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SKILLS OF A LANGUAGE

There are basically four skills of language which are important for every language. Those skills are Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW). Listening and speaking are known as the primary skills of a language and reading and writing are the secondary skills of a language. Out of these listening and reading are the receptive skills of a language and speaking and writing are the productive skills of a language.

READING SKILL

Reading skill is the secondary receptive skill of a language. It is secondary because it requires education and receptive because, out of it, we receive information.

READING COMPREHENSION

Reading comprehension aims at testing the readers' ability to understand a passage. Readers are expected to answer certain questions, which are based on the given passage. There are certain steps, as follow, to be followed for effective reading comprehension.

- Read the passage quickly to get the general idea.
- Read again slowly, to know the details.
- Study the given questions thoroughly and write in your own words.

SUMMARISING

Summary is the shortened version of a text. It contains the main points and is made in our own words.

Summarising means understanding the text and write it in our own level.

There are certain steps for summarising, as given below.

- Read and understand the text carefully.
- Think about the purpose of the text (to whom the text has been written, why is it used, etc).
- Select the relevant information.

- Find the main ideas.
- Change the structure of the text.
- Rewrite the main ideas.
- Check the summary you have prepared.

READING STYLES

Reading can be of different styles based on different purposes and situations, as explained below.

Scanning

It is a type of reading which is used by the reader to get the required or specific information. The reader leaves all the other information and goes the text quickly till he gets the wanted information.

Eg: - Scanning for a particular number in a telephone index, scanning for the meaning of a word in a dictionary, etc.

Skimming

Skimming is reading quickly to get the overall idea of a text. This will be done by a reader who is not at all interested to read the text or even the news paper in full. Deep understanding of the text will not be there in this type of reading.

Intensive Reading

It is a type of reading which requires more time and attention. It is helpful to get detailed and deep information about the given text and also helping to keep the read information in our memory.

Extensive Reading

Extensive reading is a type of reading which is used for pleasure. It doesn't require detailed attention or concentration.

Speed Reading

This is a type of reading which is done by pace. It is useful for revisions during the preparation for examinations.

READING SPEED

Reading speed is different from person to person. It is also different from one purpose to the other. Age, difficulty level of the language of the text and physical and psychological conditions are also the deciding factors of reading speed. Reading speed can be indicated by the term WPM (Words per Minute). Look at the below given table to understand reading speed at various occasions.

PURPOSE	READING SPEED
To remember something	Less than 100 WPM
Normal reading speed for learning	100-200 WPM
For reading comprehension	200-400 WPM
Speed reading	400-700 WPM
Average reading speed of adults	250 WPM with 70% comprehension

CRITICAL READING

Critical reading is a type of reading by which the reader goes beyond just understanding the text. An analysis of the given text is done by this method and the reader tries to find out the purpose of writing and the style of the author, etc.

There are certain steps, as follow, in critical reading.

1. Previewing

In this step, the reader checks the thickness of the text, name of the author, style of writing, paperback, font style, etc.

2. Annotating

Annotating is the step in which the reader marks the important and difficult points by giving underlines, brackets or by writing at the margins, etc.

3. Summarising

This is the step in which the reader makes a short note about the text, by including all the important points.

4. Analysing

This step is used to analyse the summary prepared based on the text.

5. Rereading

This is the step in which the given text is reread to check whether any point is left.

6. Responding

The step in which any question based on the text is answered.

READING AND COMPREHENDING TECHNICAL ARTICLES

A short technical article is prepared after a preliminary study, before completing the entire process of a research. A short technical article may contain almost 2500 words, with eight references the least.

A long technical article is prepared after containing a detailed study. To read and comprehend a long technical article, the following stages may be followed.

- 1. Identify the Influential Sources**

While selecting an article, select the most influential and genuine journal.

- 2. Focus on the Concepts you Identify**

Try to understand the concept clearly. In case if you have doubts, approach scholars.

- 3. Get Practical Experience**

Understand the article clearly by gaining the exposure through practical experience.

While reading and comprehending articles from newspaper, the following points to be noted.

- 1. Find a comfortable place to read the article**
- 2. Decide the reading purpose**
- 3. Preview the section you have to read**
- 4. Make your own opinion**

VARIOUS TRANSITIONS IN A TEXT

Transitions are words or phrases that help lead the reader from one idea to the other. Authors use transitions to introduce major details and examples. Transitions occur within paragraphs that lead to anticipation of what comes next. They can occur between paragraphs and sections.

SQ3R METHOD OF READING

SQ3R is a reading comprehension method which has five steps namely **Survey, Question, Read, Retrieve and Review**. This method has been introduced by Francis P. Robinson. This method offers an effective approach to reading textbook materials. The steps are explained below.

