

## READING

### Introduction

Reading is an important communicative process and reading skills are probably the most important language skills required for academic and professional purposes. Quick, efficient and imaginative reading techniques are essential to enhance the effectiveness. Professionals spend on receiving information (listening and reading) is more than what they spend on sending (speaking and writing) information.

### Purpose of Reading

Professionals may have to read a variety of texts ranging from a short email to a voluminous book or lengthy report every day. Reading is concerned with four factors: decoding, comprehending, text analysis, and response. The basic purpose of reading is to extract information from various sources such as text books, research papers, and articles in technical journals, teaching notes, notices, web materials, encyclopedias and technical reports. One reads to understand a topic or enrich one's knowledge about a topic; to derive pleasure; to understand what happens around. In addition, one needs to connect the ideas on the text to what one already know. During reading one needs to concentrate and be alert so that one will be able to grasp the message first and has to read again to understand the finer aspects of the topic.

*Pouring words of clueless subject into your mind is like pouring water into your hand*

### Topic Sentence and Its Role

The topic sentence known by varied terms such as theme sentence, key sentence, and summarizing sentence, is the main idea of a particular paragraph. It sums up the entire content of the paragraph and generally appears as the first sentence of the paragraph. But many a time, it may occur at the end. Occasionally, it may be found somewhere else in the paragraph too. A paragraph starting with the topic sentence is said to follow **deductive logic**, as all other sentences in that paragraph deduce something from this sentence. In contrast, if paragraph ends with topic sentence, one needs to induce some supporting details in order to attain statements. Such paragraphs are said to follow and **inductive logic**. Topic sentence gives only the main idea while the detailed points are supplied through the other sentences of the paragraph. And striking feature of this paragraph is its unity in gathering all the relevant links to connect the main idea.

### Reading Rates

The number of words that one reads in a certain time is said to be reading rate and it differs depending upon the reading material and the way it is written. While one reads, one's eyes move across the page and rest on a word, which is called a fixation. In order to increase the speed, one must take in more words with each fixation, rather than make the eyes move faster.

The following lines will help to read faster and ensure that one is grasping what one reads.

- Concentrate on group of words rather than each and every word while reading
- Familiarize with new words by referring dictionary
- Inculcate a habit of reading with non-lip movements.
- Read more and more books
- Have some purpose and based on that choose the depth to go in reading a particular.
- Spend a few minutes a day reading at a faster-than-comfortable rate.
- Increase the speed of reading gradually from day to day.

**Note:** Refer the table in page 262 to understand and analyze various reading rates.

### **Reading and Interpretation**

A passage can be understood in the following ways:

1. Understanding the passage from author's perspective
2. Interpreting from one's own perception and
3. Deviate from author's intention.
4. Understanding the author's technique of presenting will help understand the passage better.
5. Authors use the following techniques of presentation:
  - \* Discussion
  - \* Elaboration
  - \* Demonstration
  - \* Comparison
  - \* Argumentation
  - \* Criticism...Etc.
6. Perceptions are unique to person and are shaped by background,, ability etc.
7. It is important to go beyond the literal meaning of the words and understand the main idea the author intends to focus on.
8. Applying mind to understand the text being read is therefore critical.
9. Language proficiency will enable interpreting the context quickly
10. Additional knowledge about the topic may interfere in understanding the intentions of the author.

**Note:**Refer pages 264 and 265 for examples

### **Reading between the Lines**

Understanding the hidden meaning or intention behind explicitly stated words is known as reading between the lines. One should know how to connect the dots between the lines in the text what the author implies or leaves unsaid. Some clues given in the text or our prior knowledge of the topic may be helpful. Inference questions such as “what do you infer from these lines?” or “What does the author imply in lines..?” enable us to understand the elements of the given text.

**Note:** Refer pages 265 and 266 for examples

### **Inferring Meanings – Lexical and Contextual**

Good vocabulary enables you to detect the hidden differences in sentence meaning that may hold the key to the meaning of an entire paragraph or a passage. Enhancing one's vocabulary can boost the reading speed and comprehension, as it is easy to infer that hidden meaning of a particular word in a context. As one concentrates and gets more information, it is able to define that word and also will get connected to the information about its orthography (Spelling) and tries to infer the lexical and contextual meanings of it. One needs to perceive the words and phrases used and recognize their definitions to follow what one read.

