

READING SKILLS

“Every man who knows how to read has it in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant and interesting.” – Aldous Huxley

Reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it, and understand its meaning. An individual's ability to understand text is influenced by their traits and skills, one of which is the ability to make inferences (suggestions).

Reading is a skill which facilitates us to get a message; identifying the written words (written symbols); understanding the meaning; used to teach pronunciation; grasping information from texts. Reading is a complex activity that involves both perception and thought. Reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. Comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text. Readers characteristically make use of contextual knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text. There are the following types of reading and the corresponding types of activities to develop the corresponding reading skills;

1. Skimming

Skimming is used to quickly gather the most important information, or 'gist'. Run your eyes over the text, noting important information. Skimming reading is

reading to confirm expectations; reading for communicative tasks. Skimming is the most fundamental type of reading. Its object is to familiarize you as quickly as possible with the material to be read. It's not essential to understand each word when skimming. The Newspaper (quickly to get the general news of the day), Magazines (quickly to discover which articles you would like to read in more detail). you may skim by reading: titles, subheadings, words in that are in bold, in italics or underlined, diagrams, a report's abstract, introduction or conclusion, the first sentence of every paragraph, chapter questions, chapter objectives, chapter summaries etc.

2. Scanning

Scanning is used to find a particular piece of information. Run your eyes over the text looking for the specific piece of information you need. General reading or scanning is reading to extract specific information; reading for general understanding. Scanning is a skill that requires that you read quickly while looking for specific information. To scan a reading text, you should start at the top of the page and then move your eyes quickly toward the bottom. Generally, scanning is a technique that is helpful when you are looking for the answer to a known question. Use scanning on schedules, meeting plans, etc. in order to find the specific details you require. If you see words or phrases that you don't understand, don't worry when scanning. For example while you read contents, headings, subheadings, diagrams, introductions, etc

3. Extensive reading

Extensive reading is used to obtain a general understanding of a subject and includes reading longer texts for pleasure, as well as books. Do not worry if you don't understand each word. e.g. a novel you read before going to bed.

4. Intensive reading

Intensive reading is used on shorter texts in order to extract specific information. It includes very close accurate reading for detail. In this case, it is important that you understand each word, number or fact.

5. Close reading

Close reading means not only reading and understanding the meanings of the individual printed words, ^{Close Reading} ~~but also~~ involves making yourself sensitive to all the degrees and connotations of language as it is used by skilled writers. Close reading or searching reading is reading for complete understanding; reading for detailed comprehension (information; function and discourse). Close reading is the most important skill you need for any form of literary studies. It means paying especially close attention to what is printed on the page.

6. Purposeful reading

If you tend to begin reading like this: "I need to read Chapter 6 – here it goes!", You may need to rethink your approach. Specifically, you will need to create a purpose for reading. You can create this purpose if you: Be very clear about exactly what you are looking for. Don't just read aimlessly. Perhaps you will look for

answers to questions, general understanding of a topic or issue, detailed knowledge, a range of perspectives, identification of a writer's position, evaluation of a writer's position, arguments that support your position, arguments that oppose your position, examples, statistics, definitions, explanations, quotes, etc. Try to have the purpose in writing nearby so you maintain focus. Purposeful reading of this nature can help you read faster and more selectively. It can also help your concentration and your ability to remember.

7. Information words

There will be times when you need to do more than skim a text but still need to read quickly. This may require ability to conduct "surface reading". It is worth remembering that no more than 50% of the words in an average textbook are "information" words. The other words are like glue and paint: they are there to provide connections and add interest, but are not essential for meaning. If you concentrate on information words, you can read faster and with better comprehension. But, how do you learn to pick out the important information words? A large part of the trick involves paying attention to what the author is trying to say. Look for the message, and the information words will emerge naturally.

8. Phrase reading

Watch the eyes of a friend or a member of your class while he or she is reading. You will see that they move along each line of print in a series of jerks. The pauses between the jerks are known as fixations. It is during the fixations that your eyes take in words. Poor readers take in only one or two words in each fixation. This is how a poor reader's eyes move along lines of print. A good reader, on the

A good reader
other hand, takes in several words in each fixation | This is how | a better reader's | eyes move along | lines of print. |

? 9. Analytical reading

Analytical reading (or study reading) is needed when you want to make sure that you fully grasp and appreciate what you are reading. You may have to read statements more than once, stop to think about them, or jot down key words when using this style. As a result, your reading rate can easily drop to below 100 words a minute.

10. Marking the text

If the text you are reading is your own copy, you could also underline key words, highlight with a marker, or make notes in margins, or alternatively, if you don't own the text, you could use little 'post-it' labels. This process of marking texts can help you concentrate (and keep reading!) and can help you identify key points and make the book easier to survey later when you need to use it again for your assignment or to revise for an exam.

11. Note-taking

If you don't take notes well, or don't take them at all, now is the time to develop this important skill. Note-taking can help you gain deeper understanding and insight, a better ability to remember and good exam preparation materials for later.

12. Managing vocabulary

Even if you are a good English speaker, you may at times feel stunned by the amount of unfamiliar vocabulary you encounter. Of course, as a university student, you have a great opportunity and need to build your vocabulary (~~disciplined specific and general~~), so consult glossaries and use a dictionary. Keep a list of new words: record their definitions and write example sentences which show meaning and usage. When using your dictionary, be eagle-eyed. Know which words can be ignored, and see if it is possible to guess the meanings of words.

13. Reading with others

Consider getting a "study buddy" or study group. Be careful to keep focused on what you need to do and you may find that by sharing notes, explaining, asking and quizzing each other, you can increase your capacity to understand, reflect upon and remember key points in texts. Finally if you continue to find reading difficult, remember this: Reading at university level is challenging. However, if you put in the time and effort you may start to enjoy the task.

14. Understanding the Text

To understand the context is far more important to proper comprehension than going through the dictionary and memorizing mechanically all the words that you probably will never use or ever see them written somewhere.