

More Time For Other Things

CONGRATULATIONS. You have successfully completed the Margaret Willis Speed Reading Course, all 13 lessons for only \$98. You are now able to read at the amazing rate of 8,000 words per minute, which means that you should have finished reading this already. (And me still writing!) Let's review it. (1) How was your comprehension? Did you understand what I'm about to tell you about the uplifted book? (2) Have you completely rid yourself of old-fashioned poky reading habits? Or do your eyes swerve to avoid strange words, such as marzipan or fireflaught? Do you lose precious seconds over foreign words, such as "ofay" or "Quodlibet"? Are you blinded by insults, miserable wretch? (!eeh eeh — gnitirw drawkcab tuoba woH) And, most important, if the book you're reading raises questions that any intelligent person should stop and consider, do you? If you don't how can a book make any impact on you? I am about to demonstrate that very point. At this moment (in which you are gobbling up 133 words), I am standing behind you holding a dictionary (abridged) directly over your head. I am going to drop it on you. Perhaps you are wondering, "What does this mean? Is it symbolic, or what?" Too late, pal, I have let go! It will hit you in about one-tenth of a second, or 13.3 words. There! How did it feel? Are you still reading? Good. I think you'd be an excellent candidate for our next course: Speed Writing. Using new methods of instruction, we'll teach you to write books that a reader can make good time on—not the twisting garden path of English lit, but smooth straightaway prose that gets the reader home in minutes. You'll be able to write these books at the rate of 120 words per minute. Seem slow? Well, most authors never get much above 50. After that, you'll be ready to learn speed listening. It's a totally new concept in listening that enables you to get through whole days of tedious conversations, long drawn-out meetings, in about an hour. You can finish an entire lifetime in only three years, giving you that much more time to do the things you really want to do.

— Garrison Keillor