

How to Read with Cheetah Speed

7 Steps to Mastering Speed Reading *and* Remembering

By Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, Chief Cheetah, Cheetah Learning, Inc.

One of the things I hear a lot is about the enormous amount of information coming at people, and how they feel overwhelmed with how to digest what's important to them and to their success.

I first developed my own approach to speed reading and remembering when I was a graduate student; since then, I've perfected it with accelerated learning techniques. It's really seven simple steps that have helped numerous colleagues and my own children master material quickly.

The goal is to read faster and with more comprehension, and to ultimately retain the information you read longer.

Seven Steps to Speed Reading and Remembering

1. **Review** the table of contents and the index.
2. **Flip** through the book and identify what you want to learn.
3. **Schedule** your reading time.
 - Timing: Estimate 30 seconds per page to read and 30 seconds per page to mind map.
 - Breathing: Every hour, take a 10-minute break to stretch, breathe, and eat a high-protein, low-sugar snack.
4. **Break it Down.** Read each chapter by: Thumbing through it, reading the section headings, reading the first and last sentence of every paragraph, and reading the captions of the pictures and diagrams.
5. **Summarize.** Review the chapter and summarize it in a one-page [mind map](#).
6. **Find the Keys and Note the Feelings.** On the mind map, identify three key things learned in the chapter and your feelings about the chapter.
7. **Take a Break.** Take a 10-minute break every hour to stretch, breathe, and eat a high-protein, low-sugar snack.

How Does this Work?

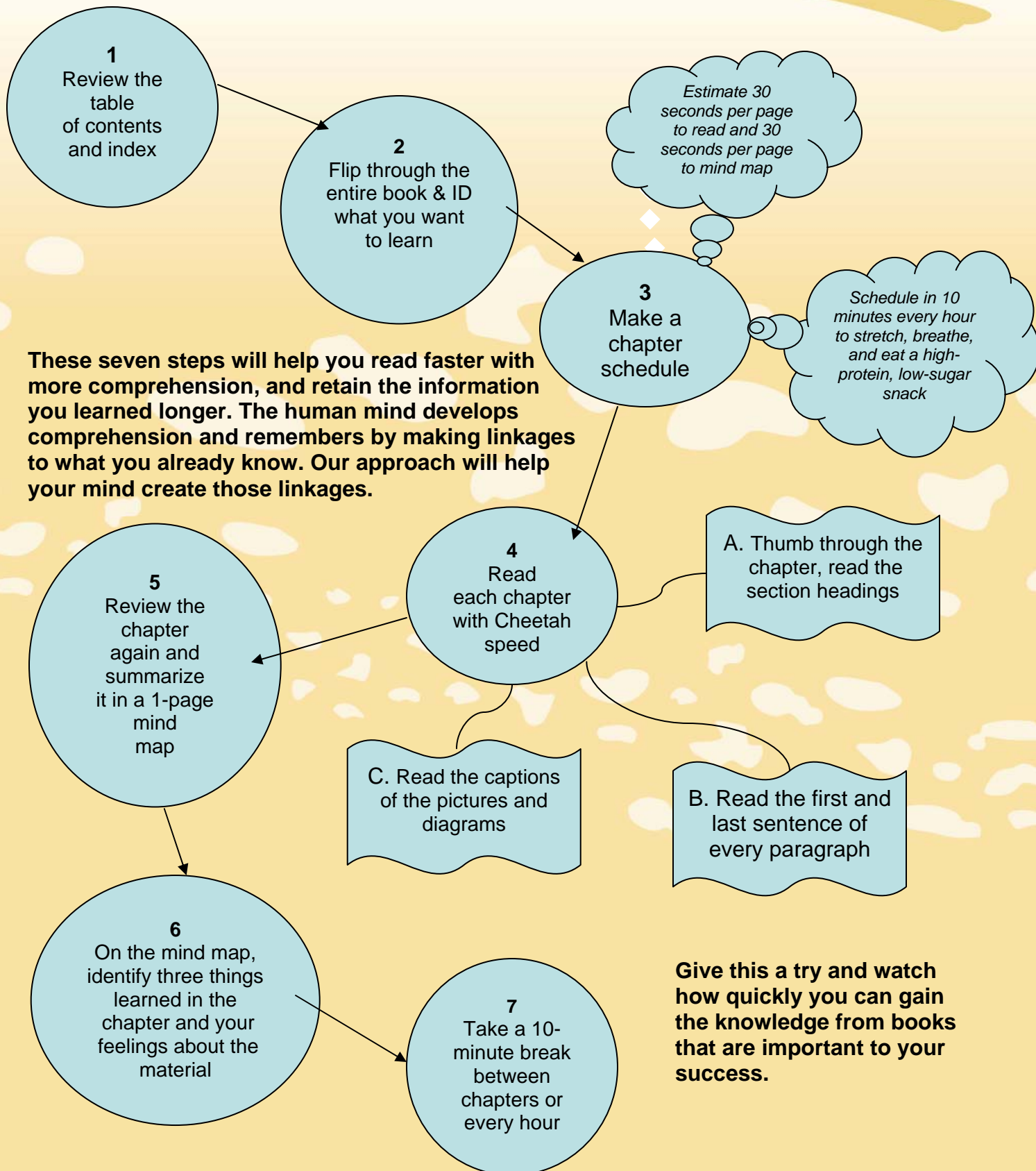
The human mind develops comprehension and remembers by making linkages to what you already know. With this approach, you help your mind create those linkages. When you structure your reading efforts with schedules, you stay focused longer. This is a reward-feedback system that motivates you to continue – it is especially good for dry, technical reading.

