ORELT

Open Resources For English Language Teaching

Module 3 - Success In Reading

ORELT Ltr covers.indd 3 6/25/2012 9:53:38 AM

ORELT

Open Resources for English Language Teaching

Module 3 – Success in Reading

COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

Commonwealth of Learning, 2012

CC BY-SA

© 2012 by the Commonwealth of Learning. Open Resources for English Language Teaching: Module 3 – Success in Reading is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Licence (international): http://creativecommons.org/licences/by-sa/3.0

For the avoidance of doubt, by applying this licence the Commonwealth of Learning does not waive any privileges or immunities from claims that it may be entitled to assert, nor does the Commonwealth of Learning submit itself to the jurisdiction, courts, legal processes or laws of any jurisdiction.

All of this document may be reproduced without permission but with attribution to the Commonwealth of Learning and the author.

Open Resources for English Language Teaching: Module 3 – Success in Reading
ISBN: 978-1-894975-46-9

Published by:

Commonwealth of Learning
1055 West Hastings, Suite 1200
Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada V6E 2E9

Telephone: +1 604 775 8200
Fax: +1 604 775 8210
Web: www.col.org
E-mail: info@col.org

Acknowledgements

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) acknowledges the contributions of the following in the development of the Open Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT) at Junior Secondary School (JSS) Level modules:

Professor Thomas K. Adeyanju, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria (Module 1); Dr Musa Maisamari, University of Abuja, Nigeria (Module 2); Dr Speranza M. Ndege, Institute of Open, Distance & e-Learning, Kenyatta University, Kenya (Module 3); Dr Mukti Sanyal, Bharati College, University of Delhi, India (Module 3); Dr Cornelia Muganda, Institute of Continuing Education, The Open University of Tanzania (Module 4); Professor Isaac Olaofe, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria (Module 5) and Dr Padmini Boruah, Department of English Language Teaching (ELT), Gauhati University, India (Module 6).

We also wish to acknowledge the following people for reviewing/critiquing the modules:

Dr Padmini Boruah, Department of ELT, Gauhati University; Dr Mukti Sanyal, Bharati College, University of Delhi; Dr Ravinarayan Chakrakodi, Regional Institute of English, South India; Dr Kishor G. Bhide, Department of English, SNDT Arts and Commerce College for Women, India; Dr V. Rajagopalan, SSKV College of Arts and Science for Women, India; Mr Rajesh Nimesh, Video Production Division, Central Institute of Educational Technology, National Council of Educational Research & Training, India; and Professor Vasudha Kamat, Central Institute of Educational Technology, National Council of Educational Research & Training, India.

Dr Padmini Boruah, Department of ELT, Gauhati University edited and substantially revised all the six modules. Messrs Nicholas Kimolo and Maurice Mulinge of Futuristic Ltd. developed the multimedia content materials and Dr Abdurrahman Umar, Education Specialist, Teacher Education; Commonwealth of Learning conceptualised, designed and co-ordinated the ORELT project.

Contents

About this module manual 1

How this module manual is structured ... 1
The module overview ... 1
The module content ... 1
Resources ... 2
Your comments ... 2

Module overview 3

Welcome to Module 3 — Success in Reading ... 3
Is this module for you? ... 3
Module objectives ... 4
Module outcomes ... 4
Time frame ... 4
Study skills ... 5
Need help? ... 6

Getting around this module manual 7

Margin icons ... 7

Unit 1: Building Confidence in Reading: Countering Defects 9

Introduction ... 9
Unit objectives ... 9
Teacher support information ... 9
Case study ... 10
Activities ... 11
Activity 1: Understanding students' attitudes ... 11
Activity 2: Countering common errors in reading ... 12
Activity 3: Developing efficiency in reading: Anticipating the topic ... 13
Unit summary ... 14
Reflections ... 15
Assessment ... 15
Resources ... 16
Resource 1: Student questionnaire on attitudes towards reading ... 16
Resource 2: The trip to Temple Town ... 17
Resource 3: Reading passages ... 17
Teacher question and answer ... 19

Unit 2: Reading Silently for Understanding and Speed 21

Introduction ... 21
Unit outcomes ... 22

Teacher support information 22
Case study 22
Activities 23
Activity 1: Guessing meaning from the context 23
Activity 2: Reading rate and reading comprehension 25
Activity 3: Understanding graphical presentation of information 26
Unit summary 27
Reflections 27
Assessment 27
Resources 27
Resource 1: Guessing word meaning from context 27
Resource 2a: Reading texts 28
Resource 2b: Reading comprehension (table) 30
Resource 3a: Graphical information in texts 31
Resource 3b: Information in print (text and table) 31
Resource 4: Histogram showing students' study hours 33
Teacher questions and answers 33

Unit 3: Reading Efficiently: The Sub-Skills of Reading 35

Introduction 35
Unit outcomes 35
Terminology 36
Teacher support information 36
Case study 36
Activities 37
Activity 1: Reading for gist: Skimming 37
Activity 2: Reading for specific information: Scanning 39
Activity 3: Understanding text and distinguishing text style 40
Unit summary 42
Reflections 42
Assessment 42
Resources 43
Resource 1: Travel guides: Africa's best beaches 43
Resource 2: Practising skimming 44
Resource 3: Understanding text organisation 44
Teacher question and answer 47

Unit 4: Reading — Study Reading: Strategies for Reading across the Curriculum 49

Introduction 49
Unit outcomes 49
Terminology 50
Case study 50
Activities 51
Activity 1: Surveying text 51
Activity 2: Understanding the use of discourse markers 53
Activity 3: Study reading (taking notes from a reading passage) 54
Unit summary 54
Reflections 55

Assessment 55
Resources 56
Resource 1: A book cover 56
Resource 2: Surveying a book: Finding information about content 56
Resource 3: Understanding the function of discourse markers 57
Resource 4: Making an omelette 57
Resource 5: How to make a telephone call from a public telephone 58
Resource 6: Functions of discourse markers 59
Resource 7a: What causes earthquakes? 59
Resource 7b: Making notes on a passage: What causes earthquakes 60
Resource 8: Commonly used abbreviations and symbols in note taking 61
Teacher questions and answers 62

Unit 5: Extensive Reading: Encouraging Lifelong Learning 63

Introduction 63
Unit outcomes 63
Terminology 64
Teacher support information 64
Case study 64
Activities 66
Activity 1: Creating a "reading culture" in class 66
Activity 2: Jigsaw reading 67
Activity 3: Understanding text style: Types of passages 68
Unit summary 69
Reflections 69
Assessments 69
Resources 70
Resource 1: Creating a book corner in the class 70
Resource 2: Jigsaw reading: Sequencing paragraphs in a text 72
Resource 3: Types of passages 73
Resource 4a: Narrative and descriptive passages 74
Resource 4b: An argumentative passage 75
Teacher question and answer 75

About this module manual

Module 3 — Success in Reading has been produced by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). All module manuals produced by COL are structured in the same way, as outlined below.

How this module manual is structured

The module overview

The module overview gives you a general introduction to the module. It will help you determine:

- if the module is suitable for you,
- what you need to know,
- what you should expect from the module, and
- how much time you will need to invest to complete the module.

The overview also provides guidance on:

- study skills,
- where to get help,
- course assignments and assessments, and
- activities and units.

We strongly recommend that you read the overview *carefully* before starting your study.

The module content

The module is broken down into units. Each unit comprises:

- an introduction to the unit content,
- unit objectives,
- unit learning outcomes,

- new terminology,
- core content of the unit with a variety of learning activities,
- a unit summary,
- assignments and/or assessments, as applicable, and
- answers to assignments and/or assessments, as applicable

Resources

For those interested in learning more on this subject, please see the list of additional resources at the end of each unit of this module manual. These may be books, articles, websites or audio/video files that can assist in the teaching of the unit, and so on.

Your comments

After you have completed **Module 3 — Success in Reading** we would appreciate your taking a few moments to give us your feedback on any aspect of this module. Your feedback might include comments on:

- Module content and structure.
- Module reading materials and resources.
- Module assignments.
- Module assessments.
- Module duration.
- Teacher support (assigned tutors, technical help, etc.)

Your constructive feedback will help us to improve and enhance this module.

Module overview

Welcome to Module 3 — Success in Reading

Unlike listening and speaking, the skills of reading and writing are not acquired naturally as we grow up. These two skills, also called **literacy skills**, are crucial to success in school and later life. This module will discuss the skill of reading, which helps a student to improve various areas of language such as vocabulary, grammar and comprehension.