Survey

Through this step the reader first goes through a chapter and notes the headings, subheadings and other outstanding features, such as figures, tables, etc. This step takes 3–5 minutes, but it provides an outline of the text.

Question

The reader tries to make and ask questions on the content of the reading materials and looks for answers. The questions may be like what the chapter discusses, how the details help him, etc.

Read

The reader uses the background work done with surveying and questioning to begin reading actively. This means reading in order to answer the questions raised by the questioning step.

Retrieve

The second "R" refers to the part "Retrieve". The reader tries to retrieve from memory what was learned. The reader uses his/her own words to formulate the material. This recital step may be done either in an oral or written format.

Review

The final "R" indicates "Review." After reaching the end of the passage, the reader reviews the material by repeating the point of the passage, by using the reader's own words.

PQRST METHOD OF READING

PQRST method is aimed at helping the students to memorise and reuse the information, learned from the text books, into long term memory. PQRST stands for **Preview, Question, Read, Summarise and Test**.

Preview

Here skimming and scanning will be done to get the gist of the text. The reader reads the summary or introduction and conclusion, headings, pictures, charts, etc. If there are none of these, reading the first sentence of every paragraph will be done to get an overall idea.

Question

In this step, the reader thinks about the purpose of the chapter and the text material. Questions may be prepared based on the title of the chapter or each heading and based on your previous knowledge.

Read

In this step, the reader reads slowly to get the entire meaning of the text. The reader can underline the important points. Remember the questions the reader made in the previous step and try to answer them to understand the material thoroughly.

Summarise

Summarising process includes answering the questions you made in the previous step, jot down the important points and concepts of the text, paraphrasing the main points etc. Only after understanding these steps, the reader can move to the final step.

Test

At the end of the session, the reader tests himself on what he just read. The reader has to remember the headings, explain the main ideas and check whether he can answer the questions. The reader tests himself again the next day, in a few days, and in a week or so.

READING COMPREHENSION TECHNIQUES

There are certain techniques that can be adopted for reading comprehension.

Monitor the Comprehension

The reader thinks of his comprehension skills and thoughts at the time of reading the text. He tries to check whether the text deviates from the main course or subject matter.

Activate and Connect

The already known ideas of the reader about the topic of the reading material are important in this technique. Activating the pre-existing memory of the reader and connecting the same to the new reading materials happen here.

Ask Questions

Asking questions by the reader at the time of reading is very important in order to understand the innate and detailed meaning and information of the text.

Infer and Visualise

Inferring means, taking the background information of the reader and merging it with the information given in the text. Visualising helps in creating images, sounds, etc. in mind about what the reader reads.

Decide the Importance

No any reader remembers everything that he read from a text. Deciding what is important for the reader to be done while or even before reading the text. This helps in remembering the contents, which are important for him.

Summarise and Synthesise

This is the technique is used to get the big picture of the text without losing the main points of it. Synthesising the already known ideas with the text read will be done here.

UNDERSTANDING TEXT BOOKS

Text books are integral part of a student's life. In order to be highly successful in academic field, text book reading is highly recommended. **Through the following stages**, understanding the texts can be done in effective manner.

Before Reading

Make a basic idea and concept about the text that you read, before starting the reading. This basic idea about the text can be helpful in understanding it easier. This is known as previewing, in which the reader understands the importance of each chapter, topic, headlines, associated questions, etc. The reader prepares to answer certain questions that have been given in the text itself.

While Reading

Read the text carefully to answer the questions you developed while previewing. Visualising the information that you read will help in understanding and remembering the points. Highlighting by underlining, marking or giving brackets may be done. Make a note, including pictures, graphs, etc. on the text that you read will help in future, during the time of examination.

After Reading

Remember the things that you have read and also discuss the same with peer groups at the time of collaborative learning (combine study). Writing the main theme or important points of the text may be done to enhance memory.

NOTE TAKING

Note taking is writing down the important, difficult and new points **while** listening to the speaker. It is a "while" process because listening and writing happen at the same time. The listener does this during classroom lectures as well, which may help him to comprehend and understand text books. The listener takes notes in his own understanding level without following strict grammatical rules. Note taking process improves attention span.

NON VERBAL CUES

To be highly skillful in communication, a person should have verbal and non verbal skills. Non verbal communication includes body language, sitting and standing posture, how people utilise space when they communicate, movement of hand, eye, etc. By recognizing non verbal cues, a person can understand the intention or mindset of another person while they communicate. The following are certain non verbal cues and their interpretations.

Non verbal Cues	Interpretation
Crossed arms	Defense
Sitting/standing straight	Confident
Continuous eye contact	Interested in the speaker
Looking down	Guilty
Looking at the watch regularly	Bored
Yawning	Tired
Looking up	Memorizing
Biting nails	Stressful
Tapping the fingers	Impatient/ bored
Raised eyebrows	Fear/surprise

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