The following suggestions help in developing skills that could recognize and infer the words

- Words in isolation mean different from words in integrated word groups, so perceive complete word group as a unit and try understand the word.
- Domain knowledge is necessary to give meaning to otherwise confusing sentences.
- Do not stop reading if you are not able to recall the meaning of a certain word or phrase.
- Analyze the word structure to guess the meaning of words and identify the context clues and signal words to understand the meaning of unknown words.
- Contextual clues in the neighborhood of the word can be helpful.
- Meaning of an unknown word can be inferred through its extended definition or stated qualities.
- The antonym of the unknown word can lead to the meaning of the word.
- Remembering the words through the appropriate phrases in another excellent way of getting the meaning.
- Ensure that the guess made is appropriate.

**Note:** The above points are effective in exam point of view when read and written with relevant examples given in pages 267 and 268.

### **Understanding and Interpreting Ideas**

Understanding and interpreting ideas requires critical eye and the following guidelines will help develop the critical eye:

- Identify the type of the passage (specific science, general science, or non-science)
- Pay attention to first 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the text to get an overview of the text.
- Look for author's intention – to discuss, compare, persuade etc....
- Identify Author's tone – opinionated, argumentative, descriptive, factual, or even handed
- Identify the main and supporting ideas
- Get the gist of each paragraph
- Ask yourself questions to understand
- Do not get caught in unnecessary details.

- Paraphrase the complicated parts.
- Jot down notes.
- Read for structure; ignore details.

**Note:** Refer pages 270 and 271 for examples

### **Interpreting Graphics in Technical Writing**

Technical material contains not only text but also a number of graphics such as table graphs, maps, drawings, diagrams, flower charts. In order to understand and interpret these graphics, the following questions must be answered.

- What is the title/caption?
- What features do the graphics represent?
- How is the graphic organized?
- What is the scale/unit of measurement?
- What is their significance?
- What are the highlights?
- Why did the writer choose this type of illustration?
- What relationships do they depict?
- What is the relationship between the data in these graphics and the textual information?

**Note:** Refer pages 272 and 273 for examples

### **Intensive and Extensive Reading**

There are different purposes of reading a text like:

- To get information
- To get facts quickly
- To derive pleasure
- To enjoy a narrative technique
- To grasp the meaning of almost all the words.

#### **Extensive Reading:**

- It is the type of reading that is carried out for overall or general understanding of the text without aiming for 100 per cent comprehension.
- In extensive reading the focus is not on vocabulary, syntax etc. but on the gist of the text.
- It provides pleasure rather than the comprehension.

#### **Intensive Reading:**

- It is a type of reading that requires a high degree of comprehension and longtime retention.
- It is carried out for complete or thorough understanding of the text by focusing on vocabulary, sentence structure, and also the coherence among the various parts of the text.
- It is also called academic reading.
- It involves several skills like: predicting the content, scanning and identifying the topic sentence, understanding the discourse coherence, sequencing of the sentences etc.

#### **Guidelines for intensive Reading are:**

1. Be clear with the purpose of your reading
2. Predict the contents
3. Scan the text.
4. Use contextual clues to interpret the meaning of the unknown words.
5. Understand the gist of the text.
6. Identify the topic sentence and its role in each paragraph
7. Make notes

#### **Critical Reading**

- When a text is read specifically to discover and analyze some information then is read critically.
- Understanding the manner over and above the matter is given importance.
- Attempt is made to understand the factors that affect the discovery made in the understanding the manner of presentation
- And also connect the idea that lead to the discovery.
- As critical reader the text can be understood from three different angles :
  - The author's purpose
  - The tone and style of presentation and
  - The author's preferences/ biases on the topic
- Intensive reading is mandatory for critical reading.
- The critical reader needs to examine the choice of words for the content, language and structure used to assess the text appropriately.
- Critical reading requires the discovery, analyses and the interpretation of the information contained in the text.
- Analysis and interpretation are possible only if the reader thinks creatively and critically.
- Creative thinking enables to generate innovative ideas and critical thinking helps to evaluate what is being read.
- Non Critical readers satisfy themselves with only the information but critical readers go further and identify the style of writing and the meaning of the text.

#### **Reading for different purposes**

As we learnt already that besides reading academic and professional texts, we read several kinds of other texts too for various reasons. They are for

- Enhancing reading ability
- Knowing about what is happening around
- Awareness on the developments in science & technology
- Expanding vocabulary
- Developing writing skills
- Deriving pleasure etc.