Reading is a complex skill involving several sub-skills and can be developed only through practice. Children who read actively from childhood have a wider range of vocabulary, can read faster and understand better, and find it easier to express themselves when they are adults. Children who do not have a habit of reading often find themselves unable to articulate their thoughts and feelings adequately. As they lose practice in reading, they begin to read more slowly. This is dangerous, because slow reading requires more effort, which makes it easy to give up. So here we have a vicious circle: we do not read because we cannot read fast, and because we do not read enough, we cannot improve our reading speed and reading comprehension.

In most parts of the world, people are deeply concerned about low literacy skills, which can result in an increase in school dropout rates. Parents and teachers of competent readers know that children have to be initiated into reading with loving care and patience; and interest and competence in it has to be nurtured and developed over many years.

This module will help you motivate reluctant or poor readers to begin to take an interest in reading by learning to use the sub-skills of reading. It will help you introduce students to the different strategies that efficient and fluent readers use to comprehend different types of passages. The module will also deal with some common reading weaknesses and how to overcome them, and should encourage teachers to conduct action research by taking a critical look at their classroom practices.

Is this module for you?

This module is intended for teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) at the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level.

Module objectives

Objectives

The objectives of this module are to enable teachers to:

- assess their students' competence in reading and their motivation to read,
- prepare and execute a reading programme for their students,
- use a task-based interactive approach to enhance students' understanding of the reading process, and
- demonstrate the use of strategies that increase the efficiency and speed of reading.

Module outcomes

Outcomes

Upon completion of **Module 3 — Success in Reading** you will have:

- used various activities and classroom strategies to build your students' confidence in reading,
- made students aware of the reading mistakes they should avoid,
- created opportunities for your students to engage actively in reading,
- trained your students to read silently with better understanding, and
- equipped your students with reading skills and strategies they can use for effective learning across the curriculum.

Time frame

How long?

You will need approximately 15 weeks to finish this module — eight weeks for formal study and seven weeks for self-directed study — to complete all the activities recommended.

This is a distance learning programme, thus the time frame is flexible and largely self-directed.

Study skills

Study skills

As an adult learner your approach to learning will be different from that of your school days: you will choose what you want to study, you will have a professional and/or personal motivation for doing so and you will most likely be fitting your study activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities.

Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. As a consequence, you will need to consider performance issues related to time management, goal setting, stress management, etc. Perhaps you will also need to reacquaint yourself with such things as essay planning, coping with exams and using the Web as a learning resource.

Your most significant considerations will be *time* and *space*; that is, the time you dedicate to your learning and the environment in which you engage in that learning.

We recommend that you take time now — before starting your self-directed study — to familiarise yourself with these issues. There are a number of excellent resources on the Web. For example:

- http://www.how-to-study.com/

  The "How to Study" website is dedicated to study skills resources. You will find links for tips on study preparation (a list of nine essentials for a good study place), taking notes, strategies for reading textbooks, using reference sources and coping with test anxiety.

- http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html

  This is the website of Virginia Tech's Division of Student Affairs. You will find links to tips on time scheduling (including one called "Where Does Time Go?"), a study skill checklist, basic concentration techniques, how to take control of your study environment, note taking, how to read essays for analysis and tips on developing memory skills ("Remembering").

- http://www.howtostudy.org/resources.php

  Another "How to Study" website with useful links to learning about time management, efficient reading, questioning/listening/observing skills, getting the most out of putting your knowledge into practice, memory building, staying motivated and developing a learning plan.

The above links are our suggestions to start you on your way. At the time of writing these Web links were active. If you want to look for more go to www.google.com and type "self-study basics," "self-study tips," "self-study skills" or a similar combination.

Need help?

Help

Contact your Google Group support email, SMS number or your tutor.

Group email: orelt_tutors@googlegroups.com

Getting around this module manual

Margin icons

While working through this module manual you will notice the frequent use of icons in the margin. These icons serve to "signpost" a particular piece of text, a new task or change in activity; they have been included to help you to find your way around this module manual.

A complete icon set is shown below. We suggest that you familiarise yourself with the icons and their meanings before starting your study.

Activity	Assessment	Assignment	Case study
Outcomes	Summary	Objectives	Feedback
Terminology	Reading	Reflection	Study skills
Help	Time	Audio	Video

Unit 1: Building Confidence in Reading: Countering Defects

Introduction

It is said that the human brain is "programmed" to want to learn. However, as a teacher you must have noticed that many students fail or get poor grades all through school. We often think of them as lazy, uninterested or inattentive students. But often the truth is that they are simply poor or weak readers, which has an adverse effect on their performance in almost all academic subjects. They fall behind in class because they do not receive the instruction, scaffolding and practice they require to become competent and fluent readers. In this unit, you will learn how to motivate reluctant readers and help them build their confidence. You will learn to use an interactive methodology to help students experience success in reading and build confidence in their ability to read efficiently.

Unit objectives

Objectives

The objectives of this unit will help teachers to:

- motivate passive and bored readers to become interested in the reading process, and
- instil in students the confidence to read for longer periods.

Teacher support information

The activities in this unit will help you encourage your students to read efficiently and develop confidence in reading. The activities require students to "learn by doing" so that they are all actively engaged in the process of reading. One strategy you can use to support weaker readers is to identify the more fluent and efficient readers and use them to support the poorer readers in the class. The success of your programme will depend on how you can motivate and sustain the interest of good readers, and use them to inspire their less able peers. You can begin it as a pilot study with one of your JSS classes, preferably Form One. For the best results, start it early in the academic year and sustain it across two, if not all three, terms. Please do not expect miracles to happen, as different students may be at different stages of learning. You will have to allow the

students to work at their own pace in a tension-free and supportive environment.

Case study

Case study

Miss Halima Rodgers was the English Language teacher for the Form One class at Hilltop High School. She knew that during the year she would have to ensure that the new students read English language texts well enough to be able to leave school with good grades. She also knew that many came from homes without a reading culture and would need help to use reading as a learning tool. She was convinced that if she could make even a marginal improvement in each student's reading ability, they could improve their grades not only in English but also in most other subjects.

When the new class came to her in January, she gave them a reading comprehension test and discovered that only ten students out of a class of 52 scored more than 50% in the test. Most had copied large chunks of the given text as answers; only ten students had composed responses to the specific questions in their own words. Many had located the key word or phrase but could not or had not taken the risk of formulating/composing a response to the specific question asked. Five students appeared to be behind. They had trouble with the basic mechanics of writing and had left more than three questions unanswered.

This was exactly what Miss Rodgers had expected. She realised that she had another typical Form One class this year and decided that she would use the reading programme that she had pilot tested last year. She decided to share her plan of action with the class and involve them in making the project a success. Over the next few classes, she did the following:

1. She discussed and explained the crucial role of reading for success in school.
2. She discussed and analysed the class score on the reading comprehension test she had administered on the first day of the new term.
3. She discussed each question, asked the highest scorer to read out his or her answer and explained why it deserved the mark. The purpose of the detailed discussion was to help students see that scores were not based on teacher prejudice or bias but on performance expectations.
4. She explained the class scores in terms of good, average and poor readers. The emphasis was on performance level as reflected in the test. She then divided the class into ten groups with five students in each group. Every group had one high scorer, two average and two or three poor readers.
5. The high scorer in each group was made Group Leader and was entrusted with the responsibility of improving the scores of his or her group across the term. The group that showed the maximum improvement would be awarded certificates and trophies at the school's annual Prize Day function.

6 She started a book corner in the class, with each student bringing in old books from home, neighbours or used-book stores. Students were encouraged to borrow and read books at least three times every week. The emphasis was on introducing a reading culture into the class.

7 During the term Miss Rodgers noticed that her Group Leaders were taking their jobs very seriously. She helped them devise strategies to help the weaker readers guess the meanings of words from the context, and to read texts once quickly for overall meaning and then with more attention to detail. Towards the end of term, Miss Rodgers' students showed marked improvement in their reading habits. The improvement between the groups was so close that all the ten groups were awarded prizes.

Points to ponder

1 How do you judge or identify the poorer readers in your class? Do you use any special strategy to encourage poor readers?

2 Research shows that children transfer their literacy skills (i.e., their ability to read and write efficiently) across curricula. Have you noticed any similarities in your students' written responses to comprehension questions in different subjects?

Activities

Activity 1: Understanding students' attitudes

Activity 1

At the JSS level, students are old enough to take responsibility for their own academic progress. In fact, as we have all experienced, rather than being told what is good for them, children of this age group prefer to discover answers for themselves.

As reading is probably the most important language skill in terms of academic success, students will benefit if they become aware of their abilities, strengths and weaknesses in their reading proficiency.

