{Number of Words (W)}}{\text{Time spent reading (M)}}$$

IMPORTANT:

You must convert the time spent reading (hours, minutes, and seconds) to calculate WPM as a decimal.

To achieve this, you can use the formula below.

Seconds x 0.0166 An Excel spreadsheet is available from the Global Chief Arbiter for Speed-Reading, Professor Marek Kasperski (marek@tonybuzan.com)

If there were 33 seconds, the decimal equivalent would be 33 x 0.0166 or 0.55 seconds.

ALTERNATIVE

The table below shows the decimal value of seconds from 1 to 10.

Seconds	Decimals	Seconds	Decimals	Seconds	Decimals	Seconds	Decimals
1	.016	16	.266	31	.516	46	.766
2	.033	17	.283	32	.533	47	.783
3	.050	18	.300	33	.550	48	.800
4	.066	19	.316	34	.566	49	.816
5	.083	20	.333	35	.583	50	.833
6	.100	21	.350	36	.600	51	.850
7	.116	22	.366	37	.616	52	.866
8	.133	23	.383	38	.633	53	.883
9	.150	24	.400	39	.650	54	.900
10	.166	25	.416	40	.666	55	.916
11	.183	26	.433	41	.683	56	.933
12	.200	27	.450	42	.700	57	.950
13	.216	28	.466	43	.716	58	.966
14	.233	29	.483	44	.733	59	.983
15	.250	30	.500	45	.750	60	1.00

To apply this formula to our example, 58 minutes 21 seconds, our decimal time would be 58.35 minutes.

We can now calculate our words per minute, WPM.

Number of words read (W): 55,231

Time spent reading (M): 58.35 seconds

3 minutes and 21 seconds will be 3.35.

Now calculate your words per minute.

$$\text{WPM} = \frac{55231}{58.35} = \mathbf{947 \text{ WPM}} \text{ (words per minute)}$$

Note: the WPM score is rounded to a whole number, do not use a decimal point

CALCULATE YOUR COMPREHENSION SCORE

Let us extend our current example.

The comprehension test will comprise 20 (N) questions. Each question will be roughly divided into equal sections from the book.

The questions will require a written answer.

To calculate your comprehension score, add the number of correct answers.

Let us assume we correctly answered 14 questions. We divide your score of 14 by 20 and multiply by 100 to calculate your percentage comprehension.

$$\text{COMPREHENSION IS } \frac{C}{N} \times 10 = \mathbf{7 \text{ Comprehension score}}$$

A competitor must score 40% or more to achieve effective speed. This low score benchmark can be changed at the discretion of the Global Chief Arbiter for Speed-Reading.

If the competitor did not finish the book in the two hours allocated, we need to determine how many words they read.

Fraction read = Page number reached ÷ Number of pages in the book
Number of words read ≈ Fraction read x Number of words in the book

EXAMPLE

Then calculate as before.

CALCULATE YOUR EFFECTIVE SCORE

The purpose of the effective score is not to establish a reading speed based on comprehension but to create a score capable of separating competitors with similar speed and comprehension scores.

In our example, we have calculated the WPM: 946.5WPM
The comprehension score is 70%, or 7.

CALCULATING THE EFFECTIVE SCORE.

EFFECTIVE SCORE = WPM x C = **6,625 Effective Score** (to the nearest whole number)

REMEMBER:

The higher the effective score, the better. The highest number will win.

EXAMPLE

Chapter 2: G.O.M.S.A.

The independent **Guild of Mind Sport Arbiters**

All competitive sports rely on sets of rules to ensure fairness. The same principle applies to mind sports.

The independent Guild of Mind Sports Arbiters (G.O.M.S.A.) was founded by Chris Day, General Secretary of the three Championships, the World Mind Mapping Sports Council, the World Speed-Reading Sports Council, and the World Memory Sports Council.

G.O.M.S.A. was founded to provide an independent, trusted network of qualified arbiters for Mind Sports.

G.O.M.S.A. Founder, Chris Day

G.O.M.S.A. President, Professor Marek Kasperski

GOMSA Logo



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Professor Marek Kasperski created the GOMSA logo in March 2023. It replaces the old logo that has been in use for many years.

The central feature shows a seahorse. The seahorse was chosen as the word represents an acronym commonly used to summarise memory techniques. **S**enses, **E**xaggerate, **A**ction, **H**umour, **O**rders, **R**epetition, **S**ymbols, and, best of all, **E**njoy.