When we read certain texts, we get not only the updated information about what is happening in the various domains but also the recent developments. Reading different kinds of texts like these enables students to progress both personally and professionally. And to make these things get progressed well, we need to keep in mind certain other guidelines while reading them.

### **Reading General Articles**

The writers of general articles of both newspapers and magazines prefer an easy-to-understand/conversational style as they know their readers don't like to read or absorb the whole text but to just get an idea about the topic and its application areas. The following are a few tips for reading general articles.

1. Pay attention to the titles, visuals, and the introductory paragraph to know the topic and scope.
2. Try to connect the ideas to understand the content. In order to create a dramatic impact, some authors may not present the ideas in a logical sequence.
3. Think how you can use the ideas from the articles you read in your everyday life.
4. Enjoy the language, sense of humor and examples used by the author.
5. Focus on conclusion as it gives the essence of the title and precisely give the author's views

**Note:** Refer pages 276 and 277 for examples

### **Reading Essays**

Essays are written as a part of the application process to describe about their objectives in joining the proposed discipline, to get financial assistance for attending an event or recruitment tests, to express one's faculty in competitive exams etc. In all these cases, they are written from the author's point of view. To write such essays, we should read, understand and appreciate essays in terms of their objectives, language, style, etc. The more we read such essays, the more we could enhance our knowledge on certain topics and also our writing skills. The following are a few tips for reading essays.

1. Pay attention to the title and the introductory paragraph to know the topic or issue.
2. Identify the purpose.
3. Find out the author's point of view about the topic.

4. Note down the clear stated assumptions made by the author and consider whether they are true.
5. Infer the unstated assumptions.
6. Decide whether to agree or disagree with the author's definitions of particular terms.
7. Analyze carefully the examples the author use. They are to justify his/her views on the topic.
8. Understand the well-defined structure – an introduction, the main text and the conclusion.
9. Use the cues(Transitional words and phrases) to understand the relationship between ideas.

**Note:** Refer pages 278, 279 and 280 for examples

### **Reading Journal Articles**

Though all journal articles have a more or less similar structure beginning with an abstract and introduction followed by method, result, discussion, conclusion, and references; the structure of a particular journal is generally determined by its editors. We need to pay attention to each of these parts that will give us adequate information to understand the topic. The following are a few tips for reading journal articles.

1. Read the abstract first in order to get an overview about the whole article.
2. Read introduction to know the objectives of the article and the previous work done on that area and also the purpose behind that.
3. Understand the series of steps taken to accomplish the research from the methodology section.
4. Know the findings of the author from the results section.
5. Read the discussion section to interpret the results/to know what they mean.
6. Read the conclusion to understand the key issues related to the research topic or to know the areas in which the research can be used.

### **Novel/Story Discussion**

The way we discuss the story or novel with our friends or family members is informal and they may not follow any particular pattern. However, if it is discussed in forum, we need to follow certain pattern to make audience understand the various aspects of it. Given below are few guidelines that you can use while discussing a novel.

1. Begin with the plot (Introduction, suspense, climax, conclusion) of the novel which should be more detailed than what is given on the back cover of the book. We could mention the protagonists and the other important

characters and the story line which may arouse the audience's attention. If there is subplot or parallel plots, discuss them.

2. Talk about the author – his/her brief biography, other words, and any incident in his/her life that may be related to the novel.
3. Discuss the genre or the kind of story – is it a murder mystery. A romantic novel, a space opera, a political satire, a moral story, etc.
4. Talk about the message that the novel gives to its readers. The theme can also be presented here (courage, love, happiness, alienation, escapism, revenge, etc.).
5. Discuss the place/setting, time and action of the novel.
6. Discuss the style of writing – the narrative technique used by the author, the language (idioms, figures of speech, symbols, examples, sentence structure, etc.), the tone (formal, conversational), simple and clear or complicated.
7. Present the character sketches – their characteristics, their roles in the novel and the relationship that exists among the characters, how they are developed.
8. Discuss your views of the novel.