The beginning of the academic year is the ideal time to make students conscious of the importance of being competent in reading. One way we can do this is through self-reflection questionnaires. You can make your own self-reflection questionnaire, or try out the one given in **Resource 1**, from W. Grabe and F.L. Stoller's *Teaching and Researching Reading* (Pearson Education, 2002, pp. 242–244). This is a good sourcebook for activity research.

1 For this activity, administer the questionnaire on attitudes towards reading reproduced in **Resource 1**.

2 As this is an exercise on self-reflection, make sure the students do not spend too much time pondering over each question; the answers should be quick and honest. You could also tell them that there is no right or wrong answer; the student should say what is true for him or her.

3 Practise the procedure on the board, so that students who are unfamiliar with the 1-2-3-4 rating scheme can become comfortable with it before starting the questionnaire.

4 Analyse each section of the questionnaire to obtain three different scores for each student. The first score (based on Section I) will indicate the student's previous experience with reading. The second score will indicate the reading environment and the third, his or her individual perception about the usefulness of reading.

5 You will notice that each of the three sections has six questions. So, to calculate scores, add the section score and divide it by six. The average score will range from one to four.

6 Lower scores (1 and 2) suggest a positive attitude to reading. Higher scores (3 and 4) suggest a more negative attitude. Once all the scores have been calculated, look at the individual profiles and then the class profile as a whole.

7 Insert the individual scores alongside the reading comprehension pre-test scores. Study the correlation between the two scores. You may find reasons to explain student performance. This will help you to counsel and to create individual reading instruction plans.

8 Note down your observations. You may wish to share some of these with the student or his or her parents/guardians/other teachers.

Activity 2: Countering common errors in reading

Activity 2

When we read in a language in which our literacy skills are well developed, we do not have to struggle with the words on the page because we read quickly and effortlessly.

This activity should make students compare their reading skills in the language they are competent in (usually the home language) with their skills in English. By reflecting on the strategies they use to read in each language, the students will become aware of their reading errors, if any. This will then enable them to use counter-strategies to overcome them.

To begin the activity, divide the students into small groups and have them brainstorm on the following points:

- Which language they like to read in.
- Why they can read better in that language (you could prompt them to think about their familiarity with spellings and pronunciation of words, etc.).
- Whether they read in English with the same ease.
- The differences they can identify in their reading habits in these two languages.

The discussion and feedback on this task should include some of the following reasons why we read better in a language other than English: familiarity with spellings and pronunciation (so we do not have to stop

and spell out any long word to understand it); and familiarity with the meanings of words as well as the places and the events referred to in the book, and so on.

Now give the students a short passage to read from an interesting book or magazine, which is just a little challenging for them, or use the sample passage in **Resource 2**. Tell them to note down their starting time and finishing time. Announce that this exercise is to find the fastest reader in the class, but that not only should they read fast, they should also read with understanding and be able to answer the questions you will ask them on the passage (**Resource 2**). This will ensure that they do not merely pretend to read.

As they read, notice the following reading errors:

1. Vocalisation: murmuring and pronouncing the words as they read.
2. Pointing: using their fingers to point to each word as they read.
3. Eye span: reading one word at a time, rather than in sense groups (see **Unit 2**).
4. Regression: going back to the beginning of each previous line.
5. Skipping words: ignoring and moving over words that look difficult to spell or are unfamiliar.

After they finish reading, bring to their notice how people who read silently, without vocalising or pointing with a finger, can read with speed. Have them reflect on whether they had to go back to the previous line, or skipped reading certain words.

Now have them read the passage again (timing themselves again), consciously avoiding these errors. This time, put the students in groups and have one of them monitor the others' reading habits.

You can then have them repeat this exercise (with different passages) over several sessions, and ask them to note down their timings again at the end of that period. When the students find an increase in their reading speed, they will realise that they have managed to overcome their reading errors and will be far more motivated to read.

Activity 3: Developing efficiency in reading: Anticipating the topic

Activity 3

Often students do not like to read because their previous experiences of reading have been unpleasant and frustrating. They may have problems recognising letter-sound correspondences, experience confusion caused by homophones, be unfamiliar with different meanings of a word and so on.

The gap between their actual performance in reading and the expectations placed on JSS students can soon become so wide that they give up reading altogether.

This activity aims to help you build your students' motivation to read by preparing them for the reading process. Students with poor reading skills

(like the ones mentioned above and in **Activity 1**) can be motivated to read if they can anticipate what they are going to read. Anticipation is a pre-reading skill that helps readers focus on the content even before they actually begin the reading process.

For this activity, give the students, working in pairs, the following topics and ask them to guess what they will read in the passage. Ask each student in each pair to write at least two anticipation questions on each topic.

1. India: A Nation with Unity in Diversity
2. Inside a Science Museum
3. Deforestation: Effective Measures

An example of anticipation questions for the first two topics would be:

1. Is this passage going to talk about religion?
2. Are there dinosaurs in a science museum?

As you will notice in **Resource 3**, the first passage does not address the first question, while the second passage does mention dinosaurs. It is not important if the passage we read has the answers to all our questions, but it is important that we read the passage with more interest and attention while looking for the answers.

Now play the audio clip of the first part of each passage, or read out the transcripts in **Resource 3,** and let the students see if they guessed correctly. Even if they guessed wrongly, point out that they listened to the passage with more interest and attention than usual because they had a reason for listening. Even if they did not understand a few words in the passages, this did not stop them from listening actively till the end. This is how anticipating the content helps people read faster, and with better understanding.

Now have the students practise the skill of anticipating by working on a passage from any of their English language textbooks. Have them note down the start and end times for each passage. Their reading speed and comprehension are bound to improve after practising a few times. Ask them to try using the same strategy while reading other subject textbooks as this skill will be useful in comprehending any text.

Unit summary

Summary

In this unit we tried to make you aware of some common problems associated with reading, and how certain reading challenges cause children to lose the motivation to read. We also saw how important it is to make students aware of their reading habits, and what strategies we can use to help them overcome their reading challenges. The activities in this unit can also help students develop their reading efficiency across the curriculum.

Reflections

Reflection

- What are the most common reading challenges you have noticed in your students? Do you think their comprehension will improve if they follow the strategies given in this unit?
- What are some of the challenges/problems you may have to face in making students practise their reading skills in the class? How will you overcome these challenges?
- What are some of the weaknesses in the suggestions made in this unit?

Assessment

Assessment

- Talk to one or two colleagues and find out if they share your views on the students' reading skills. Suggest some ways in which you can jointly involve students in activities that will improve their comprehension and reading speed.
- Do your students read faster and with better understanding when they are reading storybooks? Can you think of any reasons for this difference?

Resources

Resource 1: Student questionnaire on attitudes towards reading

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE	Yes	Always	No	Never
READ AND RATE EACH QUESTION HONESTLY AND QUICKLY CIRCLE YOUR CHOICE	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Section I: Think about your past experience with reading.				
I did well in reading last year	1	2	3	4
I like to read books that make me think	1	2	3	4
I like having the teacher say I read well	1	2	3	4
I visit the library with my family	1	2	3	4
I like to read on rainy Saturdays	1	2	3	4
I remember family members reading to me	1	2	3	4
Section II: Think about people you know who read.				
Members of my family like to read	1	2	3	4
I know people who can help me with my reading	1	2	3	4
My brothers and sisters sometimes read to me	1	2	3	4
My friends like to read	1	2	3	4
My friends and I like to share books	1	2	3	4
I talk to my friends about what I am reading	1	2	3	4
Section III: Think about reading. How useful is it?				
I can learn a lot from reading	1	2	3	4
I have favourite subjects that I like to read about	1	2	3	4
I read to learn new information about topics of interest	1	2	3	4
I like to read new things	1	2	3	4
I can use my reading to help me with schoolwork	1	2	3	4
I sometimes read to my parents	1	2	3	4

NB: Some of the items included in the questionnaire above have been adapted from A. Wigfield and J.T. Guthrie (1997), "Relations of children's motivation for reading to the amount and breadth of their reading." *Journal of Educational Psychology,* 89:420-32

Resource 2: The trip to Temple Town

Resource 2

At the hotel, the guy in a smart uniform standing at the front desk gave Jaydeep the letter. It was in a sloping hand, typical of a girl's handwriting, and said, "I met an interesting guy who dances all day. First, they called him the king of dance. When he didn't stop, they built a temple for him." It also had the name of a hotel.

