

Block 3

Unit 2 Reading : Concept and Types

Structure

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Objectives

2.2 Reading : its meaning

2.3 Types of reading

2.3.1 Loud

2.3.2 Silent

2.3.3 Intensive

2.3.4 Extensive

2.3.5 Supplementary

2.4 Techniques to increase speed of reading

2.4.1 Phrasing

2.4.2 Scanning

2.4.3 Skimming

2.4.4 Key word reading

2.5 Reading comprehension in the classroom

2.6 Let us sum up

2.7 Questions for reflection

2.8 Answers to check your progress

2.9 References and suggested reading

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Recent changes have been done in the syllabus of “Teaching of English”, the change was welcome as it was thought to inculcate some essential qualities and skills in the pupil- teachers so that they might overcome several of their inhibitions in order to emerge as excellent teachers in their professional life.

Generally, pupil-teachers do not read widely, which limits their knowledge disastrously, having adverse impact on their professional excellence. With the introduction of this topic, it would become necessary for pupil-teachers to undertake study of different types of text with a purpose of review, analysis and synthesis, for overall interpretation and adaptation. This unit will come to their aid greatly.

The present unit deals with concept and types of reading, we will discuss the techniques to increase speed of reading. And we will also discuss – reading comprehension in the classroom.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- Understand different reading skills
- Understand the reading process
- Grasp techniques to improve reading skills
- The aim is to enable the students to improve and command over English and increase comprehension of the texts

2.2 READING: ITS MEANING

Reading is one of the most useful skills in learning a foreign language. It serves as a means by which the “unbounded field of knowledge” lies open before us and we are able to know new facts and relationship. Francis Bacon was very correct when, in one of his essays, ‘Our Studies’ he wrote, “Reading maketh a full man” According to Gray, “Reading is a form of experience.” Indeed good reading habits promote ‘self education’ which helps in the modification of personality. Reading , trains our mind and broadens our outlook. If one has developed a taste for reading in school days, he will realize that nothing but reading is the best utilization of his hours of leisure.

Of all the linguistic skills, reading is perhaps one that requires our attention most and lacking which we find that there are great retardation in reading activities of our pupils.

Reading is a complex communicative process of receiving and interpreting the written words. It involves recognizing what is written and comprehending the matter, that is, understanding the main and subsidiary points as well as links between different parts of the written material. While receiving and interpreting the written word, the reader is concerned with four factors, i.e. decoding, comprehending, text analysis and response.

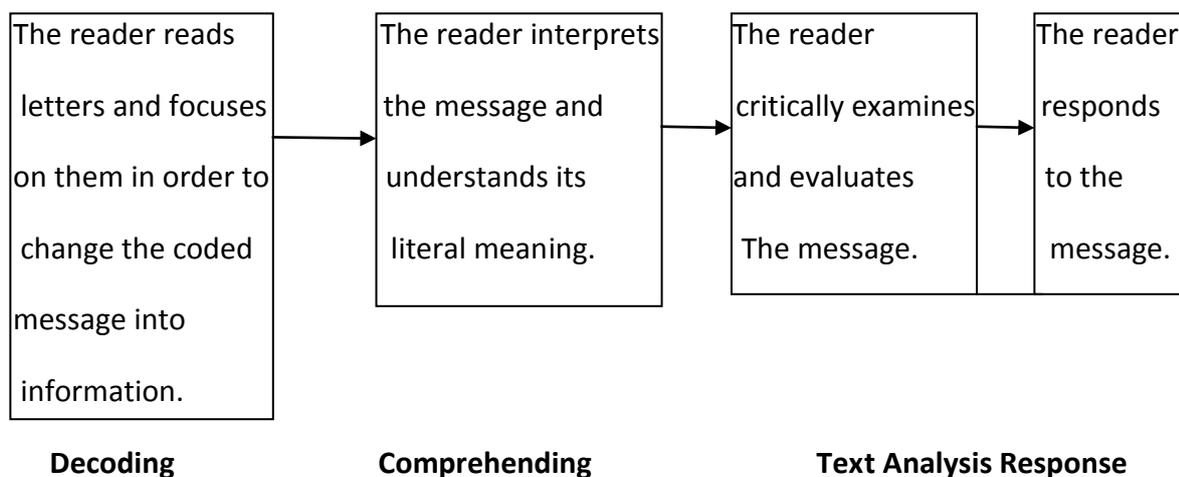
Decoding or interpreting in reading refers to the process of changing the coded message into information. As it involves understanding the written language, it requires the ability to recognize words accurately, and the manner in which words are used in varying contexts. A written message can be decoded only if we know the language in which the message is encoded.

