

# COMPREHENSION SKILLS

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## **Reading comprehension**

It is the ability to process text, understanding its meaning,

and to compare with what the reader already knows. Fundamental skills required in efficient reading comprehension are knowing meaning of words, ability to understand meaning of a word from discourse context, ability to follow organization of passage , ability to draw inferences from a passage about its contents, ability to identify the main thought of a passage, ability to answer questions answered in a passage, ability to recognize literary devices or propositional structures used in a passage and determine its tone, to understand the situational mood (agents, objects, temporal and spatial reference points, casual and intentional inflections, etc.) conveyed for assertions, questioning, commanding, refraining etc. and finally ability to determine writer's purpose, intent and point of view and draw inferences about the writer .

## **Reading**

Reading is the active process of understanding print and graphic texts. Reading is a thinking process.

Effective readers know that when they read, what they read is supposed to make sense. They monitor their understanding, and when they lose the meaning of what they are reading, they often unconsciously select and use a reading strategy (such as rereading or asking questions) that will help them reconnect with the

meaning of the text

**Effective readers** use **strategies** to understand what they read before, during, and after reading.

## **Before Reading**

Before reading, they:

- use prior knowledge to think about the topic.
- make predictions about the probable meaning of the text.
- preview the text by skimming and scanning to get a sense of the overall meaning.

## **During Reading**

During reading, they:

- monitor understanding by questioning, thinking about, and reflecting on the ideas and information in the text.

## **After Reading**

After reading, they:

- reflect upon the ideas and information in the text.
- relate what they have read to their own experiences and knowledge.
- clarify their understanding of the text.
- extend their understanding in critical and creative ways.

## **Critical reading:**

**SQRRR** or **SQ3R** is a reading, comprehension method named for its five

steps: **survey, question, read, recite, and review**. The method was introduced by Francis P. Robinson, an American education philosopher in his 1946 book *Effective Study*.

The method offers a more efficient and active approach to reading textbook material

## **Process:**

### **1. Survey ("S")**

The first step, survey, advises that one should resist the temptation to read the book and instead first go through a chapter and note the headings, sub-headings and other outstanding features, such as figures, tables, marginal information, and summary paragraphs. This survey step typically only takes 3–5 minutes, but it provides an outline or framework for what will be presented. The reader should **identify ideas and formulate questions about the content of the chapter.**

### **2. Question ("Q")**

Generate questions about the content of the reading. For example, convert headings and sub-headings into questions, and then look for answers in the content of the text. Other more general questions may also be formulated:

- o **What is this chapter about?**
- o **What question is this chapter trying to answer?**
- o **How does this information help me?**

### **3. Read (R1)**

Use the background work done with "S" and "Q" in order to begin reading actively.

This means reading in order to answer the questions raised under "Q". Passive reading, in contrast, results in merely reading without engaging with the study material.

#### **4. Retrieve (R2)**

The second "R" refers to the part known as "Retrieve" or **regain**. The reader should try to retrieve from memory what was learned in the same manner as telling someone else about the information. It is important that the reader use his/her own words in order to formulate and conceptualize the material. Try **recalling** and **identifying major points** (heading/subheadings) and answers to questions from the "Q" step. This recital step may be done either in an oral or written format and is related to the benefits of retrieval in boosting long-term memory for the material.

#### **5. Review (R3)**

The final "R" is "Review." Once you reach the end of the passage, review the material by repeating back to yourself what the point of the passage is using your own words. You may then repeat the process on the second set of questions.

**Six stages of effective comprehension:**

Best's process of effective comprehension suggests six stages for better understanding a topic while in a learning process.

- Knowing vs Understanding what the passage says (Fact finding vs Making

- meaning with.
- Reflecting (Bringing the information to life in your own words to
- personalize and consolidate).
- Interpersonal understanding (Checking whether the reader understood the
- topic e.g. Explaining the idea to someone, doing seminars...etc.)
- Intrapersonal understanding (Finding personal significance (interpret,
- compare & conclude tentatively) of the topic in real world aspects)
- Visualization (Mind Mapping)
- Mindfulness and Acceptance

## **Types of Reading**

### **Skimming**

skimming is the most rudimentary type of reading. Its object is to familiarize you as quickly as possible with the material to be read.