Jaydeep's excitement grew. He was closing in, drawing nearer and nearer to his goal. He wasn't sure why he was doing this, wasting two valuable weeks of vacation, but he felt he *had* to follow his instincts. Like a police sniffer dog that cannot be taken away from the culprit, Jaydeep felt he was powerless to return.

At 6:30 in the evening, as the sun went down in an orange ball over the sea, Jaydeep walked to the Shore Temple. The path was lined with tiny stalls that sold seashells, souvenirs, prayer beads, incense sticks and other articles of worship. Would she be there, waiting to see if he would follow her? Perhaps his decision to come was not such a bad decision after all. *Maybe she would agree to have dinner with him... maybe she would agree to be his wife... maybe...* Jaydeep stopped with a start. There she was, her long black hair swinging from side to side as she walked along the shore.

Questions:

1 Did Jaydeep come to the place as a tourist to look at temples?

2 How did he know the girl was here?

3 What things did the shop sell?

4 Did he see the girl?

Resource 3: Reading passages

Resource 3

A nation with unity in diversity

India is divided into 28 states, which have their own governments, and seven union territories. Each state is unique, with its own language, traditions and cultures. People from all these states and union territories have an official language, which is usually the home language of most of the citizens of that state, and many other languages and dialects. People of different states look different, and have very different festivals, customs and traditions.

Interestingly, however, people still share a feeling of belonging to one country — India or Hindustan. They share their history of the freedom struggle, and consider Mahatma Gandhi as the Father of the Nation. Indians across different states celebrate certain festivals like Diwali — the festival of lights — and Holi — the festival of colours — and many states celebrate the harvest and coming of the new year in April. Although people belonging to different states speak different home languages, almost everyone knows English and Hindi, and can therefore communicate with one another.

Inside a science museum

Last year we had an excursion to the Science Museum in our capital city. You can't imagine what we saw there! It was truly the most memorable day of my life. I really didn't know you could learn so much about science and the history of our scientific development! Our guide took us around the museum, and showed us many different scientific collections. We saw different kinds of aircraft, weapons of war, older models of radios and televisions, and other fascinating machinery. They even had a huge dinosaur skeleton, and a robotic dinosaur which opened its large jaws very wide, shook its head and screamed! I was really frightened when I heard it scream — it sounded so natural! I also loved the section on rare butterflies and other insects. Then there was the snake collection and the huge aquarium which had at least 30 different kinds of sea fish.

Deforestation: Effective measures

Deforestation refers to the cutting down of trees in a forest and using the area for commercial activities. Deforestation is one of the biggest reasons for the increase in pollution, global warming and soil erosion in modern times. Because of the rapid growth of population, people across the world are thoughtlessly cutting down forests to make space for houses. Although deforestation is considered illegal in many countries, it has not stopped people from breaking the law, because timber (that is, wood from trees) is very valuable and people who sell timber make a lot of money.

Deforestation has dangerous consequences. When we cut down trees, we make the soil loose. The roots of trees hold the soil firmly, and this prevents the soil from being washed away during heavy rains. When the soil becomes loose, it is easily carried away, and all the important minerals contained in the soil also get washed away. This leaves the soil infertile. When floods come, the rains take away the soil, and the force of the water easily carries away with it people's houses, crops, animals and their means of livelihood.

Video

Resource files

See in the enclosed DVD a video recording of the activities:

- Scripts\Module3\Unit1\Activity3\Resource3\Video\India_A_Nation_With_Unity_In_Diversity.mp4
- Scripts\Module3\Unit1\Activity3\Resource3\Inside_A_Science_Museum.mp4
- Scripts\Module 3\Unit 1\Activity 3\Resource3\Deforestation.mp4

Teacher question and answer

Feedback

Question: What do I do if half of my class reads poorly and the other half does not have much of a reading problem? Sometimes it is difficult to give individual attention to all my students, especially in large classes. How do I handle this problem?

Answer: This is a common problem, and one way you can handle it is by pairing the stronger students with the poorer ones, and having the stronger ones help the others. You can, for instance, have the stronger students read the passage aloud to their partners, so that they learn to pronounce the unfamiliar words. Or they can monitor the way the poorer students read and help them discover their reading defects, and so on. Having students work in pairs and groups also helps you manage large classes better. You can go round and watch the students work, and then address their problems when you give feedback. This way, they will receive individual attention, and common problems can be addressed efficiently, thus saving you time.

Unit 2: Reading Silently for Understanding and Speed

Introduction

Reading silently improves students' understanding because it helps them concentrate on what they are reading, rather than the pronunciation of individual words. When we read silently, we can form mental pictures of the topic being discussed. Also, we do not need to read one word at a time. When you encourage your students to read silently, you are helping them develop the strategies they need for reading fast, and with better comprehension. This is called reading efficiency, and it will help your students to read any text with maximum attention to meaning.

Silent reading also helps develop the skills of reading for a purpose, as the focus is on understanding the content without the additional burden of having to pay attention to pronunciation.

Research has shown that people read in sense groups, which means, roughly, that we read a number of words together so that they make sense to us. For example, this is how I read the first sentence of this paragraph: *Reading silently/improves students' understanding/because it helps them/ concentrate on/what they are reading,/rather than the pronunciation of individual words*. Within these groups of words, our eyes stop at the content words (*reading, silently*, *improves*, *students'*, *because*, *helps*, *concentrate*, etc.) — that is, nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc., the words that carry independent meaning — and skip over the function words (*it*, *them*, *on*, *the*, *of*, etc.) — that is, grammatical words such as articles and other determiners.

The activities in this unit will demonstrate certain strategies that students can use to become more efficient readers. It will also introduce you to the technique of classifying the contents of a text according to main and subordinate ideas, illustrations and information that is not directly related to the topic, and adjusting our reading speed accordingly.

Unit outcomes

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- help students develop silent reading skills to read more efficiently,
- teach students how to guess the meanings of unfamiliar words from the context,
- help students understand the relation between reading speed and reading efficiency, and
- help students improve their reading efficiency through understanding how to interpret information given in graphical form.

Teacher support information

In this unit you will be able to help students practise the strategies used in silent reading to improve their reading speed and skills. After the activities, you should begin to see gradual improvement in their comprehension. This is because silent reading helps students to focus their attention on the text; their increased concentration on the text is sustained until the entire text is read. This also helps students absorb ideas into their subconscious and then use them in their daily lives.

Case study

Case study

Hassan Muammar was a student at St. Michael's Junior Academy. He enjoyed being at this school because of its extracurricular activities. He was a good rugby player and he loved football. His friends attributed his success to his physique: his height and an agile body that enabled him to run fast. But something always bothered Hassan.

Though he loved the extracurricular activities, he knew his mother would not be pleased if he did not improve his fluency in reading. He always stammered and faltered over words in class, was usually the last to finish reading any text and found it very difficult to remember what he had read.

One Monday he shared his concerns about his reading problems with his English teacher. The teacher was not surprised; he had noticed that most of his students were good at sports, especially rugby and football, but were poor readers. The teacher realised that he had to find strategies for developing his students' fluency, speed and interest in reading.

The teacher first initiated a class discussion on reading stories, asking his students about the kinds of stories they liked to read. Most students said they loved to listen to stories, but did not enjoy reading them as it took them a long time to finish reading a story book. The teacher then announced that he would tell them the first parts of two interesting stories and, if they liked them, they would have to read the next parts themselves. The students were happy with this arrangement, and readily agreed to the plan.

He then announced the name of the first story: "Ambrose." To motivate the students to listen, the teacher informed them that the story was set in ancient Greece. He then divided his class into groups of three students, and told each group to write down three things that they expected to hear in the story.

The students took up the challenge, and came up with many interesting ideas about what they thought they would learn about Ambrose when they heard the story. The purpose of this game was to make the students excited about reading the story, and the teacher was happy to note he had succeeded in increasing their motivation. To maintain this excitement, the teacher told them that he would not tell them whether they had guessed correctly. If they wanted to know what really happened to Ambrose, they would have to find out from the story itself!

He then read out the first paragraph of "Ambrose." Some of the things the students guessed turned out to be correct, while others were quite off the mark. The students enjoyed listening to one another's guesses, and became impatient to find out if the rest of the story confirmed their guesses. Then he instructed the class to read the story for themselves and find out whether they had guessed correctly.

Points to ponder

1. Do you have poor readers in your class? Do you think this kind of strategy would work in your situation?
2. Can you think of other ways in which we can motivate students to read? Do you think they can only begin at the JSS level, or should the habit of reading begin well before that?

Activities

Activity 1: Guessing meaning from the context

Activity 1

Reading has been called a "psychological guessing game." Many experts believe that the reader makes guesses about what is going to appear next; when the predictions are correct, they read easily and efficiently.

