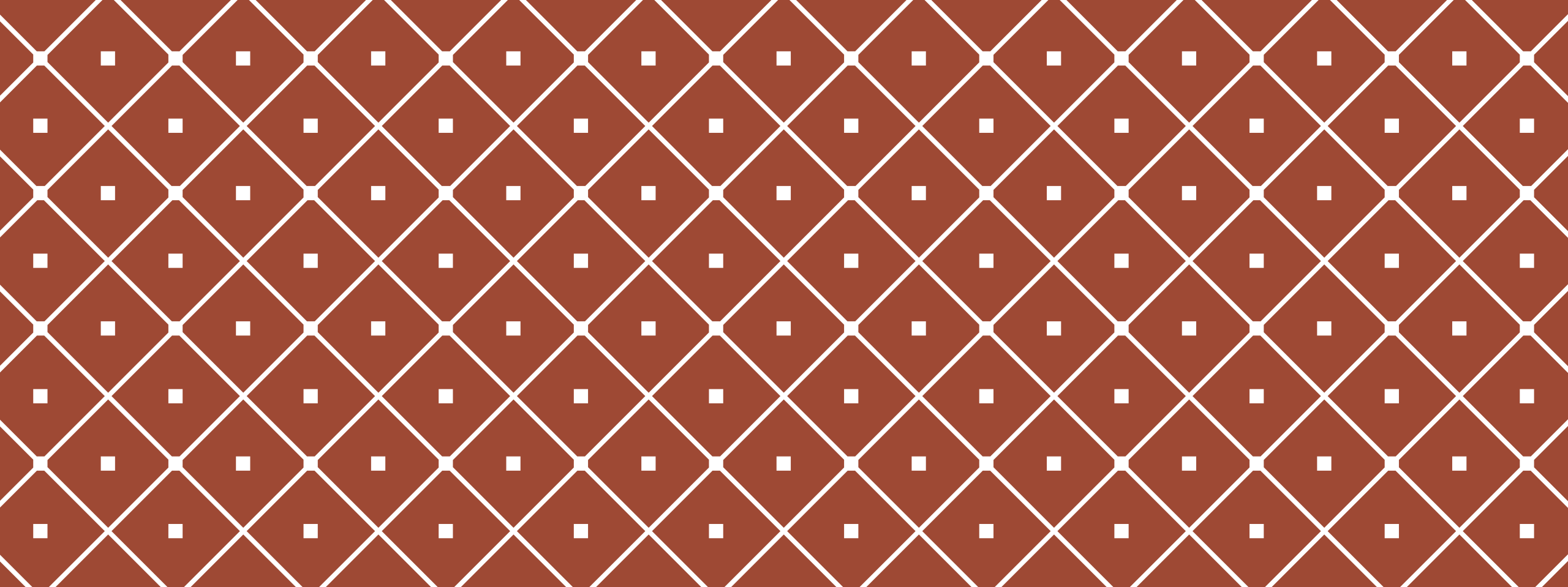




**IIT Madras**  
ONLINE DEGREE



# IMPROVE YOUR READING SKILLS

KARTHIKA SATHYANATHAN

# READING SKILLS

Reading improves your vocabulary. Vocabulary is most important in learning a language.

By actively reading or observing the text (structure of sentences) , you can improve your grammar.

This also leads to better writing and speaking (English for academic and business purposes).

# THE RULES FOR COMPREHENSION

Read out loud (at times) – reading and listening

Read a book with a pen.

Do a quick scanning of the book/passage for important key passages/ points.

Read the entire paragraph or the passage before you highlight something.

Pay attention to summary words – therefore, as a result, hence, in short, in conclusion etc.

Circle key words or difficult jargons in a passage.

Paraphrase what you read.

Interact and engage with the text (who is the main character, what issue does this article address? What is the author trying to tell you? Does she make compelling points? Does the author show any bias? ) Look for answers while you read.

# READING COMPREHENSION FOR TESTS - TIPS

## **Budget your time**

How many passages? How many exercises? How much time?

Less time on short/easy passages and more time on difficult/ longer passages.

Time yourself and stick to the plan.

## **Reading plan**

1. Skim the text : Reading the surface of the text to understand the overall message.

- heading, subheading (subject of the text)
- read the first few sentences of each paragraph.