Learning Principles at Play

There are several learning principles at play here:

- ❑ **Kinesthetic.** You are actively engaged in the material with the mind-mapping techniques.
- ❑ **Logical Spatial Learning.** You are building up the mind maps that make sense to you and are focusing on understanding the patterns of the writer.
- ❑ **Linguistic.** You are searching for key words.
- ❑ **Interpersonal.** You are reflecting on what the reading meant to you and how you felt about it.
- ❑ **Mathematical.** You are timing the reading and focusing on short passages for specified time durations.
- ❑ **Goal Oriented Learning.** You know what you want to achieve from the reading, and this helps you pick out the key points better as you're reading.
- ❑ **Emotional Intelligence.** You will remember more when you can attach a feeling to what you're learning.
- ❑ **Structured Learning.** When you break things down into smaller elements, you can stay intently focused for short periods of time.
- ❑ **Linked-in Concepts.** Your brain absorbs new information by linking to what it already knows.

7 Steps to Speed Reading & Remembering



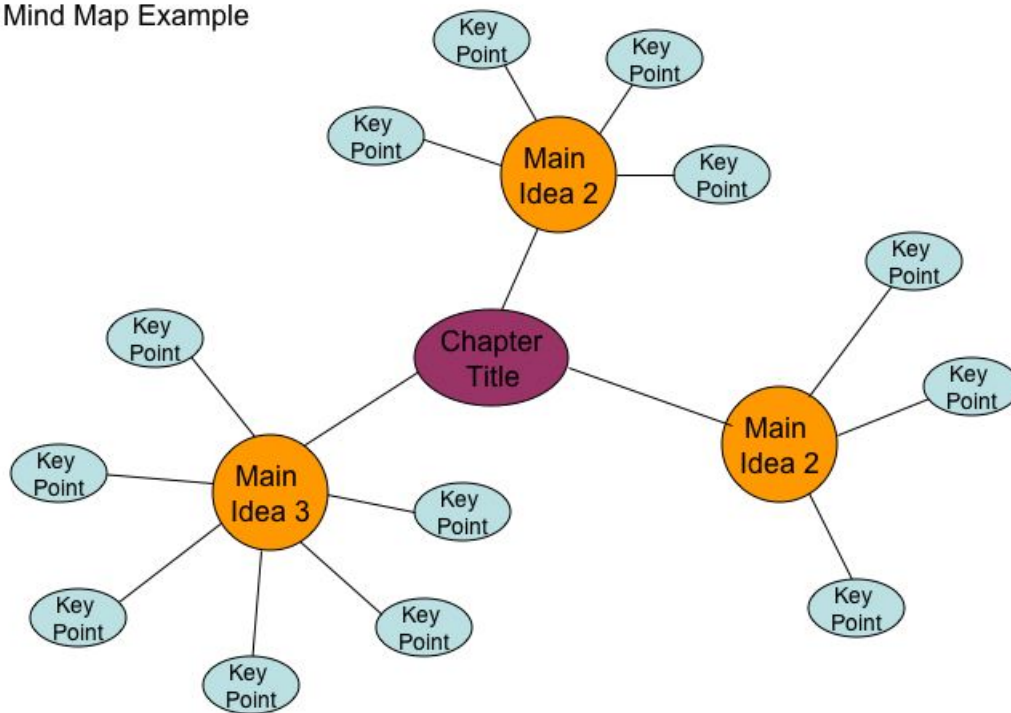
Give this a try and watch how quickly you can gain the knowledge from books that are important to your success.