Reading requires much guessing at a variety of levels. Readers can use guessing to their advantage to guess context messages, cultural references, implied meaning, grammatical and organisational relationships and the meaning of words. Since reading with understanding is a process of linking new information to what we already know, we

bring our knowledge of the world, subject matter and context into our knowledge of language (its grammar, vocabulary and orthography).

It is not possible, or even desirable, for students to refer to a dictionary every time they come across a difficult word. This would reduce their speed, slow down comprehension and reduce interest. It is better to teach students to make intelligent guesses about the meaning of a word from the clues that can be found in the surrounding words and sentences. In this activity, you will learn how to help students guess meaning from context.

Before the activity, have a class discussion on how often students refer to a dictionary when they are reading something.

Put them in small groups and ask them to quickly brainstorm on the advantages of using a dictionary regularly. During the feedback, ask them if they refer to the dictionary every time they come across a difficult or new word. Make them think about the possible disadvantages of this habit, but remind them that sometimes it is necessary to go to the dictionary.

Gradually bring the discussion around to what they do when they come across an unfamiliar word in any passage that they are reading. Possible responses would be ignoring the word and moving on, referring to a dictionary, trying to guess the meaning and so on.

Draw their attention to the fact that efficient readers do not carry dictionaries around with them; rather, they try to guess the importance of the word in relation to the overall theme, and use the surrounding words to understand its meaning. As they come across more occurrences of the word in different texts, their original guess about the meaning of the word is either confirmed or challenged. (A list of other strategies we use to guess meanings of unfamiliar words is given in **Resource 1**.)

Now give them the following example to show how we look for clues for the meaning of a word in the surrounding words or sentences.

> *He tried to open the box with no luck. He couldn't find the key, so he decided to use a* ***smidget****.*
>
> What do you think *smidget* means?

Ask them to guess the meaning of *smidget*. See if they drew any of the following conclusions:

Clues that can be found from the passage:

> *A smidget is something that is used to open a box.*
>
> *It is something solid.*
>
> *It sounds like the word midget, which means small.*

Questions that can be asked:

> *Is it something very heavy, like a hammer that is used to break a lock?*
>
> *Is it something very small, like a hairpin that can be used to pick a lock?*

Now give them the final sentences of the paragraph. Did they guess correctly?

> *He got a thick wire from the shed, bent it in the shape of a smidget, and inserted it into the keyhole. Sure enough, the lock turned easily.*

Smidget: *A small object made of metal that can be used as a tool.*

Below are some more short passages for practice. Ask the students to guess the meanings by using the same strategies.

> *His father, Dondinho, was a **professional** soccer player and that was their only source of income. Though he grew up in poverty he learned to love and enjoy soccer in the sporty atmosphere of his home.*
>
> *Icarus and his father collected lots of bird feathers and made two pairs of wings. One morning, they **fastened** the wings to their shoulders with wax and were ready to fly.*
>
> *Rajen had to cross a bridge to get to school. Jeev used to **escort** him every day. He carried his brother's schoolbag. Rajen had only to follow him. If he lagged behind, Jeev would ask, "Why? You are perhaps tired. Come, hold my hand and walk with me."*

Activity 2: Reading rate and reading comprehension

Activity 2

Why we are reading a particular piece of material influences how we read it. Different materials require different levels of comprehension and recall.

For example, we may not need to recall everything when leisurely reading an article in a newspaper, but we do need a high level of comprehension and recall when reading a contract that we plan to sign. When reading course assignments, our purpose may vary as well. We might read a Psychology assignment very closely in preparation for an exam; we might read a portion of a Science text only to learn (and remember) how many types of metals there are. As our comprehension varies, so does our reading speed. In general, we find that as the level of comprehension required decreases (e.g., when reading a magazine as we wait in the doctor's office), our reading speed increases.

Note that with reading, flexibility is required. A newspaper will be easier to read because we are scanning through the articles, but if we have an article addressing a specific subject, we might be forced to slow down so that we comprehend and remember the details. This ability to adjust our reading rate and methods to suit the type of text we are reading and why we are reading it is called **reading flexibility**.

To develop reading flexibility, your students should read different types of texts, and then reflect on whether they read different books with the same speed or effort. An appropriate exercise is given in **Resource 2a**, which contains two texts. Have the students read the two resources silently and time themselves.

Now ask them which resource they found easier to read. Tell them to think of some reasons for this.

(Possible answer: The **second** text was easier to read and remember because (i) it begins with a familiar phrase — *A long, long time ago...*, (ii) the sentence structure is simple, (iii) the sentences are short, (iv) there are few unfamiliar words, (v) the topic is culturally familiar, (vi) it has a clear beginning, middle and end, and (vii) it talks about the life of specific people.)

To conclude, take the students through the table in **Resource 2b**, and draw their attention to the fact that we vary our reading speed according to the type of text and how much comprehension is required.

Activity 3: Understanding graphical presentation of information

Activity 3

Whether we read academic or non-academic texts, we know that texts do not contain only words. Some texts give us information in other ways, with diagrams, maps, flowcharts, tables and so on.

Our reading speed is affected by how we "decipher" or "decode" the information given graphically in a text. This exercise demonstrates how we can help students to understand information given in visual form.

Have your students brainstorm on the different ways in which information is given in, for instance, their Science textbook. Prompt them to think about a typical chapter, and the kinds of ways in which words are arranged in it. (Give them a hint: How is a scientific experiment described?) Show them the pictures in **Resource 3a** and draw their attention to the non-textual elements such as the diagram and the table.

Now show them the text and table given in **Resource 3b**, and in groups, ask them to compare the advantages and disadvantages of reading information in text form and graphical form.

Note: The sample text is related to the topic of reading, but it may not be easy for students to understand. The important thing here is not to have students understand the passage, but to make them notice the different ways in which information has been presented. They should come up with points like: it is easier to remember information given in a table, it takes much less time and skill to understand something presented in graphical form, and information can be presented in a logical and orderly manner in a chart or table.

Finally, give them an exercise to practise their own skills in interpreting information or data given in graphic form. **Resource 4** is a histogram showing students' study hours for a secondary school. The students have to answer questions based on the diagram to find out how best to understand information given in tabular form. This exercise gives them practice in comparing information across columns and rows, locating specific information on a graph, interpreting facts and figures, etc.

Unit summary

Summary

In this unit you learned that reading efficiency and speed increase when people read silently. You also learned about some strategies and skills that your students should practise to improve their comprehension skills and reading speed. When students see an improvement in their ability to read texts with understanding and speed, their confidence in reading will increase, and this should motivate them to read more. The ability to recognise text types and topics is an added skill that will help students to improve their reading skills.

Reflections

Reflection

- Did you find the activities relevant and interesting?
- Did the resources motivate your students to read more?
- Did the students participate actively in the activities? Were the activities too difficult for some students? How did you help them?
- In your opinion, should anything have been done differently?

Assessment

Assessment

- Think of two more activities to develop reading speed, using the students' course books. Also note down possible challenges that you might encounter in having your students do the activity in class.
- Look for a table of information in any of your students' other subject textbooks, and design a set of questions around it. Collect other kinds of visual information that students usually have to read, and use them to test whether the students understand graphical presentations of information.

Resources

Resource 1: Guessing word meaning from context

Resource 1

When we read, we already have certain kinds of knowledge about the words, some of which we have learned consciously at school, and some of which we have learned instinctively over time. Here are some aspects of words in English that we use as cues to guess their meaning:

- Prefixes: (anti-, pro-, un-, dis-, co-, etc). For example, prefixes like un- or dis- usually carry a negative meaning, so we can guess that a word like *uncertain* has some negative connotation.
- Suffixes: (-tion, al, -ist,-ism,-tive, ally, etc). For example, suffixes like –tion make a word a noun, while –tive will make a word an adjective.
- Roots that are familiar (re-*place*-ment, *wander*-lust, etc.).
- Grammatical context that signals information (noun, verb, adjective, etc.). For example, if a word sits between an article and a noun, it functions as an adjective; that is, it is being used to describe something.
- Knowledge of the topic and whether the word in question is central to understanding the topic.
- Understanding the main ideas expressed until one meets the unfamiliar word.
- Frequency of occurrence of the word in question. If it appears only once, and is in an example, the word can be ignored. However, if the word recurs in crucial positions, we may have to look up the dictionary for its exact definition.