The globe in the background represents the global nature of the guild, promoting mind sports worldwide. The top of the head features warm colours, red, orange, and yellow. This represents the sparks of imagination, creativity, and associations.

The seahorse is very colourful. This is very deliberate. Tony Buzan, the inventor of the Mind Map, was an advocate for colour. He believed that colour forms a strong memory trace and is critical for recall.

If you look closely at the background map, you will see a small red dot placed to mark London, England. This pays homage to the birthplace of GOMSA.

Arbiters

The Arbiters at the Championship are all trained by the President of G.O.M.S.A., Professor Marek Kasperski.

This training will ensure uniformity and the highest level of professionalism.

Arbiters are anyone from the Guild of Mind Sports Arbiters (G.O.M.S.A.) at Levels 2, 3 and 4

If you want to become an Arbiter, please contact Professor Marek Kasperski.

GOMSA also is responsible for refining Mind Mapping and Speed-Reading criteria. As the competitions become more fiercely competitive, decisions need to be made regarding what standard is acceptable and what is not permitted to score points.

This isn't easy and not always easily agreeable to all competitors. Therefore, it is necessary to have an independent organisation, such as GOMSA, that reviews and makes decisions and publishes those decisions worldwide via its website.

Mind Mapping and Speed-Reading criteria are frequently reviewed
GOMSA are also responsible for training Arbiters and issuing their certificates of competence upon completion of training. These certificates are valid for three years and can be renewed for three years once a refresher course is completed.

Chapter 3: The Arbiter's PLedge

By registering as an Official Accredited Arbiter, each trained Arbiter agrees to act following the Arbiter's Pledge:

"I pledge to act at all times as an Ambassador for the Mind Sports of Mind Mapping, Memory, and Speed-Reading. I pledge that all my decisions will be unbiased, fair, and balanced and that I will treat all competitors without discrimination. I commit to acting honourably and to promoting the benefits of becoming a Mental Athlete.

I pledge to uphold the principles of fair play and transparency in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Sport of Mind Sports and the World Sports Councils for Mind Mapping, Memory and Speed-Reading and in the spirit of the Magna Memoria. Dendritae Jubilant! ((May your brain cells rejoice!))"

The Competitors' Pledge

By registering as an Accredited Competitor, each Competitor agrees to act in accordance with the Competitors' Pledge:

"I agree to act at all times as an Ambassador for the Mind Sports of Mind Mapping, Memory, and Speed-Reading and actively promote the benefits of becoming a Mental Athlete. I pledge to conduct myself in a civilised and dignified fashion at all times, whether representing my nation or myself.

I pledge to uphold the principles of fair play and transparency in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Sports of Mind Mapping, Memory and Speed-Reading and in the spirit of the Magna Memoria. Dendritae Jubilant! (May your brain cells rejoice!)"

Chapter 4: The Magna Memoria



Left: Raymond Keene OBE with Tony Buzan

The Magna Memoria was originally designed and written out by hand by Ray Keene OBE on paper napkins, jointly with Tony Buzan, on a flight they were both on from Seoul, South Korea, to London, United Kingdom, in 1992.

The Magna Memoria means ‘The Great Memory Charter’.

Ray and Tony had designed The Magna Memoria to state the principles for the Sport of Memory. And we now use The Magna Memoria as a basis for all Mind Sports in three disciplines of Mind Mapping, Memory and Speed-Reading.

The Magna Memoria: The Great Memory Charter

Reasons to hold World Mind Sports Championships.

1. Innovation
 - a. To create a new Mind sport.
 - b. To open up fresh and significant opportunities for mental athletes.
 - c. To introduce a new field for mental combat based on the fundamental cognitive function of the Human Brain – Memory.
 - d. To demonstrate that Memory is the twin of Creativity, that Memory is a fundamentally creative act, and that investing energy in Memory produces greatly enhanced creativity.