### **Scanning**

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.

### **Close reading**

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.

Close reading means not only reading and understanding the meanings of the individual printed words, but also involves making yourself sensitive to all the nuances and connotations of language as it is used by skilled writer.

## **Extensive reading**

Extensive reading, **free reading**, **book flood**, or **reading for pleasure** is a way for language learning, including foreign languages learning, through large amounts of reading. As well as facilitating acquisition of vocabulary.

## **Intensive reading**

involves learners **reading in detail** with specific learning aims and tasks. It can be compared with extensive **reading**, which involves learners **reading** texts for enjoyment and to develop general **reading** skills.

## **Summarizing**

**Summarizing is about finding the key ideas of the text.**

Summarizing provides an opportunity for a student to **verbalize, write or type** their understanding of the text. An extension could be drawing or creating a visual display or performance of the summary. By summarizing and sharing, students can discover any gaps in their understanding or misconceptions as well as validate their key understandings.

The NSW centre for Effective Reading (2013) states there are **6 steps** for creating a summary:

1. List the main ideas;
2. Underline the most important;
3. Combine any you can;

4. Number in order;

5. Write the summary;

6. Edit the summary. (p.106)

### Headline: (From Visible Thinking)

This routine draws on the idea of newspaper-type headlines as a vehicle for summing up and capturing the essence of an event, idea, concept, topic, etc. The routine asks one core **question:**

1. If you were to write a headline for this topic or issue right now that captured the most important aspect that should be remembered, what would that headline be?

A second question involves probing how students' ideas of what is most important and central to the topic being explored have changed over time:

2. How has your headline changed based on today's discussion? How does it differ from what you would have said yesterday?

### GIST;(summary)

This can be done as a whole group, small group or individual. As mentioned above,

this involves students **making a summary using a limited amount of words.** The complexity of the text increases as students improve their summarizing abilities.

The Western Australia Department of Education (2013) extends this idea into a group setting thus: Students are challenged to read a text and summaries it in 66



words using a grid with 66 boxes. Students then write their summary in sentences.

Students then form small groups and combine their summary sentences to create a group summary of 66 words. Groups then share their summary with the class followed by discussion of **what was included** and **what was excluded and why**.  
(p.168)

### **Which is a good summary?**

The NSW Centre for Effective Reading (2013) suggests that after teaching students what a good summary is (i.e. a shortened version of the text that picks out the main ideas and important details) to read a text together and present the students with a set of summaries of the texts. The students determine which summary is the best and why. This can be done in whole or small group and is an introductory activity.

## **Sequencing**

**Sequencing** is one of many **skills** that contributes to students' **ability** to **comprehend** what they read. **Sequencing** refers to the identification of the components of a story — **the beginning, middle, and end** — and to the **ability** to **retell the events within a given text in the order in which they occurred**.

Finding meaning in a text depends on the ability to understand and place the details, the sequence of events, within some larger context—the beginning, middle, and end of a story. The ordering of events in a story, along with connecting words such as *once upon a time*, *then*, *later*, *afterwards*, and *in the end*, are good examples of textual features<sup>ii</sup>, an understanding of which gives the reader a way of integrating the story's individual parts into its larger framework—and thereby understanding the author's purpose.

readers and those that have not had much opportunity to work on their sequencing skills have a tendency to retell a story by starting with the end, since it is the part that they read or heard most recently. Even more experienced readers may re-tell a story by focusing primarily on the sections that were most appealing to them rather than by giving a more complete picture of the events that occurred. Practicing sequencing helps remedy both of these issues and makes this aspect of reading comprehension second nature.

If students are encouraged to identify the parts of a story, for instance, they will be better able to retell it to someone else, as it is a more manageable task to think of a story in pieces—the beginning, middle, and end—rather than try to recall it as one large chunk. Sequencing activities also provide an opportunity for students to examine text and story structure, which, in turn, strengthens their writing skills.

Sentence strips work well for sequencing , since events can be written on individual strips and then rearranged as necessary to put the events in the correct order. Let students use these lists or strips as reminders as they retell the story

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i New South Whales.....Australian state

ii **Text features** include all the components of a story or article that are not the main body of **text**. These include the table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions, and labeled diagrams.