The Power of Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping is a note-taking technique that helps you sort and remember key information. Since your brain takes in new information by linking to information it already has stored, the mind map helps you make new linkages.

This is an example of a chapter with three main ideas. When you create your mind maps, first identify the main ideas. Then for each main idea, summarize the key points associated with each main idea.

Mind Map Example



Assigning Locations to Key Information in your Mind Map

Your brain also remembers better by assigning locations to key information. When you take notes using the mind-mapping technique, you are creating location maps to new information. This makes it easier for you to retrieve key information from the material you are studying.

When you are reading, it helps to study the structure of the material before you begin. When you can understand how the material is structured, it makes it easier to create mind maps and ultimately easier to remember the key information you have read.

Beware of Distractions

Step away from the e-mail. Put a lock on the fridge. Silence your cell phone, and give the dog a bone. We all have so many distractions that keep us from being focused. Be honest with yourself about your distractions, and then remove them! You'll be amazed at how much you will accomplish when those dire distractions are out of the way.

Don't Underestimate the Break

We've all been there: In front of the computer for too long, and then the mistakes start multiplying, and soon you don't remember how to spell your name. When you take a break, you increase your ability to focus. It's a small, gratifying step that has a big payoff.

More than Retention

And the great reward is that beyond achieving your immediate reading and retention goals, you've mastered a skill for life. You have a tool to help you manage key information that you need to know to succeed. You no longer need to stress about reading a book, a lengthy case study, or white paper; you can tackle it with ease. Here's to a lifetime of learning and passing this skill on to others in your life.

For more information about Cheetah Learning, please visit us online at www.cheetahlearning.com.

About the Author



Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is the founder of [Cheetah Learning](http://www.cheetahlearning.com), and author of *Cheetah Negotiation* and *Cheetah Project Management*. The Project Management Institute, www.pmi.org, recently selected Michelle as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the World, and only one of two women selected from the training and education industry. She was featured in the October 2006 issue of PM Network Magazine and graduated from the Harvard Business School's Owner President Managers (OPM) program in March 2006.

She created the origins of the Cheetah Project Management methodology as an Air Force Officer in the mid 80s. In 1995, she prototyped the concept of accelerating learning using "virtual classrooms," to accelerate the way people learned and applied core business skills. As a corporate research scientist in systems engineering and adult learning for a large multinational corporation, she later created and tested a one-day approach to teaching Project Management. This approach would later evolve to become Cheetah Project Management, a fast and effective way of launching projects.

Today, she is the leader of the course development team at Cheetah and sets the strategic direction for the company. Using the Cheetah Project Management techniques, LaBrosse has grown the company from three employees in 2000 to more than 100 in 2006. Cheetah is now the global leader in Project Manager Professional Development.

Her articles have appeared in publications such as: *European CEO Magazine*, *Plant Engineering Magazine*, *Industrial Engineer Magazine*, *Control Engineering Magazine*, *Journal of the American Association for Medical Transcription JAAMT*, *NSSEA Essentials Magazine*, *ASTN Network Magazine*, *Radio Sales Today*, *Sprinkler Quarterly & Technology Magazine*, *The Federal Credit Union Magazine Online*, *Business Quarterly Online*, *American Society of Landscape Architects*, *ACRP Wire Association of Clinical Research Professionals*, *American Council of Engineering Companies Association* and more.

With a B.S. in Aerospace Engineering, and an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering, LaBrosse has done extensive postgraduate work with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Advanced Educational Studies and with the University of Washington Industrial Engineering Program in accelerating adult learning with respect to meeting core business objectives.

She lives in Nevada with her family and likes to rejuvenate in Alaska where you'll often find her kayaking, golfing or hiking.