Comprehension in reading refers to the identification of the central theme, main ideas, supporting details and writing patterns.

After decoding and comprehending the literal meaning of a written message, its significance is evaluated and appropriate conclusions are drawn from it.

Text analysis is essential for critical and evaluative understanding of a text. Text analysis refers to the process of identifying relationships among different units within the text in order to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information, explicit and implicit information, facts and opinions, examples and ideas and draw inferences and conclusions.

Response is our action or reaction to the written message. It completes the reading process as it is the last step of reading. Our response to a text depends largely on our correct understanding and evaluation of the text. We may immediately respond to the message, as in the case of reading the letter, a memo, an e-mail message. Though in some text, we may need to remember the information so that we are able to use it later.



There is no denying the fact that education is a lifelong process. The habits which are cultivated during schooldays, reading is one of which, helps to mould the entire life of a person.

The benefits of reading are many, gaining knowledge, recreation, self education, gaining experience are some of the benefits of reading.

2.3 TYPES OF READING

Why do we read ?

There are two main reasons for reading :

- Reading for pleasure.
- Reading for information (in order to find out something or in order to do something with the information you get).

How do we read?

The main ways or types of reading are as follows:

1. Loud reading
2. Silent reading
3. Intensive reading
4. Extensive reading
5. Supplementary reading

Let us discuss them in detail

1. Loud reading

This is also known as oral or aloud reading. Loud reading should be introduced after the students have been given some training in two months on the points concerning pronunciation, intonation, stress, pitch and other aspects of spoken English. According to **W.M.Ryburn**, " There is very little real reading done in English. Part of difficulty is that English is a foreign language, but the chief difficulty is found in the fact that pupils are not taught to read aloud properly in their mother tongue."

Following exercises will help students

1. Exercise with pace and pause

Read aloud from a newspaper or a book, Just before you run out of breath, say aloud , 'I pause and I breathe'. Take time to inhale, and let your breath drop low, as if into your stomach. Then continue reading on the out breath. Every time you need to breathe, say the words, 'I pause and I breathe'. Continue the exercise until you feel comfortable using the phrase, and are breathing deeply and regularly. Using a tape recorder can help to monitor this. Then continue reading aloud, but this time say the phrase, 'I pause and I breathe' silently in your mind.

2. Correcting your pitch range

- Practice changing up and down within the space of a few words. Take the statement 'I can do that', and say it in four different ways.


I can do that

I can do that

I can do that

I can do that

- Practise using pitch to reflect the emotional content of your speech. Practise saying each of the following statements twice in succession: first, as flatly as you can ; then as emotionally as you can, using pitch to express emotion.

Congratulations! A new job!

Please don't kick the cat.

I won't go. Never. Don't ever ask me again.

That's an interesting thought...

3. Articulation – turning voice into speech

What turns voice into speech is the action of the speech organs of the head. These are:

- The tongue- both the tip and the back of the tongue are used to produce different sounds.
- The lips
- The soft palate- this is movable; it lies at the back of the roof of the mouth.
- The hard palate – this is immovable; it lies in front of the soft palate of the top of the mouth.
- The dental ridge- this is just behind the upper front teeth.
- The jaw

Exercise with vowels

To improve the quality of your vowels, practice speaking loud a vowel sequence;

Hoot, hook, hawk, hot, heard, hut, hard, heel, hid, head, hand

Hoe, how, ahoy, hay, high, hair, here, hire, hour, shower

Objectives of loud reading

1. To enable the students to read with correct pronunciation, articulation, intonation, stress, pitch, pause, pace and rhythm.
2. To enable the students to read with expressions .
3. To enable the students to understand the meaning of spoken words, phrases and sentences.
4. In the words of **Ryburn**, "To test the pupils' knowledge of English words and phrases and whether they know how to pronounce them, how to phrase words, how to articulate clearly. That is , reading aloud is a test as well as a practice."

5. The main objective of loud reading is to develop in the students a desire for silent reading.

Process

The process of loud reading is executed in two steps:

1. The teacher reads a sample passage with correct pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm and pauses if the pupils require repetition of model reading, the teacher should do so. But they should not be accustomed to it. The aim of this sample or model reading is to train the auditory nerves of the students. In the opinion of Dr. West, "Until the pupil can read, the teacher is the sole source of the language. He is like the mother bird putting gobbets of English in the open beaks of his pupil."
2. Students should read loudly. Here, the teacher should correct the pronunciation and he should correct the students wherever necessary, but it should not be done in between but after the pupil finishes the reading. While reading plays, pupils should be assigned roles and they should read their respective roles.