# READING COMPREHENSION FOR TESTS - TIPS

**Read the first line (marked in red) of the two paras and try to understand the main topic in each paragraph.**

**Philosophy of Education is a label applied to the study of the purpose, process, nature and ideals of education.** It can be considered a branch of both philosophy and education. Education can be defined as the teaching and learning of specific skills, and the imparting of knowledge, judgment and wisdom, and is something broader than the societal institution of education we often speak of.

**Many educationalists consider it a weak and woolly field, too far removed from the practical applications of the real world to be useful.** But philosophers dating back to Plato and the Ancient Greeks have given the area much thought and emphasis, and there is little doubt that their work has helped shape the practice of education over the millennia.

# READING COMPREHENSION FOR TESTS - TIPS

2. Go ahead with the easiest exercises :

- read the questions and fully understand them.
- understand the keywords or their synonyms (help you identify the answers).

According to the passage given below, is the following statement True or False

a) Educationists consider philosophy a 'weak and woolly' field.

Philosophy of Education is a label applied to the study of the purpose, process, nature and ideals of education. It can be considered a branch of both philosophy and education. Education can be defined as the teaching and learning of specific skills, and the imparting of knowledge, judgment and wisdom, and is something broader than the societal institution of education we often speak of. Many educationalists consider it a weak and woolly field, too far removed from the practical applications of the real world to be useful. But philosophers dating back to Plato and the Ancient Greeks have given the area much thought and emphasis, and there is little doubt that their work has helped shape the practice of education over the millennia.

# READING COMPREHENSION FOR TESTS - TIPS

3. Read the text and find the answers.

4. Move on to the next exercise.

Challenges while reading – Lack of rich vocabulary and practise.



# HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR READING SKILLS?

## **Read more and read widely**

Read and read as much as possible – newspapers, magazines, books, articles etc.

Read something you like in the beginning) – history, films, sports, editorials etc.

Read something different everyday (different themes and genres).

## **Note down and review new vocabulary.**

Keep a notebook and pen handy while you read.

**Practise makes reading perfect** – read it more than once.

# CRITICAL READING

## 1. Separating facts from opinion.

Facts: information that can be proved true through objective evidence. Facts can be checked for accuracy and thus proved true. Here is a fact: China is the most populous country in the world.

Opinion: belief, judgement or conclusion that cannot be objectively proved true. Here is an opinion: the best treatment for thyroid is homeopathy. (There is no consensus in the scientific community that it is true)

Note: Much of what we read is a mixture of fact and opinion.

# CRITICAL READING

## 2. Detecting propaganda.

Propaganda – information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view. (politicians and advertising agencies) Part of being a critical reader is also to recognise propaganda techniques for the emotional fluff they are.

The most common type of propaganda technique is transfer, in which products or candidates try to associate themselves with something that people admire or love. Politicians trying to use a) national symbols (flag for example to invoke patriotism) or b) famous film actors (our love and liking for the actor) to promote their political campaign – our feelings we have towards the actor and the patriotism stirred in us by the national flag will get transferred to the politicians, who gets us to vote for him.

# CRITICAL READING

## **Recognizing errors in reasoning.**

Valid point – supported by rocklike foundation of solid support.

Fallacious point - based on a house of cards that offers no real support at all.

One common fallacy is circular reasoning – the supporting reasoning is really the same as the conclusion. It is illogical. For example: Mahesh is a great swimmer, because he is so wonderful at swimming. Supporting reason: he is so wonderful at swimming; Conclusion: Mahesh is a great swimmer. We still do not know why he is a great swimmer. No real reasons have been given.

False cause – a fallacy that oversimplifies the issue. That is, to assume that because event B follows event A, event B was caused by event A. For example: Every day, I eat parata for breakfast. One time, I had a dosa instead, and there was a major earthquake in my city.

# EXERCISE — READ THE RHYME AND THINK CRITICALLY

*Jack and Jill went up the hill  
To fetch a pail of water;  
Jack fell down and broke his crown,  
And Jill came tumbling after.*

## **Questions to ponder.**

Who is Jack? Who is Jill? Is Jill a boy or a girl? Are they kids? Teenagers? Adults? How is Jack and Jill related? Are they friends? Are they siblings? Are they lovers? Have you ever imagined them as an old grandpa and grandma? Why would anybody go uphill to fetch water? (because natural water sources like rivers and streams flow downhill). What happened after the fall? Did they die?