Resource 2a: Reading texts

Resource 2a

Text 1: Equality in education

In Kenya, the general education policies are based on the belief that all people should have equal chances. This means none should be denied education on the basis of their race, age, gender or religion. Education should lead to social equality and responsibility. Free primary education has led to a general increase in enrolment in primary school. Many children who had been left out because of economic reasons now have a chance to go to school. This has led to a significant increase in enrolment, especially amongst girls. If this policy is extended to secondary school, there will probably be an increase in the enrolment of girls in secondary school as well. If more girls have the opportunity to complete a secondary education, they will have more opportunity to enrol in colleges and seek better employment.

Although primary school enrolment of girls roughly equals that of boys in some places, about two-thirds of the world's illiterate adults are women. Of the more than 100 million children who drop out of school before completing standard four, two-thirds are girls.

To deal with the high dropout rate amongst girls, the Government of Kenya has come up with awareness programmes to improve the lives of girls, so that they can be motivated to attend school. Education is important in enabling women to improve their standards of living.

Although women provide important labour, especially in the agricultural sector, they receive very little for their effort. Education will enable women to have access to better paying employment.

(Adapted from B. Kukubo, T. Ngari and Z.K, Mutea (2004). *Explore English, Form 2.* Nairobi, Kenya: Longman Kenya Ltd.)

Text 2: The stepmother

A long, long, time ago, in the distant village of Kithare, there lived a man and his wife. The man worked on his farm every day. One day, the wife gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. She named her Lora. The mother fed the child on bananas, potatoes, rice, bread, maize, beans and vegetables. Each day the baby grew older and more beautiful. "Oh! My daughter will attract many suitors when she is of age," she whispered to herself.

One day, the mother got sick. No medicine man could cure her and she died. The husband was left alone with his daughter. So he married another wife.

The second wife gave birth to a baby girl. She named her Rosina. The two girls grew up together. They were soon inseparable. They fetched water from the river together, they weeded the farm together, they gathered firewood together, they cooked together and even slept on the same bed. Lora grew more beautiful each day but Rosina was not beautiful. Lora's beauty was the talk of the village. Soon, suitors began visiting the homestead to ask for Lora's hand in marriage.

Rosina's mother did not get jealous. She knew that even if her daughter was not beautiful, God would give her a suitor. Rosina's mother was out to prove to the world that a stepmother can love a stepdaughter with genuine love. She prayed every day for God to give her daughter a husband. One day, a rich young man from a neighbouring village visited the village, and saw Rosina helping an old farmer pick up his load. The young man was very impressed by Rosina's kindness, and soon asked for Rosina's hand in marriage. By this time, another worthy man from their own village had permission to marry Lora. Thus, in the end, both girls married good suitors. Rosina's mother proved correct the saying that "what is ugly in one's eyes is beautiful in another's eyes."

Resource 2b: Reading comprehension (table)

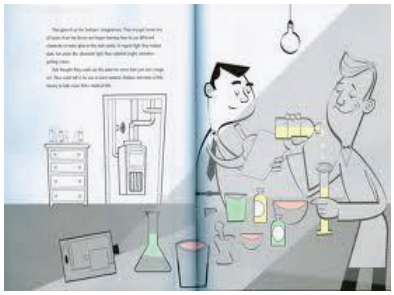
Resource 2b

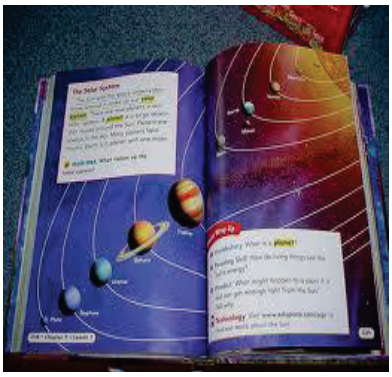
	Type of material	Purpose in reading	Desired level of compre-hension	Appropriate rate of reading
1	Poetry, legal documents, argumentative writing	Analyse, criticise, evaluate	100%	Under 200 w
2	Textbooks, research documents	High comprehension recall for exams, writing research reports following directions	80%	200-300 w
3	Novels, paperbacks, newspapers, magazines	Entertainment, enjoyment, general information	60%–80%	300-500 w
4	Reference materials, catalogues, magazines, non-fiction	Overview of material, locating specific facts, review of previously read material	Below 60%	600-800 w

Resource 3a: Graphical information in texts

Resource 3a

Typical pages from JSS Science textbooks





Resource 3b: Information in print (text and table)

Resource 3b

(Excerpts taken from free Internet article from *Reading and Writing* (2006) 19:1–19 Springer 2006, DOI 10.1007/s11145-003-8128-y, available at www.psych.yorku.ca/gigi/documents/Kerr_Symons_2006.pdf)

Computerized Presentation of Text: Effects on Children's Reading of Informational Material

Matthew A. Kerr and Sonya E. Symons (University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada; Acadia University, Wolfville, Canada)

Text

Reading rate, free recall, cued recall, and comprehension data are presented in Table 1. Means for each of these variables were compared using paired-sample *t*-tests with medium of text presentation (i.e., paper and computer) as the independent variable. Effect sizes were calculated and are reported as Cohen's d. Children spent a mean of 2.5 minutes (SD = 0.8) reading text on paper compared to a mean of 2.8 minutes (SD = 1.0) reading text on the computer monitor. Reading rates in words per minute were calculated because one passage was slightly longer than the other. Children read the paper text at a faster rate than the computer text

($t(59) = 5.16$, $P = 0.001$, $d = 0.35$). When asked to recall as much information from the text as they could, participants recalled more of the text that they had read on the computer than the text that they had read on paper ($t(59) = 2.37$, $P = 0.02$, $d = 0.25$). There were no reliable differences of presentation medium on cued recall ($t(59) = 0.00$) or comprehension ($t(59) = 0.17$, $P = 0.87$). It is possible that the observed higher free recall scores after reading from computer screens may have been a result of greater reading time. Analysing efficiency rather than accuracy is one way to examine this time/accuracy trade-off. Carver (1990) calculated reading efficiency (E) as the product of the accuracy of comprehension (A) and the rate at which information is presented (R), where E = A∗R. In the present study, accuracy of recall and comprehension were defined as the proportion of correct responses on the respective tests. Rate of presentation is the individual's reading rate expressed in words per minute. The efficiency equation yields an estimate of how much of the text was recalled or comprehended per minute of reading. The best observed free recall score plus one was deemed "maximum" free recall, and was used in calculating free recall efficiency. Means and analyses of the efficiency variables are included in Table 1.

Table 1: **Descriptive statistics for recall and comprehension by presentation medium.**

	M	SD
Reading rate (wpm)		
Paper	177.8	63.1
Computer	156.8	55.4
Free recall		
Paper	3.6	1.9
Computer	4.1	2.0
Cued recall (maximum = 8)		
Paper	2.8	1.7
Computer	2.8	1.6
Comprehension (maximum = 7)		
Paper	3.4	1.7
Computer	3.3	1.5
Free recall efficiency (wpm)		
Paper	68.2	48.2
Computer	67.0	44.7
Cued recall efficiency (wpm)		
Paper	68.1	50.6
Computer	57.8	45.5
Comprehension efficiency (wpm)		
Paper	91.5	63.9
Computer	75.7	45.4

Resource 4: Histogram showing students' study hours

Resource 4

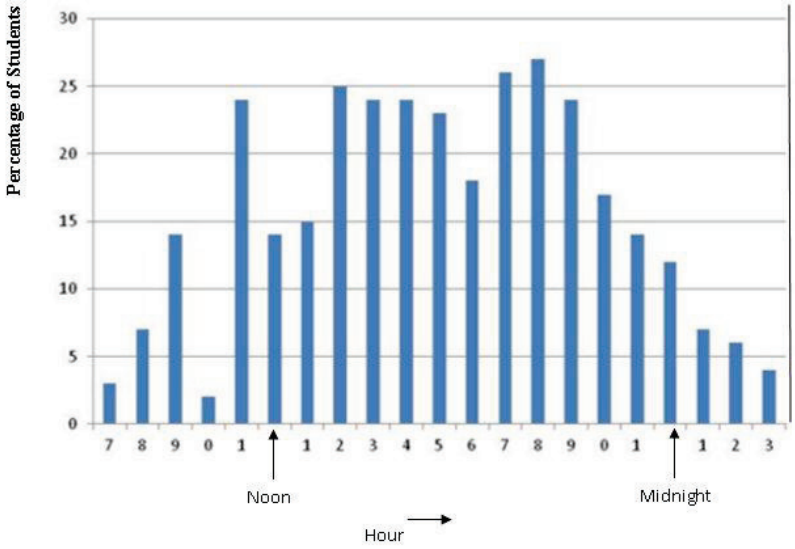


Fig: Histogram of Students' Study Hours

The chart above tells us what percentage of their time students of City Secondary School spend studying. Look at the chart carefully and answer the questions below.

a What percentage of students study between midnight and 1:00 a.m.?

b What is the most popular study hour?

c Why do you think only about 22% students study at home between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.?

d Why does the chart show students' hours only from 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 a.m.?

e During which hours do more than 25% of students study?