The standard of reading aloud can be raised with the raising of the level of the students. Poetry recitation can be done. Speed in reading along with accuracy should be emphasized at senior level where as at junior level only accuracy is demanded.

Precautions

The following precautions should be exercised while carrying out the act of loud reading :

1. The students should be asked to maintain accuracy and not speed. Speed will come with practice, but accuracy once lost will be difficult to regain.
2. The passage for reading should be within the comprehension power of the students.
3. Reading aloud should be done on individual basis so that their individual pronunciation and other aspects of reading are checked. Group reading does no good as teacher is unable to point out errors.
4. The posture of the students should be right. The relationship between head and neck is most important for a balanced posture.

Advantages of loud reading

Loud reading has the following advantages:

1. Model teaching by the teacher helps the students to know the correct pronunciation and method of reading.
2. It develops the skill of speech and giving lectures.
3. It helps in eradicating the mistakes related to pronunciation of the students.
4. It trains the sensory organs—eyes, ears and mouth because in loud reading, they work in coordination.
5. It makes students learn by imitation which is a natural method of learning things by the children.

Disadvantage of loud reading

The disadvantage of loud reading can be the following:

1. Some scholars, including E.W. Manzel, are of the opinion that loud reading is not a source of pleasure.
2. If a student becomes habitual to loud reading, he cannot become an extensive reader.
3. Loud reading does not help in penetrating the meaning. A.W. Frisby says, "The danger of too much reading aloud is that it may lead to the short circulating of the meaning, whereby the written word does not convey meaning but becomes merely a symbol for the collection of sounds and is translated straight in sound."
4. In public places like library and reading rooms only silent reading is allowed.

Some scholars like P. Gurrey have not recommended loud reading. But the advantages of loud reading are more strong. So, we cannot dispense with loud reading in early stages.

2. Silent Reading

Silent reading is considered to be the best kind of reading as the mind is fully engaged in this act. The children should be initiated into reading silently as soon as they have mastered some degree of fluency of reading aloud. **Morrison** has said, "Loud reading by students should be followed by silent reading." **Mehta** has said, "We all read faster than we speak and children must be initiated into the silent reading habit as early as possible."

Objectives of silent reading

The objectives of silent reading are:

1. To enable the students to read silently, without making any kind of sound but not moving even their lips, so that others are not disturbed.
2. To enable the students to teach them to read speedily, easily and fluently.
3. To enable the students to not only read but also to comprehend or understand things, ideas or meanings side by side.
4. To expand the reading vocabulary of the students.
5. One of the most important objectives of silent reading is to develop in the students the way to enjoy and recreate themselves. According to **Ryburn**, "The aims of silent reading are pleasure and profit; to be able to read for interest and to get information."

Process

In the initial stages of introducing silent reading when the vocabulary of the students has not developed much, the teacher can give the summary or gist of the paragraph or text to them, so that the students are able to understand and interest is developed in them. In the words of **Ryburn**, "He should test what the students have gained from what they have read

by questions on the subject matter. Another good way of teaching is to get pupils to give the substance of the paragraph they have read.”

The length and difficulty of the given passage should be according to the level of the students.

To say that reading is a silent and personal activity does not imply that it only lends to individual work. On the contrary, it is particularly interesting to encourage comparisons between several interpretations of a text which will lead to discussion and properly a need to refer back to the text to check. Here are possible step:

- a) Silent reading followed by an activity which each student does on his own.
- b) The students now work in pairs, each one is trying to justify his answer. The group should try to agree on one answer or interpretation.
- c) The groups exchange partners and students compare their result
- d) A general discussion involving the whole class may follow.

Precautions

The following precautions should be exercised while carrying out the act of silent reading :

1. The silent reading should be started only when the children know really well about the basic structure of English sentences.
2. The children can be triggered in silent reading only after having got the ability of pronouncing words.

Advantages of silent reading

Silent reading has the following advantages:

1. Silent reading is a quick way of reading through a passage. Silent reading saves time and energy.
2. The students find it an interesting way of reading.
3. According to **Mehta**, “ It acts as a deterrent against the tendency so common amongst beginners to translate what they read in English into their mother tongue.”
4. Silent reading is of great value in the practical life even after the school life. It helps in higher classes as the students have to comprehend the vast resources of textbooks for comprehension and examination purposes.
5. According to **Ryburn**,” It enables attention and energy to be concentrated on meaning and so it saves a division of attention resulting in a greater assimilation of information.”

