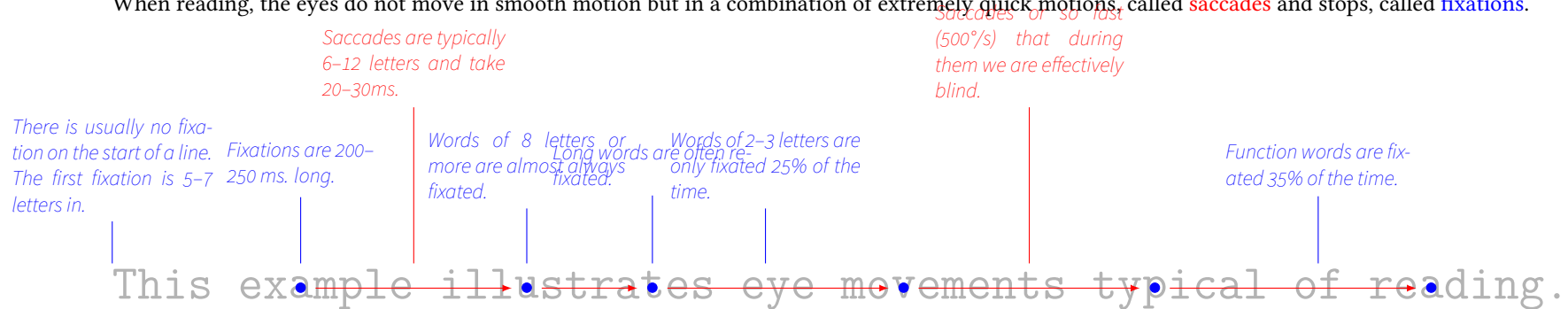


EYE MOVEMENTS AND PERCEPTUAL SPAN IN READING

Based on Rayner, K., 1998. "Eye movements in reading and information processing." *Psychological Bulletin*, 85(3), pp.618–66.

When reading, the eyes do not move in smooth motion but in a combination of extremely quick motions, called **saccades** and stops, called **fixations**.



The area from which we retrieve information is, the *perceptual span*, as is asymmetric. In English it reaches 14–15 letters to the right of the fixation and 4–5 letters to the left. It is only around half of this span, 7–8 letters to right, that we can identify words. Further right we most importantly get information on word length used to plan the next saccade. In writing systems that are read from right to left the asymmetry of the perceptual span is mirrored. For more densely packed orthographies such as in Hebrew and Chinese it is smaller.

This example illustrates eye movements typical of reading.