(Correct answers: a = around 7.5%, b = 8:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m., c = because they are at school then, d = because students are sleeping the rest of the time, e = 7:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.)

Teacher questions and answers

Feedback

Question: Do you think students should be encouraged to read silently? Should children read aloud so that their pronunciation improves?

Answer: The answer to this question is in the question itself: reading aloud helps improve pronunciation. But it

slows down the speed of reading, and diverts our concentration from the meaning. This leads to poor understanding, and also prevents us from remembering important points.

Question: How can I make students realise that practising these reading skills will improve their reading speed and comprehension?

Answer: You can encourage them to keep a record of their reading speed in a journal or logbook. Tell them to note the starting and ending time every time they read a book using these skills. At the end of the month, they can compare their reading speed. Reading speed is calculated in terms of words per minute (wpm). So if I take three minutes to read a passage of 300 words, my reading speed is 100 wpm.

Unit 3: Reading Efficiently: The Sub-Skills of Reading

Introduction

In real life, people read a variety of texts for both information and pleasure. Reading materials differ in content, style and purpose, and we adjust our reading style accordingly. To become efficient readers, we have to train ourselves to read different texts in different ways. For example, we do not read a novel and a textbook in preparation for an examination in the same way. When we are reading a novel, we do not need to pay attention to every detail the way we do when reading a textbook and read more quickly: most speed reading involves a process called **chunking**. Instead of reading each word, the reader takes words in "chunks," — that is, groups of words that make a meaningful unit, such as phrases, clauses or even whole sentences. And, as adults, most of our reading is silent. When we read silently, we save the time spent on articulating words, and read in chunks or sense groups instead of one word at a time.

In this unit, we will try to help you make your students aware of the various sub-skills and strategies we use to read different texts with efficiency. Reading efficiently, as you have already seen in **Units 1** and **2**, means adjusting one's reading speed and style to match the purpose for which we read. This involves reading for an overall idea or gist, specific information and detail, and to understand the writer's attitude. This unit will give you some information about various sub-skills of reading, and how students can be trained to use these sub-skills to read actively.

Unit outcomes

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- help your students understand the relation between reading purpose and reading efficiency;
- give your students practice in the sub-skills of skimming for an overall idea and scanning for specific information;
- help your students understand text structure, so that they can distinguish between main, subordinate ideas and illustrations, and digression, if any; and
- help your students develop their reading efficiency by modifying their style of reading to suit the purpose for which they are reading.

Terminology

Terminology

Scanning: Searching quickly for a specific piece of information or a particular word. For example, when looking up a word in a dictionary, an address in a directory or the flight arrival schedule of a particular flight, we do not read entire pages or passages. We search for the keywords or ideas because we know what we are looking for. Scanning involves moving our eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words and phrases.

Skimming: Reading through a text quickly to get an overall idea of the contents; that is, the gist of the passage. For example, before buying a book we glance quickly at the cover page, the reviewer's comments on the back cover (also called book jacket), the contents page, etc., to get a general idea of its contents.

Book corner: A special area in the classroom set aside for a collection of non-academic books for children, preferably storybooks for that age group.

Teacher support information

The activities in this unit should develop students' efficiency in developing some important sub-skills of reading. It is therefore important to have them work independently, either on their own or by collaborating with their peers. Improving reading efficiency is a matter of practice, and if students can be engaged in meaningful and interesting activities, their skills will develop more quickly. This will then help them read different kinds of texts, and respond to the information provided more efficiently.

Case study

Case study

Elizabeth Roy, a JSS teacher of English and Social Studies, was eager to attend a training course for English teachers in Cape Town. She hoped to learn some ways of helping her Grade 9 students read better. For some reason, her students read their English textbooks with more interest than they read their Social Studies texts. She wondered whether it was because English textbooks had stories and such things about people, while Social Studies talked about facts.

When she shared her concerns with the experts, she realised that she was not the only one whose students behaved like this. Other colleagues were facing the same problem. The experts decided to make this a complete

session. The next day, they had the participants, including Elizabeth, work on exercises related to the textbooks that they taught. They took Elizabeth and the others through a series of interesting activities that made them read the same texts for different purposes, with varying speeds and with a focus on different aspects of the passage. Elizabeth realised that if she could get her students to actively engage with the text through a variety of activities, they would read other subject texts with the same interest as they read their English textbooks.

Elizabeth tried out some of the techniques and exercises she had learned in her class, and found to her pleasant surprise that the students' interest picked up, and they slowly began to perform better in Social Studies too. She realised that no matter what kind of text we read, if we read actively, we will get the maximum benefit and joy.

Points to ponder

1 Is it necessary to teach children how to read different kinds of texts? Do we use the same or different strategies to read different texts?

2 Should we use other subject texts to teach reading, or would the English textbook be enough?

Activities

Activity 1: Reading for gist: Skimming

Activity 1

In real life, we read a variety of materials in the languages we know (our home language or English, for example). Some materials like course books are read with close attention to detail as we need to use the information in examinations.

Other materials, like magazine articles, are read for pleasure. Then there are things like billboards and hoardings that we mostly read with little concentration as we really do not need to use their information in our daily activities.

In this activity, we will deal with the sub-skill of **skimming**, which is used to get an overall idea of the text.

To begin the activity, ask the class to list the different types of things they read. They will probably come up with things like *textbooks, storybooks, magazines, comics, signboards, letters, postcards, menu cards, labels on things they buy, phone books, instruction manuals (for phones, TVs, cameras, etc.), subtitles of English movies, maps, encyclopaedias* and so on. Now tell them to list these different types of texts and classify them according to the *reasons* for reading them given in column 2, in the table below. Write the list on the board as the students respond.

Your board might look like this:

Kinds of things we read	Reasons for reading
▪ Novels, short stories, fiction ▪ Non-fiction, textbooks, travel books, encyclopaedias ▪ Newspapers, journals, magazines, maps, directories, dictionaries ▪ Forms, applications, questionnaires ▪ Brochures, catalogues, hoardings, advertisements, notices, labels, posters, displays at airports, stations, etc. ▪ Letters, reports, proposals	▪ For specific information ▪ To pass an exam ▪ To pass time ▪ To know details of something ▪ To have an overall idea ▪ For having a general idea

Ask them to look at the list and decide which type of reading materials they read fast, very fast, slowly and very slowly. Bring the discussion around to the fact that we read different texts at different speeds depending on why we are reading.

For the main activity, give them the following situation: A friend, Nigel, wants to go on a vacation to the seaside, and he cannot decide where to go. He knows you have some idea, so he has asked for your advice to help him choose a good place. He is in a hurry, so he has asked you to give him an idea as soon as possible.

In groups, have the students read about Africa's best beaches in **Resource 1**, and help him make a decision. They can look at the pictures of the beaches and read the tourist information before they decide.

After they finish the task, ask them to recall how they read the passages: did they read them very slowly, or somewhat quickly? What kind of information did they look for, and how did they decide on a destination?

From their answers, try to have them realise that they read about the different beaches somewhat quickly so that they could get **an overall idea** about them and give the information to Nigel. This skill is called **skimming**.

To test their ability to skim a text for the **overall idea** or **gist** of a passage, ask them, in their groups, to read the summaries of the beaches given below, and match them to the descriptions of the African beaches given in **Resource 1**.

- *World-class surfing, Billabong Pro competition, amazing beaches along the South African coast.*

- *White beaches, hospitable people, old fishing villages, modern resorts, north-end beaches a must-see.*
- *Breath-taking beaches around the Nile Delta; ideal spot for diving; near the Pyramids.*
- *Fabulous beaches, relaxation, gentle surf, sea, sky*.

Conclude the task by bringing to their notice that reading for gist or overall idea involves:

- reading the text quickly for general information (**skimming**),
- mentally summarising the information for later use, and
- remembering keywords (*diving, surfing, relaxation, breath-taking beaches, hospitable*) only, and not every detail.

Before ending the discussion, ask them to again list the kinds of texts they **skim for gist**. Then ask them to collect a few of those to practise in the next class.

For more ways of practising skimming, see **Resource 2**.