Disadvantage of silent reading

The disadvantage of silent reading can be the following:

1. Silent reading does not suit beginners .
2. It hardly introduces the students with pronunciation. Though the students pronounce in their minds, but the mistakes of the students cannot be corrected by the teacher.

3. It is difficult to find out if the students are really reading or are just looking at the text with the thoughts wandering.

We need to improve our visual perception skills and ability to identify words and phrases. Eye reading makes reading fast, efficient and result oriented. Silent reading is an end in itself as it makes possible for us to read wide and intensive. Its benefits are numerous and should not be discouraged looking at its disadvantages.

3. INTENSIVE READING

Intensive reading is a detailed study of the prescribed text in order to train the students is an important aspect of language teaching, i.e. reading. According to Jespersen, "To keep them occupied with the text repeatedly in such a way that they do not lose sight in the meaning, so that they may thus become so familiar with it at last that they know it almost or entirely by heart, without having been directly required to commit it to memory." The teacher has to carefully plan teaching of intensive reading as it plays an important role, not only in examination but also in practical life as well.

Intensive reading: reading shorter texts, to extract specific information. This is more an accuracy activity involving reading for detail.

Objectives of intensive reading

The objectives of intensive reading are:

1. The aim is to make a detailed study of words, phrases, word order and expressions, thus entirely dealing with the sentence structure.
2. The aim is to enable the students to comprehend the text, its sense and meaning.
3. The aim is to enable the students to improve and command over English and increase comprehension of the texts that they come across with expanding vocabulary.
4. It encourages the students to gather information from the text.

Process

The process of intensive reading is very important and needs careful planning by the teacher. According to **Dave Singh**, "Teachers follow their own method: for after all, a teacher is the principal method. Much depends on his personality, expression, initiatives, drive, devices etc. However, still there are broad steps in a lesson which no intelligent teacher can afford to miss without detriment to his efficiency of teaching."

The steps of teaching intensive reading are as under :

- 1) Selection of the topic is one of the most important steps in beginning to teach intensive reading.
- 2) The second step is introduction to the topic. Any of the two methods can be used – first, to introduce the topic to the students in an interesting description so as to arouse their interest; or secondly , to test the previous knowledge of the student by asking them question on the topic or a related subject.
- 3) After this, the teacher presents the text to the student in his own manner, so that the students can have acquaintance with the passage.
- 4) Now the teacher gives a model reading. Model reading by the teacher is an essential part of intensive reading and must not be ignore. According to **Morris**, “ For a considerable part of a course, it is strongly advisable for the teacher to give a model reading of the fresh text, exploiting its dramatic possibilities”.
- 5) The next step is reading aloud by the students. They should be invited to read aloud one by one, preferably starting from the bright students and going down to the weak students. The teacher should correct their mistakes in pronunciation, stress, pitch etc. The purpose of this exercise is to overcome their mistakes and hesitation in reading and speaking.
- 6) The teacher should explain new words, phrases, sentence patterns, grammatical points as well as special reference of the text to the students. The teacher should explain the synonyms also, these synonyms can be in the mother tongue or English, as the teacher finds appropriate. Similarly, sentence patterns can be explained by giving parallel examples and other structure in the mother tongue and English. The words and phrases should also be analysed on the basis of parts of speech, tense, degree of adjective, use of gerund etc. Other features of sentences such as active/ passive voice, direct/ indirect narration etc. should also be explained.
- 7) Having fully explained the text and its various features, the teacher now tries to test comprehension level of the students.

Intensive reading can be more interesting by encouraging the students to ask questions to their classmates on the passage read by them. This will encourage students to search out questions from the passage. For this they will be very keen go through every line of the passage.

Advantages of intensive reading

Intensive reading has the following advantages:

1. It improves the power of expression.
2. The students develop the skill of questioning and answering.
3. The students become interested in looking into details of the text they come across as they find newer meanings being attributed to the otherwise ordinary looking passages.

Disadvantage of intensive reading

The disadvantage of intensive reading can be the following:

1. Its process is long and cumbersome.
2. It seldom imparts joy and pleasure.
3. The students are interested in this method only from the point of view of examinations.
4. This method does not teach grammar properly. According to **Ballard**," During the last fifteen years of English composition both written and oral have steadily improved in schools and this improvement has taken place concomitantly with a declining attention to grammar." Grammar as we know as the most important aspect of language, and without learning it properly a language cannot be mastered.

Today, most of the students just want to pass the examination , the students often read the summaries and mug up the details without having interacted with the original texts even once.

We can say that intensive reading is an important aspect of learning a language, but it should come after the students have gone through extensive reading. Only then it can be made beneficial and joyful.