### **SQ3R Reading Technique**

In order to reap maximum benefit out of reading time, we can make use of the SQ3R reading technique – survey, question, read, recite, and review. George Bernard Shaw said: question, examine, Search in order to understand things in their right perspective. The functions of the SQ3R technique enable us to get an idea about the structure and organization of the text

#### **1) Survey:**

We need to get an overview of the text before finding out answers for the given questions. Get an overview of the text by

- Reading the title, contents, headings and sub-headings.
- Reading the chapter summaries.
- Looking at the illustrations, their captions, etc.
- Making a note of highlighted words, sections, etc.
- Reading the introduction and conclusion.

Surveying a text is more or less equal to scanning the text.

Surveying a text also helps us to judge our background knowledge related to text.

#### **2) Question:**

- Many a time we pose questions to ourselves to clarify something.
- Such questions enable us not only to get a clear picture of the given information but also enable us to check the details.
- We may be able to get the main points of the text.



- We may also grasp well the sequence of ideas presented the text.

3) **Read:**

- We should read the text focusing on the main points.
- Slow down reading speed in case of certain dense or complicated texts
- Read fast the simple texts.
- Making notes while reading may be helpful to understand and interpret the text.

4) **Recite/Recall:**

- Retain some information regarding places, people or products by recollecting the details.
- Recall the main points and supporting points once we finish the reading.
- Recite the supporting points in our own words.
- We may write down the points. But we should not copy from the passage.

5) **Review:**

- The last stage after completing steps one to four is review of SQ3R technique.
- Test yourself by covering the key points.
- Check the correctness by referring to the text.
- We can reread or expand our notes or discuss with our friends the main points.

## **Study Skills**

In order to make the most of the comprehension, one needs to apply certain skills besides employing various reading techniques. Two important skills, namely note-making and sequencing of sentences are discussed in this section.

### **Note-making**

It is a systematic process of writing down important information, ideas, facts, viewpoints, and arguments contained in a written text for future references. It is necessary to recall the main idea from the text we have read as it is not so easy to remember all the points. We need to develop qualities like quick comprehension, identification of main ideas, and recognition of the relevance to our needs. The following are some formal note-making methods:

#### **Outline/linear method:**

In this method, main ideas and subsidiary points are identified from the reading text and arranged in a table consisting of two columns. The first column is used to write down the

main ideas and the second one for the subsidiary points of each main idea. One can differentiate the main and subordinate points by using indentation or two levels of bullets.

### **Sentence/categorical method:**

In this method, sentences are used to represent the main and subordinate ideas. As we know each paragraph contains the topic sentence and it is supported by the relevant points; here these sentences should be selected and highlighted above the main and subsidiary points which are relevant to them. Though it resembles the linear method, like the latter it isn't put in contrast mode with words and phrases, but with highly focusing on topic sentences followed with main and subordinate points.

### **Schematic/mapping method:**

In this method, semi graphical elements are used to represent the context of a text to show the relationship of each point or idea to other facts and idea contained therein. This method has an edge over other methods as one can record a great deal of information in less space and also show the complex relationships among several ideas and facts. The following are a few tips on using this method for note-making tasks:

- Represent the main idea in a central box/circle.
- Depict the subordinate ideas as though they are radiating from this central image.
- Use branches attached to the higher-level branches to represent further minor points.
- Ensure that the branches form a connected nodal structure.

## **Understanding Discourse Coherence**

Discourse is a serious speech or a piece of writing on a particular subject and coherence is to put all that writing in a logical manner. It is an important subskill to be aware of. A coherently structured discourse is assumed to be a collection of sentences, and in turn paragraphs, that are ordered such that they make good sense in some relation to each other. If you are writer, it is important to ensure that all your interpretations and perceptions are able to connect with the readers' situations and concepts. There should be no scope of ambiguity, especially in technical discourse. To clearly express various segments of a discourse, you can use a variety of expressions such as **but, yet, so, as, and, since, while, in the same way, on the other hand, in addition to, etc.** These are called transitional words or phrases that join one idea to another idea. These are also called as **connectors, markers, or signal words.** They show the connection between what has already been written and what is going to be written. Overusing of these markers may make the style of your work artificial and affects its smooth flow.

### **Sequencing of sentences.**

As we have learnt the concept of discourse is to identify the order in which the sentences need to be organized, the process of sequencing the sentences in a text is to arrange that order in a logical and coherent manner which has the pattern topic sentence followed by relevant points in a paragraph. Adding discourse markers such as signal words, pronouns, repetitions, synonyms, etc. make the paragraph more logical and well organized that could be easily analyzed and grasped.

**Note:** Refer pages 299-305 for relevant examples