**Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning. It relies on two, interconnected abilities: word reading (being able to decode the symbols on the page) and language comprehension (being able to understand the meaning of the words and sentences).

When we make sense of a text, however, we don’t just remember the exact words and phrases we read. Rather, we form a mental model of what the text describes by integrating the sense of the words and sentences into a meaningful whole, like a film that plays in our head.

Good comprehension is vital if reading is to have a purpose, if a reader is to engage with and learn from a text and, ultimately, if a reader is to enjoy what they’re reading.

​**Importance of Reading Skill**

* Reading like listening is indispensible in order to decode a written message.
* Understanding through reading connects the reader to the writer who after decoding the literal message is able to give feedback.
* Since all official records are maintained in written form, it enhances the importance of reading skill.
* A good reader’s immediate response to the message may result in building good rapports with the sender.
* Efficient reading results in extracting information and enriching knowledge.

**Types of Reading**

Reading is not a passive process i.e., it’s not merely grasping the message of the written words but it involves the reader’s participation in the form of his responding to the writer’s view point. A good reader is one who’s active and thus responds to the text. This type of practice makes reading a productive and dynamic process. Different reading materials require different reading skills as mentioned below:

1. Reading extensively: Some reading materials that aim at providing general understanding of a subject require skill of reading extensively.
2. Reading intensively: there may be some texts such as science articles, technical papers and so on that are to be read seriously and intensively. Intensive reading leads to in-depth knowledge of the subject.

**Methods of Reading Speedily (4s)**

1. **Skimming method:** The word ‘skim’ literally means to scum or cream or floating layer from the surface of liquid. The skimming is a specific technique of reading which means reading a text superficially or look over with curiosity and gather salient facts contained in it. In other words, when skimming, we read a text quickly to get the gist of it and locate specific information.
2. **Scanning method:** The word ‘scan’ literally means to look at all parts intently or quickly. The planning method of reading a text means reading quickly to look for specific bits of information. The reader is required not to read a passage thoroughly but his eyes should wander over the text quickly in order to find out what information is relevant to his purpose.
3. **Skipping method:** Skipping while reading means that you don't read an entire section altogether. When you skip at any point in your reading, then it is probably material that is unnecessary or just filler. A skilled reader accurately knows when it is safe to skip a section. Skipping is selective reading in a way.
4. **Screening method:** Reading thoroughly.

**General Strategies for Reading Comprehension**

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.

In order to learn comprehension strategies, students need modeling, practice, and feedback. The key comprehension strategies are described below.

**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.

**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.

**Identifying the Main Idea and Summarization**

Identifying the main idea and summarizing requires 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.

**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.

**Making Inferences**

In order to make inferences about something that is not explicitly stated in the text, students must learn to draw on prior knowledge and recognize clues in the text itself.

**Visualizing**

Studies have shown that students who visualize while reading have better recall than those who do not (Pressley, 1977). Readers can take advantage of illustrations that are embedded in the text or create their own mental images or drawings when reading text without illustrations.

**Objectives of improving reading skills**

1. To enhance the ability to understand written words.
2. To develop ability to connect one sentence with the other.
3. To be able to derive or decode the message of the written words
4. To make reading not a passive but an active process.
5. To enhance knowledge and use that knowledge at the workplace.
6. To use the acquired information/knowledge.