

## Promoting Reading Skills of English Language

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**Outline:**

- What makes texts difficult to understand?
- Goals of reading
- Types of reading
- Strategies for reading comprehension
- Reading techniques and models

## What makes texts difficult to understand?

Most of your reading difficulties will be caused by a problem on the list below. Of course, when two or more of these problems happen together, your chances of understanding will be even smaller.

- ❖ The text has many unknown words
- ❖ The text has long, complicated sentences
- ❖ The text is about a topic you know nothing about
- ❖ The text is about a topic you find boring
- ❖ The text has small print, long paragraphs, no pictures
- ❖ The text has been badly written
- ❖ You are feeling tired
- ❖ You are distracted
- ❖ You don't know the important cohesion markers
- ❖ You don't know why you have to read the text



## What to do when you don't understand what you're reading?

- ❖ Do not stop immediately but keep reading a bit.
- ❖ Think whether it's important to understand.
- ❖ Know that there are no easy ways to understand.
- ❖ Study examples carefully.
- ❖ Go slowly! Make mental images of the meanings.
- ❖ Talk to yourself!
- ❖ Look up important words.
- ❖ Look at beginnings of sections.
- ❖ Break down the puzzling passage into several parts.
- ❖ Draw a diagram.
- ❖ Try to figure out the overall framework.
- ❖ Focus on the parts that you do understand.

### TIPS TO REMEMBER:

- Read with a purpose.
- Skim first.
- Get the reading mechanics right.
- Be judicious in highlighting and note taking.
- Think in pictures.
- Rehearse as you go along.
- Stay within your attention span and work to increase that span.
- Rehearse again soon

## Goal of Reading

According to William (2002), we read to:

- ❖ Search for simple information
- ❖ Skim quickly,
- ❖ Learn from text,
- ❖ Integrate information,
- ❖ Write,
- ❖ Critique texts
- ❖ Get general comprehension.

### Reading to search for simple information

Is a common reading ability, though some researchers see it as a relatively independent cognitive process. It is used so often in reading tasks that is probably best seen as type of reading ability.

### Reading to skim quickly

Is a common part of many reading tasks and a useful skill in its own right. It involves, in essence, a combination of strategies for guessing where important might be in the text, and then using basic reading comprehension skills on those segments of the text until a general idea is formed.

### Reading to learn from text

This one typically occurs in academic and professional contexts in which a person needs to learn a considerable amount of information from a text. It requires abilities to remember main ideas, recognize and build rhetorical frames and link the text to the reader base.

### Reading to integrate information

This requires additional decision about the relative importance of complementary, mutually supporting or conflicting information and likely restructuring of a rhetorical frame to accommodate information from multiple sources.

### Reading to write and critique texts

This texts may be task variants of reading to integrate information. Both require abilities to compose, select, and analyse information from a text.

## Types of Reading

According to Patel and Praveen (2008), there are some types of reading such as:

1. Intensive reading
2. Extensive reading
3. Aloud reading
4. Silent reading.

### **1. Intensive reading**

Is type of reading that focuses on idiom and vocabulary that taught by the teacher in the classroom and that idiom and vocabularies exist in poem, poetry, novel or other sources. For example, the students focus on linguistic or semantic details of a reading and focus on structure details such as grammar.

### **2. Extensive Reading**

Is type of reading involves learners reading texts for enjoyment and to develop general reading skills. For example, the students read as many different kinds of books such as journals, newspapers and magazine as they can, especially for pleasure, and only needing a general understanding of the contents.

### **3. Aloud reading**

Are reading by using loud voice and clearly. For example, reading poetry, dialogue, and other types of text.



#### 4. Silent reading

Activity is meant to train the students to read without voice in order that the students can concentrate their attention or thought to comprehend the texts. For example, the students are reading a text by heart.

#### Strategies for Reading Comprehension

There are some strategies that make a simple and effective approach formulated to enhance the comprehensive abilities of students.

The process of comprehending text begins before children can read, when someone reads a picture book to them. They listen to the words, see the pictures in the book, and may start to associate the words on the page with the words they are hearing and the ideas they represent.

##### 1. Using Prior Knowledge/Previewing

When students preview text, they tap into what they already know that will help them to understand the text they are about to read. This provides a framework for any new information they read.

Research has shown that better comprehension occurs when students are engaged in activities that bridge their old knowledge with the new. For example, a simple question like “what do you know about ... (a particular topic)” will stimulate students’ previous knowledge of that topic. This will help them connect the current reading to their prior knowledge and make the new reading more stimulating and engaging. The strategy allows students to work their way up from an already existing schema, instead of starting a new one.

## 2. Predicting

When students make predictions about the text they are about to read, it sets up expectations based on their prior knowledge about similar topics. As they read, they may mentally revise their prediction as they gain more information.

## 3. Questioning

Asking and answering questions about text is another strategy that helps students focus on the meaning of text. Teachers can help by modeling both the process of asking good questions and strategies for finding the answers in the text.

Encourage students to frame questions before and after reading to increase their comprehension. Each student should be able to reflect on three main questions, namely, a right now question, an analytical question, and a research question.

A 'right now question' focuses on the material presented. What is the essence of the material read? *What are the facts that are being mentioned?*

An 'analytical question' requires students to ponder over what they have learnt. *What does the author want me to understand from this material?*

A 'research question' encourages the students to look for information beyond what is in the text. This allows for more comprehensive active learning to occur.