4. Extensive reading

Extensive reading has been strongly recommended by **Indian Education Commission**(1964-66). This type of reading is also known as **rapid reading or independent reading**. The teacher plays the role of the supervisor while the students carry it out independently.

Extensive reading to read silently and quickly in order to understand the subject matter and derive the meaning as a whole without the help of the teacher and expand passive vocabulary. According to Thompson and Wyatt," The main purpose of extensive reading is the cultivation of taste for reading and it seeks by encouraging the habit of visualizing what is read to make reading a form of visual instruction."

Extensive reading should be undertaken only when the students have mastered at least a vocabulary of about 500 words, implying it should be started in the middle classes and not prior to it, and the students should have developed the ability to recognize words at sight.

Extensive reading: reading longer texts, usually for one's own pleasure. This is a fluency activity, mainly involving global understanding.

Objectives of extensive reading

The objectives of extensive reading are:

1. To develop the habit of self-study in the students.
2. To develop the taste for reading in the students.
3. To enable the students to understand the meaning of the given passage as early as possible.
4. To increase the passive vocabulary of the students.
5. To develop the power of concentration.
6. To read for pleasure and recreation.

Procedure

According to **Thompson and Wyatt**," The exact procedure to be adopted will depend upon the nature of the subject matter to be read and the skill in reading already acquired by the class."

1. The teacher should give a brief introduction of the topic to create interest among the students.
2. The difficult words should be explained before hand.
3. Students should be asked to read the text silently with reasonable speed.
4. Comprehension questions should be asked after the students have finished silent reading. However, the question should never concern the fine details of the text. They should only test the comprehension level on a wider scale.
5. When the students have finished reading all units, the students can be asked narrate the gist in their own words.

Advantages of extensive reading

Extensive reading has the following advantages:

1. It helps widen the vocabulary of the students.
2. It keeps the whole class active and busy.
3. It prepares the students for intensive reading so students are encouraged for library reading.
4. It inculcates the habit of self study in the students.

The advantages of extensive reading are many but unfortunately, the situation is different in Indian schools where much thought is not paid to this aspect. The lesson plans should suitably contain provisions for extensive reading.

Suggestions for selection of books

According to **Champion**," Books prescribed for extensive reading should not contain even one unfamiliar word or phrase. There should not be language barrier between the pupil and what he reads." We know meeting this suggestion in Indian context is difficult to attain, but attempts can be made in this direction. Following are some suggestions:

1. The text books should be simple in language and according to the level of the students.
2. The books should contain interesting texts like short stories, plays, biographies, etc.
3. The books should be suitable to the taste, culture, society, experience and interest of the pupil.

Comparison between Intensive and Extensive reading

It will be beneficial to compare intensive reading with extensive reading in order to understand them properly.

Intensive reading	Extensive reading
1. It concentrates upon the language aspect.	1. It concentrates upon the subject matter.
2. The aim is to make a careful and minute study what is read.	2. The aim is only to grasp the meaning of what is read.
3. Words, phrases, and expressions are studied in detail.	3. Words, phrases, and expressions are not studied in detail.
4. Reading by the pupils is aloud and control by the teacher.	4. Reading by the pupils is silent and independent.
5. New words and phrases occurring in the book pass into the pupils active vocabulary.	5. New words and phrases occurring in the book pass into the pupils passive vocabulary.
6. It requires intensive teaching.	6. No detail teaching is required.
7. The teacher plays an active role.	7. The teacher's role is reduced to that of a supervisor.

2.3.5 Supplementary reading

Supplementary reading quite resembles intensive reading. It is carried out under the direct control and general supervision of the teacher. Extensive reading is the most important aspect of supplementary reading, as such it is also called **subsidiary reading**. The chief purpose of supplementary reading is to supplement intensive reading of a detailed prose lesson. It is generally introduced in the middle stage with one to three supplementary readers. The method of teaching is just like the extensive reading. It may be carried out twice or thrice in a week as the teacher or school administration deems fit. Supplementary readers are recommended in the middle and high classes where prose text forms the basic course.

Check your progress

Notes: a) Write your answer in the space provided after each item.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. One of the following is **not** a type of reading:

- i) Loud reading ii) Silent reading iii) Descriptive reading iv) Supplementary reading

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2. Mention the advantages of intensive reading.

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2.4 Techniques to increase speed of reading

Students who read too slowly will easily get discouraged. They will also tend to stumble on unfamiliar words and fail to grasp the general meaning of the passage.

