**Reading skills**

Reading skill refers to the ability to understand written text. It is advisable to develop this skill at early age of schooling. When students comprehend or understand written text, and combine their understanding with prior knowledge, they are able to perform the following three reading-comprehension skills.

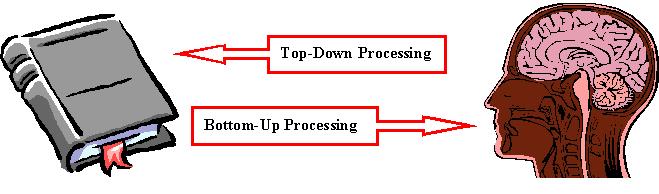
1. Identify simple facts presented in written text (literal comprehension)

2. Make judgments about the written text’s content (evaluative comprehension)

3. Connect the text to other written passages and situations (inferential comprehension)

**Models of the Reading Process**

 Reading basically involves transforming a text, which is a graphic representation, into thought, or meaning.  It used to be thought that this was simply a matter of combining letters into words, words into sentences and sentences into meanings.  However, over the last thirty years, psychologists and linguists, using a variety of experimental techniques, have discovered that things are much more complex.  Several models of the reading process have been put forward to account for the experimental findings.  A key element in explaining reading is the amount to which what the brain already knows affects perception of what is being read (top-down processing).  This idea was initially thought to be in contrast to earlier ideas that reading was a linear progression from page to understanding (bottom-up processing), but newer research seems to indicate that both elements play important parts in reading.



**Bottom-up**

Model A bottom-up reading model is a reading model that emphasizes the written or printed text, it says that reading is driven by a process that results in meaning (or, in other words, reading is driven by text) and that reading proceeds from part to whole. To elaborate, Gough (1972) proposes a phonics-based or bottom-up model of the reading process which portrays processing in reading as proceeding in serial fashion, from letter to sound, to words, to meaning.

**Top-down**

A top-down reading model 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. Reading doesn't result from the precise perception and identification of all the elements in a word, but from skills in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary. Readers have a prior sense of what could be meaningful in the text, based upon their previous experiences and their knowledge about language. Readers are not, in their view, confined only to one source of information—the letters before their eyes, but have at their disposal two other important kinds of information which are available at the same time: semantic cues (meaning), and syntactic cues (grammatical or sentence sense). Thus, what readers bring to the text separately in terms of both their prior knowledge of the topic and their knowledge about the language assists them in predicting what the upcoming words will be.

In this model it is evident that the flow of information proceeds from the top downward so that the process of word identification is dependent upon meaning first. Thus the higher level processes embodied in past experiences and the reader's knowledge of the language pattern interact with and direct the flow of information, just as listeners may anticipate what the upcoming words of speakers might be. This view identifies reading as a kind of “psycholinguistic guessing game”(Goodman, 1967). A representation of the top-down process is depicted in the following figure. Insert Figure 2 Here The top-down model centers upon the assumption that good readers bypass the letter sound correspondence when they read because they read so quickly. That is, because good readers read at a faster speed, they do not depend upon the phonemic code**.**

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| **Inrtetsneig fcat!**  Aoccdrnig to rscheearch at an Elingsh uinervtisy, it deosn’t mttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is that the frist and lsat ltteer is at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a total mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae we do not raed ervey lteter by it slef but the wrod as a wlohe. |

**Interactive Mode**l

Since neither the bottom-up nor top-down model of the reading process totally accounts for what occurs during the reading process. Reading is thus neither a bottom-up nor top-down process, but a synthesis of the two. The interactive reading model, as developed by David E. Rumelhart in 1977, describes a reading process and the way linguistic elements are processed and interpreted by the brain. The model combines both surface structure systems, such as the sensory, bottom-up portion of reading with deep structure systems, such as the thinking, or top-down, aspects of reading to build meaning and memory for all learners.

## **Two main types of reading**

**Intensive Reading**

You need to have your aims clear in mind when undertaking intensive reading. Remember this is going to be far more time consuming than scanning or skimming. If you need to list the chronology of events in a long passage, you will need to read it intensively. This type of reading has indeed beneficial to language learners as it helps them understand vocabulary by deducing the meaning of words in context. It moreover, helps with retention of information for long periods of time and knowledge resulting from intensive reading persists in your long term memory.

This is one reason why reading huge amounts of information just before an exam does not work very well. When students do this, they undertake neither type of reading process effectively, especially neglecting intensive reading. They may remember the answers in an exam but will likely forget everything soon afterwards.

**Extensive reading**

Extensive reading involves reading for pleasure. Because there is an element of enjoyment in extensive reading it is unlikely that students will undertake extensive reading of a text they do not like. It also requires a fluid decoding and assimilation of the text and content in front of you. If the text is difficult and you stop every few minutes to figure out what is being said or to look up new words in the dictionary, you are breaking your concentration and diverting your thoughts.

**Strategic reading methods can help students achieve not only their academic needs, but more importantly their life goals**.