

Unit 4 - Reading Skills (Lecture Notes)

Topic - 1: Introduction

Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man — Francis Bacon, the famous essayist, has rightly observed in his well-known essay 'Of Studies'. This quote suggests that reading makes a person more knowledgeable, discussions make them more prepared and articulate, and writing makes them more precise and accurate in their thoughts and communication. In essence, it highlights the value of these three activities in intellectual and personal development.

- ~ “Reading is a process of constructing meaning from written texts. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of interrelated sources of information” (Stanley, 2007)
- ~ Reading comprehension is understanding a written text. Understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible. Francoise Grellet (1991:13)
- Reading is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.
- By reading effectively you will learn to question and survey the text you are reading to gain a better understanding of your subject.
- Reading for academic study can be different from reading for leisure.
- For example: When reading a novel you would read the book from cover to cover but academic reading can be more of a selective process. You will often only read the chapters or pages that are relevant to the subject you are researching.
- Reading is probably the most crucial skill. It is so because a good reader can rise above the disadvantage of limited opportunity received in terms of listening, speaking, and writing a language.
- It is observed that only good readers are good communicators. It is a skill that cannot be ignored. It is advisable to acquire efficient reading skills as early as possible.

Topic - 2: Need for Developing Efficient Reading Skills

As a reader, we definitely know how to read. But the question is whether we know how to read skillfully and artfully.

Skillful Reading

- *Skillful* reading is for specific information.
- *Skillful* reading can be learnt through a systematic approach and formal training.
- It often involves strategies such as speed reading, critical thinking, and the ability to discern key points and main ideas.
- Skillful readers may be adept at summarising, synthesising, and evaluating information. The goal of skillful reading is to gain a deep understanding of the content and use it for specific purposes, like research or studying.
- Example; When we read a Novel, a Newspaper or a Textbook there is different intention behind it so it affects the way we read it.

Artful Reading

- *Artful* reading goes beyond basic comprehension. It involves a more immersive and interpretive approach to literature or text.
- *Artful* readers pay attention to the nuances of language, symbolism, themes, and the author's style.
- They may analyse the text for its artistic or aesthetic qualities and delve into deeper layers of meaning.
- It involves paying attention to the nuances of language, the author's style, symbolism, and thematic depth.
- The goal of artful reading is not only to understand the text but also to experience it on a more profound level, akin to appreciating a work of art.
- Artful reading aims to engage with the artistic and emotional aspects of a text.

In general, efficient reading enables individuals to absorb information more quickly, allowing them to increase their productivity and accomplish more in less time.

Topic - 2: Benefits of Effective Reading

1. Effective reading can provide you with a 'comprehensible input' from the book or document that you read.
2. It can enhance your general ability to use other language skills such as listening, speaking and writing.
3. It can enhance your vocabulary, that is, you can always learn new words, phrases, and expressions.
4. Effective reading also helps you keep your mind focused on the material and prevents it from unnecessary distractions.
5. Moreover, this enables you to extract useful information much more efficiently within a limited time.
6. It can help you consolidate (to combine) both previously learned language and knowledge.
7. It helps in building confidence as you start reading longer, and later, voluminous texts.
8. It gives you pleasure and relaxation as books are the best and most reliable friends.
9. Effective reading facilitates the development of various other skills, such as making predictions, comparing and contrasting facts, creating samples, hypothesising (proposing ideas), reorganising the message as transmitted by the text, improving your critical thinking, and hence developing a sharp acumen (means the ability to make good judgement & take quick decision) with passage of time.

Topic - 3: Four Basic Steps to Effective Reading

While reading a text to learn something, you need to follow the following four basic steps:

1. *Figure out the purpose of reading a particular text.*
 - You can identify suitable reading strategies and use your background knowledge of the topic in order to anticipate the contents.
2. *Spot the parts of the text relevant to the identified purpose and ignore the rest.*
 - This selectivity enables you to focus on particular elements of information from the text. So, you are able to sift through the information, which in turn reduces the amount of information you have to hold in short-term memory.
3. *Choose the appropriate reading strategy that suits your purpose.*

- Select the strategy that is suited to the reading task in that particular context and use that strategy in an interactive manner. This will develop your understanding as well as confidence.
- 4. *Test or assess your comprehension during reading and also when the reading task is completed*
 - Monitoring comprehension helps you make out the inconsistencies and discrepancies in total comprehension of the text. At this step, you can also learn to use alternative strategies
 - When you check your understanding, you can find mistakes or things that don't make sense in what you read. At this point, you can also discover new ways to understand the text.

Topic - 4: Types of Reading

1. *Skimming*
2. *Scanning*
3. *Extensive Reading*
4. *Intensive Reading*

1. Skimming

- Rapid reading focusing on the TITLE, HEADINGS, TOPIC SENTENCE, SIGN POSTS to get the main idea –
- Skimming is used to quickly gather the most important information or gist from the document or novel that you read.
- For this, you should make your eyes run over the text, noting important information.
- You may also go through the contents of the chapters rapidly, picking out and understanding the key words and concepts.
- For example, while reading the newspaper in the morning you quickly try to get the general news of the day and discover which articles you would like to read in more detail.

2. Scanning

- Scanning is used to find a particular piece of information.
- Rapid reading assisted by key words to locate specific pieces of info - for research, review –
- In this type of reading, you allow your eyes to run over the text, looking for the specific piece of information that you need.

- This is the most effective way of getting information from magazines - scan the table of contents or indexes and turn directly to interesting articles to arrive at the specific information.
- Gets info that answers what, who, where, when, how. Example; looking for a word meaning in the dictionary, getting documents from the filing cabinet.

3. Extensive Reading

- Extensive reading is used to obtain a general understanding of a subject.
- It includes reading of the longer texts for pleasure, and business reports to know about the general trends.
- You can use this type of reading to improve your general knowledge of business procedures, or to know the latest marketing strategy.
- Reading for pleasure any topic of interest.
- Main purpose: to relax and enjoy yourself.
- Example; comics, humorous stories, tales, novels, short articles in the newspapers and magazines, jokes, and other forms of light reading materials.

4. Intensive Reading

- careful or in-depth reading.
- You read for details and extract specific info on particular topics.
- Intensive reading is used on shorter texts in order to extract detailed information.
- It includes very close and accurate reading for details.
- You use this skill to grasp the details of a specific situation.
- In this case, it is important for you to understand each word, information, or fact.
- When you read your text book for understanding the concepts or various theories, you have to read intensively. You also require to read every single detail when you want to go for an insurance claim or want to sign a contract.
- Intensive reading skills help you understand and interpret the text, infer

EXTRA

Understanding the text:

- In order to understand a written text the reader should have
- The knowledge of the written system
- The knowledge of the language (Morphology, syntax, and semantics)

- The ability to interpret
- The knowledge of the world
- The knowledge of the a particular culture

While reading the reader interacts with a text, decodes it and constructs the meaning in the process. The meaning the reader constructs depends on not only what the writer writes but also what the reader brings to the text.

By improving your reading skills you can reduce unnecessary reading time and this will enable you to read in a more focused manner.