#### 4. Analyzing text structure

This requires students to learn how to analyse or comprehend the structure of a text. Students are taught to identify the pattern by which writers organise their material. This may be in the form of cause-effect pattern, problem-solution pattern, or a descriptive pattern like a list, web or a matrix pattern. Understanding the pattern in which the material is presented allows the students to comprehend the information better. It is important to teach all the patterns of a text structure to

the students, as each structure is different and takes time to learn. They should also be taught to make use of subheadings, labels, captions, tables, graphs, etc. as these help students to understand the material better.

## 5. Visualising

Studies have shown that students who visualise while reading have better recall than those who do not. Readers can take advantage of illustrations that are embedded in the text or create their own mental images or drawings when reading text. Students should be encouraged to form visual images in their head as they read the text, which will help in better comprehension. Research suggests that students should visualise them as structural images or diagrams instead of mere pictures, as pictures have a tendency to fade.

## 6. Identifying the Main Idea and Summarisation

Identifying the main idea and summarising require that students determine what is important and then put it in their own words. Implicit in this process is trying to understand the author's purpose in writing the text.

The last technique is to summarise the material read. Research has indicated that the ability to summarise enhances comprehension. Block and Pressley defined summarise as “the ability to delete irrelevant details, combine similar ideas,

condense main ideas, and connect major themes into concise statements that capture the purpose of a reading for the reader.” A student making use of the other four strategies will find it easier to summarise the material. They can summarise the material in the form of diagrams, either visually or in writing.

### Reading Techniques and Models

There are many techniques that we can use to make our reading easy. According to Mikulecky and Jeffries in Fisher (2008), state reading can help much more if we can read well. The techniques are:



## Skimming

Skimming is reading rapidly in order to get a **general overview** of the material.

- ❖ Is technique used to **quickly read the main ideas** of the text.
- ❖ Read the **title**.
- ❖ Read the **introduction or the first paragraph**. Often, the main idea of articles is given in the introduction.
- ❖ Next, move on to the first two sentences of the paragraphs, as **topic sentences** are usually placed at the beginning of a paragraph.
- ❖ Read any **headings** and **sub-headings**.
- ❖ Read the **summary** or last paragraph.
- ❖ As you read the paragraphs in the text's body, you can also begin **to pick up important details** such as **names**, **dates**, and **terminologies** which are repeated in the succeeding sections.
- ❖ Read the last paragraph in its entirety, as closing paragraphs often summarise the entire text's essential ideas.

## Scanning

Scanning is reading rapidly in order to find **specific facts**. Usually includes numbers, years

- ❖ Is a technique you often use when looking up a word in the telephone book or dictionary. You search for key words or ideas.
- ❖ Scanning is another speed reading technique that is useful for people who are learning English online.
- ❖ When we can, we read a text quickly to search for **specific information** or **answer a particular question**.
- ❖ When scanning, we **disregard the other details** in the text and its main idea, which is not part of our goal.
- ❖ When scanning a text, our **eyes need to move quickly across** the paragraphs.
- ❖ You can use your **index finger to guide you in looking** for specific information on the page.
- ❖ In most cases (especially when studying), **scanning the text first is necessary before** getting the text's essential details.
- ❖ You can also **highlight this information** so that you can quickly go back to it later on.
- ❖ This technique is **handy when learning English online** and taking **English tests**, such as IELTS.

### Steps in Scanning are:

- ❖ State the specific information you are looking for.
- ❖ Try to anticipate how the answer will appear and what clues you might use to help you locate the answer. For example, if you were looking for a certain date, you would quickly read the paragraph looking only for numbers.
- ❖ Use headings and any other aids that will help you identify which sections might contain the information you are looking for.
- ❖ Selectively read and skip through sections of the passage.

### Models of Reading process

According to Wang (2008), states the three views of reading processes are bottom up, top down, and interactive views.

#### **Bottom up**

Bottom-up processing happens when someone tries to understand language by looking at individual meanings or grammatical characteristics of the most basic units of the text, (e.g. sounds for a listening or words for a reading), and moves from these to trying to understand the whole text.



Simply stated, the bottom view of reading focuses on text based processing as the major instructional concern of teachers. Learning to read is viewed as a series of association or sub-skills that are reinforced until they become automatic. Letters are linked to form words, words are linked to form sentences, and sentences linked to form ideas; that is, the part of reading are put together to form the whole. This is viewed as a bottom up processing text shapes the learner's response.

### **Top down**

It is a reading approach that emphasizes what the reader brings to the text, it contends that reading is driven by meaning and proceeds from whole to part. It is also known as concept-driven model.

Top down view of reading focuses on the reader. In this reading process, the reader is viewed as an active problem solver who guesses what the author is saying. Then he samples textual clues; that is reading is viewed as negotiating meaning between an author and a reader. This is viewed as top down process, in which the reader's idea creates his response

## **Interactive**

The interactive view of reading focuses on the active constructive nature of reading as the major instructional concern of the teachers. The reader is viewed as using both reader based (top down) processing to form a model of meaning.

Although he is active, his guesses are formed on the basis of what the text says and what he already knows about this information; that is reading is viewed as constructing meaning. This is viewed as an interactive process where the reader strategically shifts between the text and what he already knows to construct his response.

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