One of the most common ways of increasing reading speed is to give students passages to read and to ask them to time themselves. A conversion table, taking the length of the text and the reading time into account, will tell them what their reading speed is and this will make it easier for them to try and read a little faster every time. Below is an example of a conversion table for 500- word texts.

Reading time (min/ secs)	Speed (w.p.m.)	Reading time (min/ secs)	Speed (w.p.m.)	
1.00	500	3.10	158	
1.10	427	3.20	150	
1.20	375	3.30	143	
1.30	334	3.40	137	
1.40	300	3.50	131	
1.50	273	4.00	125	
2.00	250	4.10	120	

2.10	231	4.20	116	
2.20	215	4.30	111	
2.30	200	4.40	107	
2.40	188	4.50	104	
2.50	174	5.00	100	
3.00	167			

When practising faster reading systematically, the students can be encouraged to keep a record of their results, showing their progress (e.g. in the form of a graph). This will encourage them to read more.

As we have to read both extensively and intensively, we cannot afford to read slowly. The reading needs may vary but in order to improve reading efficiency reading speed has to be increased. Reading speed is measured in words per minute (wpm). Casual or general reading such as reading novels, poems, stories and humorous articles do not require much concentration and therefore, the reading speed is faster than that of serious reading. Though, academic or professional reading such as reading technical texts, articles and proposals require more concentration and reading speed cannot be increased at the cost of reading efficiency.

<u>Reading speed</u>	<u>Casual reading</u>	<u>Academic/Professional reading</u>
Very fast	+400 wpm	+350 wpm
Fast	300 - 400 wpm	250 – 350 wpm
Average	200 – 300 wpm	150 – 250 wpm
Slow	Less than 200 wpm	Less than 150 wpm

2.4.1 Phrasing

This method pre supposes that phrases are more interesting than words as they are able to convey meanings. Also, a reader fixes his eyes and mind on a group of words rather than concentrating on each word individually. We know that phrases are adequate units of reading and teaching.

Under this method, the teacher writes a phrase on the blackboard and introduces the students with its meaning and other features.

Prof. Palmer advocates this method as he says, “ The word is too small a unit of speech and the sentence is too long a unit to be read at a time.”

Reading with phrasing in fluent reading allows children to use meaning and structure, sources of information to support the use of visual information thus, helping them problem solve as they read text. It also involves putting together all sources of information- meaning, language, structure and print knowledge, in an integrated and flexible manner to support the comprehension of the text. When this happens, phrased and fluent reading is not simply a product of reading but a major contributor to reading proficiency.

This method is not devoid of demerit as well. The mastering of phrases as individual units can be time consuming. It also concentrates on the meaning rather than on reading aspect, so it does not much facilitate reading.

To monitor child's progress , teachers can record how the child's reading sounded on the running record form. Did the reading sound like talking? Is the reader learning how to pause appropriately, read in phrases and use punctuation, pitch, and stress to get the message?

2.4.2 Scanning

Scanning refers to the ability to locate specific information or facts as quickly as possible. While trying to look for the meaning of a word in a dictionary or looking for a telephone number in the telephone directory, we scan and try to look for specific information. Scanning is an important rapid reading technique. It may serve many purposes, which include looking for :

- a) a specific point or fact in a text ,
- b) a formulae in a text,
- c) a word in a dictionary,
- d) train or television schedules,
- e) any reference or bibliographical list,
- f) examination results, or
- g) any notes/ questions/ remarks at the end of the text.

We may know how to scan a newspaper or dictionary but may do it slowly with less accuracy. What is important is to increase scanning speed with accuracy.

The following suggestions will help increase proficiency at scanning:

1. Do not read everything

The first step would be to fix clearly in mind what one is looking for. The purpose of scanning should be determined and the reader should not be confused about the information that he/ she requires.

The second step is to plan how the required information can be obtained. For example, if one is looking for a name or place, capital letter can provide clues.

2. Use guides and aids

Every reading material contains certain guides and aids, which should be used to find what the reader wants.

3. Know the association of the material to be read

The reader needs to know the connection of the reading material to scan it with speed and accuracy. Practise scanning different types of reading material, such as newspaper listings, dictionaries, telephone directories, and analyse the way information is structured in these materials.

4. Concentrate while scanning

The reader needs to concentrate while scanning a reading material. One must have the urge to read and scan the material. This will improve his visual perception and help him identify the required information quickly.

2.4.3 Skimming

Skimming is a more sophisticated skill than scanning. It refers to the process of reading a text or passage in order to get rough idea of what the text or passage is all about. It is a rapid reading technique that prepares the reader for detailed reading. As the main objective of skimming is to understand the central idea and the main points of the text, the reader needs to use a reading strategy that involves fast reading and quick analysis.

