

KH - Keyword Hunt

How to survive heaps of information throughout the day.

KH, or Keyword Hunt, is novel technique to increase reading speed. Unlike traditional speed reading the new reading technique KH does not burden the brain with an overload of information and therefore comprehension and memory are improved. The system works by training your eyes and your brain to scan for sufficient keywords to grasp all information contained in the text.

The system

The system works by training on as many different texts as you can find. What you do is highlight the keywords that summarize the essence of the text and underline the complementary keywords that give more background information. This trains your brain where to look for keywords in different texts.

The second step is to read the text that you have highlighted and underlined fully - i.e. reading even the things that you did not highlight or underline. Then read the text again while only reading the keywords that you underlined and highlighted. Do this again but then only read the keywords that you highlighted. This teaches you the sentence structure around the keywords so that you can relate the keywords to written sentences.

Note that these exercises work best with texts that are not too short but also not too long. A good text to practice on would be one chapter out of any book. Remember that many different texts exist and that you therefore need to practice on as many as you can.

The first steps

Take a book that you can scribble in, but that is still modern English, and start marking all the keywords with a yellow marker. An example of a highlighted piece of text is shown below from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll:

"Down the Rabbit-Hole

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice 'without pictures or conversation?'

The first steps

So she was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her."

As an exercise read the text you just highlighted normally a few times and after that read only the keywords. Repeat this a couple of times until you get a feeling of the English sentence structure and how words work together. With practice you should grasp the meaning of the whole text with less and less keywords. Even when you KH without a marker you can still train your speed with exercises like these.

The training

To improve your KH speed you need to work on your reading efficiency and on your keyword marking. Furthermore you should get your hands on as many types of texts as you can, since language use differs quite a lot with text type.

Improving reading efficiency is done with exercises that train the eyes and the brain. Reading efficiency can be worked on by trying to read more words at a time and by decreasing the time to register one word. To practice reading more words at a time here is a poem by Robert Frost on which you can practice:

"The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

The training

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."

Try to fix your eyes the least possible number of times on every line so as to take in as many words as possible. Repeat the exercise a couple of time and try to improve every time you do it.

To decrease the time that is necessary to register a word, or a sequence of words, the first thing that you should do is not talking out loud the words you are reading if you do. When you stopped doing this there is the possibility of improvement by doing a little exercise. In this exercise you read something faster that you normally would - even when you don't understand what you are reading. When you slow down a bit you will find that you can register words faster because of training your brain.

To improve your keyword marking you can do the exercise in *The first steps* on the preceding page.

The further training

All things can be refined and improved, and KH is one of them. You should already be comfortable with the KH system, but there still some things that will make working with it easier and more satisfying. Things that will help you get the most out of KH are:

- To improve comprehension and memorization you should imagine you are trying to fill little Post-Its while you are reading. Every paragraph will be summarized on a Post-It and thereby you will be critically going over everything you read. Critically analyzing information will make sure that you brain carefully evaluates what it has to store.

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The further training

This process can be practiced first by writing on real Post-Its to get the feeling. With practice this analysis of the text you are reading should become faster, and it should become integrated into the reading with the KH system.

- Knowing when to read more thoroughly, and when to skim over a page, will allow you to gather more information while at the same time you will be reading more efficiently. The skill of reading at different levels of depth comes with time. As you use the KH system for a longer time you should notice when you understand something and when you don't. To speed up this process you could practice KHing a more difficult book.
- Since keywords make more sense when they are in context, the meaning of what you read improves when you read the keywords of two or more sentences as a whole. Doing this also boosts your speed.

The revision training

To keep your speed up to date you should use you KH skills as much as you can, since you loose control over you skill when you neglect it. The revision training is not intensive however since KHing through a newspaper every day keeps up your skill and even saves you time.

The notes

Do not overdo exercises, let your eyes get accustomed to the reading habit slowly.

Give your eyes a break after a certain time of reading. Since KHing is a very intensive process you should only KH for 5 minutes when you just begin. After a while you should be able to handle 10 minutes. Even when you are really experienced you should not drive you eyes to the limit and therefore 15 minuter of KHing is a maximum. Remember that the more rest you give your eyes the better it is for them.

Get an up-to-date eye prescription, since staring at the pages of a book tires your eyes.

Most importantly of all: do not give up! No one can learn to KH in a minute, it takes practice and dedication to reach your goal. Also remember that practice makes perfect, but also that practice makes permanent, so do not overdo the exercises since that has an adverse effect.