- e. To provide media, employment and financial opportunities for Memory athletes.
 - f. To provide a mental playground in which imagination and association provide the basis of fun for all learning and Memory.
2. Scientific
- a. To define the art and the science of Memory anew.
 - b. To reformulate and refute psychological estimates of the limits of human potential in Memory, Learning and Thinking.
 - c. To push back the boundaries while exploring the infinite universes of, Memory.
 - d. To stretch the limits of the human brain to as close to infinite capacity and efficiency as possible.
 - e. To establish eye-catching and astounding new benchmarks and records for memory.
 - f. To provide national and international norms for measuring and grading Memory performance.
 - g. To stretch the potential and limits of the human brain using verifiable benchmarks and establishing ongoing records.
 - h. To provide certification of levels of achievement in the art and science of Memory.
 - i. To establish a rating system that allows competitors in a national and international competition to achieve global ranking.
 - j. To establish International Master and Grand Master norms as in chess.
 - k. To demonstrate that the limits placed on human performance, particularly in Memory, are inappropriate and result from a misunderstanding of the true nature of memory and its functions.
 - l. To establish new statistical norms to measure Memory's expanding parameters.
3. Educational
- a. To create a Mind Sport with educational impact.
 - b. To reintroduce Memory as a fundamental in early childhood education.
 - c. To inspire the youth of the world to take on new mental challenges.
 - d. Similarly, to inspire their elders to increase their own brainpower.
 - e. To reinvigorate faith and enjoyment in Memory and the development of mental skills for learning purposes.
 - f. To inspire all students with the knowledge that by developing mental skills, they can reduce study time by as much as 80% while simultaneously improving their grades and having more fun.
 - g. To confirm that the mnemonic systems of previous tribes, nations and civilisations and the oral tradition of passing down tribal history as a mnemonic story were correct and need to be revisited.
 - h. To provide educational beacons to help and inspire teachers to realise and nurture the previously unexplored parameters of human performance in Memory, Creativity and Learning.

4. Posterity and the Future
 - a. To give hope.
 - b. To revive the traditions of oral memory.
 - c. To create new Brain Stars in the field of Mind Sports and Memory.
 - d. To provide these Brain Stars as role models for younger children, incorporating the spirit of mens sana in corpore sano (a healthy mind in a healthy body).
 - e. To achieve the Royal Patronage of Memory Sports, as chess did with Tsar Nicholas II in 1914.
5. Social and Philanthropic
 - a. To create a global community and network of like-minded individuals free from the boundaries of age, gender, race, religion, and politics, a community fascinated by the exploration of the power and potential of Memory and the Human Mind.
 - b. To provide a deeper understanding of the art and science of Memory and to spread this information globally for the benefit of all who wish to understand and improve their memory skills and performance.
 - c. To defend the human brain against relying on excessive tools and props.
 - d. By creating enhanced self-worth enables the individual to contribute more successfully to society.
 - e. To convince governments worldwide that Memory is a worthy subject to be approved and taught in academic institutions.
 - f. To spread global peace, harmony and understanding by organising international championships.
 - g. To support and empower all those who seek to improve their memory.
 - h. To give the individual a competitive edge and to enhance the sense of self-worth and confidence.
 - i. To create a competition which is truly global and human, which open to all people, regardless of race, language, creed, gender or physical ability, and which promotes the positive human values of understanding, mutual respect, open exchange, and cooperation.
 - j. To wield Memory as a weapon against ageism.
 - k. To show that properly used Memory can stave off senility, senescence and Alzheimer's Disease.
 - l. To release people and the planet from the tyranny of linear, industrial-military thought.
 - m. To reverse the global misconception that Memory gets worse with age; to demonstrate, by example, that it should get better.

Chapter 5: Getting in Touch

As a team, we have huge ambitions for the Mind Mapping and Speed-Reading Championships worldwide.

We are extending our global reach and working with countries to set up and run their own National Mind Sports Councils. These Councils are our colleagues in growing the accurate representation of Mind Mapping, starting in schools and communities by running local competitions, National Championships, and training so that they raise their own profile within their territories and in the media.

If you think joining the Tony Buzan Team might be your next step in Mind Mapping, Speed-Reading or Memory, then we would love to hear from you at info@tonybuzan.com.

Beyond our headline events, how can you best get involved? By learning to create brilliant Mind Maps that rank highly in the accredited Buzan Marking Scheme or improve your Speed-Reading skills with us at www.tonybuzan.com.

We welcome everyone to our championships, including those who wish to train as competitors or as arbiters, officially accredited by G.O.M.S.A., and everyone who wishes to establish a National Championship or host a World Championship.

We welcome you into the worldwide family of Mind Sports enthusiasts, competitors and champions.

See you all soon,
Ray Keene OBE
Co-Founder and Global President
World Mind Mapping Championships
World Speed-Reading Championships
World Mind Mapping and Speed-Reading Sports Councils

if you are interested in learning how to maximise your brain's ability with creativity, memory power, Speed-Reading;
or training in Mind Mapping or Speed-Reading;
or becoming an accredited Competitor or Arbiter;
or wanting to set up National Championship.

Email us at: info@tonybuzan.com

www.mindmappingchampionship.com
www.worldmindsportscouncil.com
www.speed-readingchampionships.com
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