Skimming also involves discovering the purpose and association of a text. One of the most important purposes of reading for academic and professional purposes is obtaining relevant information for various purposes. This involves not only the ability to recognize the main ideas and supporting details but also the ability to identify different writing patterns used to develop these ideas. Authors use variety of discourse patterns in scientific writing.

Skimming is essential for better understanding of a text. Skimming should answer the following questions about the text:

1. What is the overall purpose of the text?

2. What is the central idea or theme?
3. What does the author intent to do? (describe, instruct, report, narrate, explain, argue, persuade, illustrate and so on)
4. What are the main points of the text?

Identifying the Central Idea

The first step of skimming is to identify the central idea. Every essay, article, passage, or textbook chapter deals with a theme or central idea. All the other ideas, points, examples, illustrations in the text support and expand the central idea.

In order to understand the central idea of a text, the reader should carefully read the following:

- The title or the main heading
- The sub-headings
- The opening paragraph
- The last paragraph

The title or the main heading of a text can give a clue to the content. Similarly, the sub-headings can also help in identifying the central idea. The opening and the last paragraphs generally sum up the subject and the author's point of view. The reader should also glance over the beginning of the text to identify its logical association. Identify the discourse technique used in the text, i.e., definition, description, explanation, comparison and contrast, narration, classification and so on.

Both skimming and scanning are specific reading techniques necessary for quick and efficient reading.

When skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it organized, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer.

When scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even follow the linearity of the passage to do so. We simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it be name, a date, or a less specific piece of information.

Skimming is therefore a more thorough activity which requires an overall view of the text and implies a definite reading competence. Scanning on the contrary, is far more limited since it only means retrieving what information is relevant to our purpose.

Yet it is usual to make use of these two activities together when reading a given text. For instance, we may well skim through an article first just to know whether it is worth reading, then read it through more carefully because we have decided that it is of

interest. It is also possible afterwards to scan the same article in order to note down a figure or a name which we particularly want to remember.

2.4.4 Key word reading

The key word method is an effective system for remembering definitions, learning foreign language vocabulary, and more. Any two pieces of information can be linked together in your memory using this method.

The way you use the key word method is by combining the creation of substitute words with visualization, a two step process:

First, convert the sound of the word into one or more concepts that can be visualized. Then, associate those concepts with an image representing the actual meaning of the word.

Memorizing vocabulary words and their definitions can be tough. Some words seem very strange at the first time you see them.

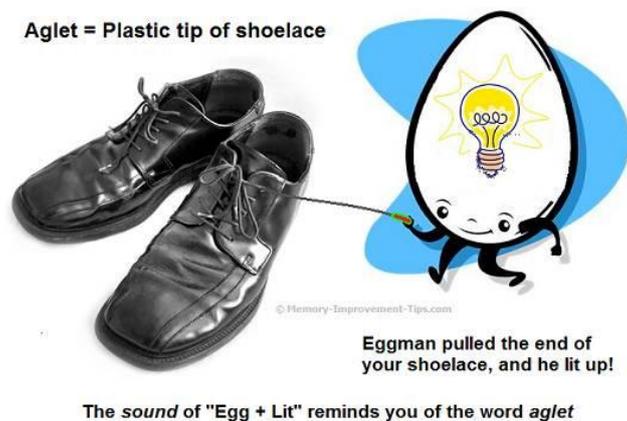
Substitute words, visualization, and association are the secrets to make it easy. In fact, if you make the effort, you can memorise lot of terms and their definitions in a short time.

Below are examples that show how to memorise vocabulary words using substitute words and association. Keep in mind, the clearer the image, the better you recall.

Example 1 Aglet. An aglet is the plastic piece at the end of the shoelace.

So what is the easy way to remember this strange word?

Create a memorable, crazy mental image that reminds you of the word.



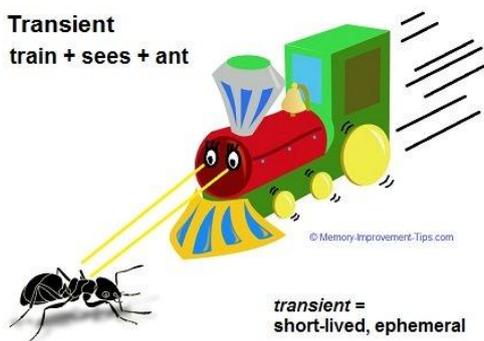
The eggman is pulling on the end of your shoelace. As he does this, he lights up. This picture is strange. That is what makes it stick in your memory.

