Activity 10: “How To Read a Book in 10 Minutes” article

[Adapted from Georgine N. Olson’s “Speed Reading Books” session at PLA Conference (March 2004)]

**BASICS OF SPEED “READING”:**

1. Select a book to “read”
2. On a card, sheet of paper, or form: record the Author, Title, Genre, Series Info, Call Number. As you “read”, jot down notes about items listed below that seem pertinent.
3. Hold the book & look at its basic features
   * Is it heavy?
   * When you open it, do the pages lie flat?
   * Look at the typeface, the space between lines, the general layout – How easy to read is it? Is there much white space? Is it densely printed?
4. Look at the cover – What does it tell you about the book (or what the publisher wants you to think about the book)
5. Read the Blurb – Does it give you an idea of the storyline; does it tell “everything” (or maybe it doesn’t tell you anything). Is it inviting, teasing, ominous?
6. Read the first chapter – Does it pull you right into the story or is there a slow build-up? If it’s a series title, how smoothly does it deliver background info?
7. Skim and read bits and pieces here and there throughout the book - Does it seem to flow? What’s your general impression of the book?
8. Read the end (sorry, but this is important!). If it has an epilogue, read a couple of sections before the epilogue. Is there a conclusion or is it open-ended? Does the ending read like a checklist, wrapping up all loose ends?
9. What can you tell about

* Style: humorous; serious; length of sentences, sections, or chapters; dialogue?
* Pacing: leisurely or action-oriented
* Format: straight-line narrative, flashback, single or multiple points of view (how smooth are transitions)
* Characters: many or few; are they a recognizable “type”; does it seem character or action-oriented
* Setting: time; place; integral or wallpaper
* Story-line: character or plot driven
* Genre: does it follow genre conventions?; sub-genre?

**FROM THE READERS’ ADVISOR’S VIEWPOINT:**

1. Does this bring to mind any other authors or titles as possible read-alikes?
2. Which readers could enjoy this? Why would they?
3. Think about how you would phrase a recommendation based on speed reading vs. cover-to-cover reading vs. what you might have learned from reviews or other readers.