How to Read A Book in 10 Minutes
By Jessica E. Moyer

To get started grab a book you haven't read before, by an author you don't know, and preferably one that you don't intend to read later. As you follow the steps below be sure to make notes. Remember you only have 10 minutes so read and write quickly!

1) Start with the cover. What does it tell you about the book?
   a) Do the cover images look like they are aimed at a particular sex or age?
   b) Is the cover image off-putting to its intended audience or obviously dated?
   c) Does it give you an idea of the potential readership or genre?
   d) What does the cover say about the author? Has he/she won any awards?
   e) Is the author or title in larger print? A very large name is a good clue that this author might be a bestseller.
   f) Is an unusual font or color used? Bright red text that drips like blood would be a good indication that this is a scary book.
2) Open up the book and read the jacket blurb or the back cover:
   a) What does it tell you about the book? Is a plot summary given? Is it directly compared to any other books?
   b) What about the author? Is a bio given or list of previous books?
   c) What do other authors think of this book? Who are those authors? Use these to help you start in making readalike connections
3) Flip open the book to a random page. Check the typeface:
   a) How easy is it to read?
   b) Better for younger or older readers?
   c) Anything noticeable or unusual?
   d) Is more than one typeface used?
   e) Are there illustrations? Do they have captions or enhance the text? Add to the overall story? Are they an integral part of the story?
4) Physical characteristics
   a) Heft - Can readers easily carry it? How big and heavy is the book?
   b) Will the intended audience be willing or able to read it and carry it around?
   c) Hardcover or paperback or mass market?
   d) Can the book be easily opened while reading?
5) Read a sample:
   a) First chapter: what happens at the very beginning? Which characters or what setting is introduced? How does the story start--with a description or with action?
   b) Read some pages in the middle. Are the same characters or setting still present? What kind of events are taking place? Is it mostly dialogue or mostly description? How much white space is on the page?
   c) Read the last chapter (this is why its best to choose a book you don't actually plan on reading). How does it end? Is the ending resolved? Left wide open? Left a little open with room for a sequel? Is it a cliffhanger than demands a sequel? Who is still alive/giving the final speech?
6) How does it fit into the appeal factors?

a) Pacing: How quickly are character/plot revealed? Is there more dialogue or description? Check for white space; the more dialogue, the more white space. Are there short sentences, short paragraphs, short chapters? The shorter the sentences, chapters, and paragraphs, the faster it will read. Are there multiple plotlines, flashbacks, different points of view, or does the book have a straight line plot? Is the ending open or closed?

b) Frame: Is the background detailed or minimal? How is the book supposed to make the reader feel? Is a special background integral to the story? Is the reader assumed to have certain types of knowledge? Either subject information essential to full understanding or previous knowledge of the world in which the story takes places (i.e. books in a series).

c) Storyline: Does the story emphasize people or events? Is the focus interior/psychological or exterior/action? What is the author's intent? Serious versus light; comedy versus drama?

d) Characterization: Are characters fully developed or are they easily recognized types? Is focus on a single character or several who intertwine? Is characterization or characters the most important aspect of the story? Are characters developed during the series or in one book? Are there memorable or important secondary characters?

e) What's the most important or most dominant appeal factor?

7) Other Considerations

a) Plot: What is the book actually about? Can you summarize the book in 30 seconds or less? If someone asked you, "What is this book about" how would you respond?

b) Genre: Is the book part of a recognized genre? If so, which one? What about subgenre? Is it a genre blend? Does the book conform to genre formulas in terms of plot or characters or does it break the rules?

c) Series: Is it part of a series? First in a series? Do the other books in the series need to be read before this book or does it stand alone? Based on the ending, how eager are readers going to be for the next one?

d) Author: Who is the author? What else have the author written? Does the author usually write in this genre or is this a new direction for the writer? Is this book a return to a genre the author hasn't written about or in for several years?

8) Using all the information gathered in the previous sections, connect this book to other books.

a) What genre or subgenre might this book fit in?

b) What other books or authors share similar appeal factors?

c) What kind of reader might enjoy this book?

Once you finish, it is a good idea to organize all your notes in a reading log or book journal or even an online book social networking site so that you not only remember your ten minute books, but have a way to look back at everything you've read. One way to get better is to set a goal, such as reading a book in 10 minutes once every week, or reading 5 books in a genre you don't usually read.