

Colored Words

Reading can get in the way of speaking.

Try This

- Look at the panel at the upper left of this exhibit. As quickly as you can, say the colors that the words are printed in (DON'T read the words themselves). For example, say “red” for the first word, not “green.” Any problems?
- Turn the upper-left panel upside down and try again. Is it easier now?
- Now try the panel at the lower left, and the panels in the flipbook. Are some words harder to do than others?

What's Going On?

Despite your intent of naming the colors of these words, you probably found it hard to avoid reading them.

That's because your brain is able to read words faster—and more automatically—than it can name colors. Your quick reading ability interferes with your attempt to say the words' printed colors. This interference is known as the *Stroop Effect*.