'Aglet' isn't the most useful word to know (unless you're in the shoe business). But I picked it as an example to show that the definition of any word can be remembered by thinking of a bizarre scene that links the meaning of the word to the sound of the syllables in that word.

Example 2 Transient. When used as an adjective, transient describes something that exists for a short period of time . Transient is pronounced "tran see ent".

Reminder: The sounds we use only need to come close. They are reminders. At recall time, your memory will know that the real word is when you hear the sounds.

The word transient sounds very much like "train sees ant". Below is a funny image that represents this phrase:



By seeing this image, one can imagine that a train engine zooms quickly toward an ant crossing the train's path. The train (having eyes) sees the ant but cannot stop.

Seeing the image in your mind's eye, you realize the train is about to run over the ant; the train sees this is about to happen but cannot stop. The ant is therefore short-lived; his existence is ephemeral.

Now you know without any confusion that "transient" means something temporary or short lived.

The human brain was built to remember images better than abstract information, you will remember this definition more easily and for much longer than if you tried to remember it by repeating the definition to yourself a million times.

Check your progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space provided after each item.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

3. What is scanning?

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4. What is skimming?

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2.5 Reading comprehension in the classroom

What is reading comprehension?

Understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible. For example, we apply different reading strategies when looking at a notice board to see if there is an advertisement for a particular type of *flat* and carefully reading an article of special interest in a scientific journal. In the first case, a competent reader will quickly reject the irrelevant information and find what he is looking for. In the second case, it is not enough to understand the gist of the text; more detailed comprehension is necessary.

The first point to be noted when practicing reading in the classroom is that it is a silent activity. Therefore silent reading should be encouraged in most cases, though the teacher may sometimes need to read part of the text aloud. The students themselves should not read aloud.

It is useful to give the class some help on how to approach a new text. The following procedure is very helpful with most of the text.

- a) Consider the text as a whole, its title, accompanying pictures or diagrams, the paragraphs and make guesses about what the text is about.
- b) Skim through the text a first time to see if your hypotheses were right. Then ask yourself a number of questions about the contents of the text.
- c) Read the text again, more slowly and carefully this time, trying to understand as much as you can and trying to answer the questions you asked yourself.

Another classroom procedure can consist of helping the students to time himself and increase his reading speed little by little. It is necessary to reach a certain reading speed in order to read efficiently. This can be done by showing the students how to record their reading speed systematically on a chart and to try to improve it each time they read a new text.

Reading can be done as a class activity, but reading activities can also be devised to individualize students' work at home. Instead of choosing one activity for the whole class, two or three sets of exercises of varying difficulty can be prepared based on the same text so that each student can work at home at his own level. If the text is then to be discussed in the class, each group of students who have worked on the same exercise will be able to talk about what they have done. This will certainly be stimulating for the weaker students, while the better ones will not feel held back.

2.6 Let us sum up

In this unit we have discussed the concept and types of reading. We have discussed how to increase the speed of reading through various techniques which will be helpful for the students. Loud reading is beneficial at primary level where as silent reading is advantageous at higher level. In the same way intensive reading is a detailed study where as extensive reading is rapid reading and supplementary reading quite resembles to intensive reading. Skimming is quickly running one's eyes over a text to get the gist of it. Scanning is quickly going through a text to find a particular piece of information.

Some exercises given in the unit will help student to correct their pronunciation, as English is a foreign language and only practice can improve students' speaking and reading skills. This unit encourages teachers to introduce variety into the teaching of reading.

2.7 Questions for reflection

- Reading is to mind, what exercise is to body. Do you agree, support your answer.
- How is intensive reading different from extensive reading?
- Silent reading is of immense value in the practical life even after the school life. Discuss.
- The books should be according to the level of the students. Why?

2.8 Answers to check your progress

1. Descriptive reading
2. The advantages of intensive reading are numerous. Some of them are:

a) The first and direct impact of intensive reading is vocabulary of the students, especially the active one. The students learn about various usages of words and sentence pattern.

b) It helps in learning grammar.

c) It develops the skill of questioning and answering.

d) It enhances the power of expression.

3. Scanning refers to the ability to locate specific information or facts as quickly as possible. Scanning is an important rapid reading technique. We simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it be a name, a date or a less specific piece of information.

4. Skimming is reading but at one's fastest speed, it is used for obtaining more important information out of a lot of material, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organized, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer. Skimming is therefore a more thorough activity which requires an overall view of the text and implies a definite reading competence.

2.9 References and suggested reading

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