Activity 2: Reading for specific information: Scanning

Activity 2

Another important sub-skill of reading that all efficient readers use as a strategy is called **scanning**, or looking for specific information.

To demonstrate the use of this sub-skill, have the students work in pairs and say which kinds of texts given in the list below they read very quickly, and why.

- A play
- A telephone directory, to look for someone's phone number
- The sports page in the morning newspaper
- The school noticeboard
- The label on a bottle of jam, to find the price
- The back cover (jacket) of a book
- A shopping list
- The questions on the question paper in an exam
- The large advertisement on the main road
- The departure announcement board in a train station
- The booklet that came with the new CD player I bought recently

During the feedback have the students recognise that we read such texts to find some specific information, and not to understand or remember every bit of information given there. We quickly scroll down a page to locate the particular thing we are looking for (e.g., a telephone number, train departure time, cricket score). **Scanning** is a very important reading skill that is frequently used for real-life purposes.

Now give the students an activity to practise the skill of scanning. Divide them into pairs then give each pair an English newspaper. You should use different newspapers so that each pair has fresh information to share with the rest of the class. Each pair should quickly scan their pages and find answers to the list of questions below. You can add to the list depending on the design of newspapers in your home town. Remember that this is a scanning task, so do not let the students spend too much time on it.

1. Look at the top front half of the newspaper. List three main types of information all newspapers must have.
2. Which item on the front top half of your newspaper is in bold and in the largest font size?
3. Note down at least one international headline on the front top half of your newspaper.
4. Does the front page carry any advertisements? What product is being advertised?
5. Which page covers the business news? What is the most important piece of news there?
6. Flip through the pages of your newspaper and find out which topics/ areas take more than one page.
7. Which page carries the editorial? Is there more than one editorial?
8. Are there any pages especially for children? What are the headlines?

After the students finish, have them think of what strategies they used to find out the information quickly. Elicit points like *they read only letters in bold print, they skipped all the smaller columns, their eyes moved very quickly over the page, stopping only when they got the specific information they required,* and so on.

You can have them practise scanning information in the lessons you teach every day — making them locate a particular sentence on a page, a page number of something, the meaning of a word given after the lesson, the number of questions following the lesson, etc. All these everyday activities help students develop their scanning skills.

Activity 3: Understanding text and distinguishing text style

Activity 3

The texts we read do not all deal with their topic in the same style, and do not all present information in a uniform, step-by-step manner. An efficient reader is one who can recognise the style of paragraphs in a prose text and know whether it deals with **a main idea, a supporting detail, illustrations, a detour** or **digression**.

Such a reader then knows which part needs to be read with more attention

to detail, and which part needs less concentration. This is not to suggest that efficient readers are careless people who do not read a passage thoroughly — it merely means that they can vary their reading speed and comprehension according to the purpose for which they are reading.

In this activity, you will be able to help your students understand how to recognise whether a paragraph is dealing with main or subordinate points, examples or digressions (that is, things that are not directly related to the topic). One way in which this is done is by noticing the use of special phrases that give us the necessary clue.

For this activity, first give students the following short paragraph and ask them to underline the most important sentence in it and say how they recognised it:

Unlike my friend Samuel, I enjoy coming to school. Regular school attendance is very important for the development of knowledge. For example, we not only get to learn from our teachers, we get a chance to chat with our friends and share jokes. My cousin has a good store of jokes.

They should have underlined the second sentence, and the word *important* would probably have helped them decide. Now have them match the sentences in the paragraph with the headings in the second column in the table below:

1 *Unlike my friend Samuel, I enjoy coming to school.*	Main idea
2 *For example, we not only get to learn from our teachers, we get a chance to chat with our friends and share jokes.*	Related idea
3 *My cousin has a good store of jokes.*	Example
4 *Regular school attendance is very important for the development of knowledge.*	Unrelated idea

(Answers: Sentence 1 — Related idea, Sentence 2 — Example, Sentence 3 — Unrelated idea and Sentence 4 — Main idea)

Draw the students' attention to the fact that passages usually have a mixture of all these types of sentences or paragraphs, and so we must recognise which ones are important to remember. These need to be read more slowly and carefully, while a lot of time need not be spent on the less important sections. Sum up by introducing the terms **Main Idea, Subordinate Idea** (related idea), **Illustration** (example) and **Digression** (unrelated idea).

Clues that help us identify different styles are found in expressions like:

An important point here is.../We want to emphasise that... (main idea)

The reason for this is.../Another idea connected to this is... (subordinate idea)

A good example of this is.../For instance,.../I would like to illustrate this point by... (illustration)

By the way,.../We may note in passing that.../Something interesting, but not directly related to this is... (digression)

For more practice, give your students the exercises in **Resource 3**. You could also bring to the class interesting passages from storybooks, newspapers or magazines and have them identify the four categories. To make them test their reading speed and comprehension, ask them to *time* themselves and read the passages on their own the first time. Then, working with a partner, ask them to identify the main and subordinate ideas, illustrations and digressions, and then read the passage again. This time, they should improve in both speed and understanding.

Unit summary

Summary

In this unit you learned how to improve your students' reading speed, developing flexibility in reading by learning how to skim for gist and scan for particular information. The unit also tried to show how to understand text structure by recognising the different ways in which information is presented in texts. When students learn to distinguish between main points and subordinate ideas, identify illustrations and recognise digressions in a reading passage, their comprehension and speed will improve, and they will be able to read with efficiency. Students must keep practising these skills, because they make us efficient readers through life and help us read a variety of texts with ease and understanding. These skills can also be transferred across subjects and used for reading non-academic texts too.

Reflections

Reflection

- Has the unit introduced technical terms like skimming and scanning adequately? Do you think newspapers are a good learning resource? Could other reading comprehension activities be done by using newspapers?
- What other kinds of texts can you use to show students how to identify main and subordinate ideas in a text?

Assessment

Assessment

- Identify two passages that can each be used for practising both skimming and scanning skills. Think of two activities that will test your students' ability to skim and scan.
- How can we identify main and supporting ideas in a passage? Read a text and note at least two expressions that helped you identify a main idea and a subordinate point.

Resources

Resource 1: Travel guides: Africa's best beaches

Resource 1

Egypt – The Nile Delta (near Alexandria and the Red Sea) has some breath-taking beaches. The Red Sea area is the ideal spot for both diving and indulging in tourist activities like visiting the Pyramids and enjoying the local culture.

South Africa – Although the South African coast is home to some amazing beaches, Jeffreys Bay (known as J'Bay) is the place to go for world-class surfing. Time your visit to coincide with the annual Billabong Pro competition.

Mauritius – Mauritius is an example of how top beaches are often found on small islands. Pereybere, Flic en Flac, and Ile aux Cerfs all have fabulous beaches where you can relax — thanks to the sound of the surf, the beautiful sky and sand.

Zanzibar – This "spice island" near East Africa has amazing white beaches, traditional fishing village, upscale resorts — and friendly locals. Seek out beaches at the north end of the island.

Resource 2: Practising skimming

Resource 2

Once you are sure your students understand the purpose of skimming for an overall idea, you can give them a task centring on the class book corner. Ask each student to pick up a book they have not read before. When you say "Go," they should quickly **skim** through the book for a general understanding of what it is about. Give them five minutes to do this. They should flip through the book, read the title, contents page, introductory paragraphs and summary or last page. No one makes notes. After the five minutes are over, tell them to stop. Now ask each student to tell a partner what he or she thinks the book is about. This should take no more than three minutes. Then the other partner does the same. The students can refer to the books they skimmed through while they talk.

You can repeat this exercise several times during your English class. For example, before starting a new unit or lesson, give your students two or three minutes to skim through the lesson and tell the class what they think it is about. After the lesson, decide whether the predictions were correct and to what extent. Allow the students to talk about the strategies they used. This will alert others about the need to read actively.

Resource 3: Understanding text organisation

Resource 3

Passage 1

Look at the picture: What fish is it? What do you know about this fish? Have you ever seen such a fish?

Here is a short paragraph on this fish, but the sentences are not arranged in the proper order. Your task is to arrange the sentences correctly and number the sentences: Write 1 over the most important sentence, 2 over a supporting detail or subordinate idea, 3 over an illustration and 4 over any unrelated idea.

1 Are you afraid of sharks?

2 My uncle says that sharks have a bad reputation just because people think that all sharks are killers.

3 I haven't taken a seaside holiday for the last three years.

4 The largest sharks like the whale shark and the basking shark are not killers.

5 There are, of course, several other types of sharks that use their rows of sharp teeth to tear apart everything, including human beings!

6 But the next time you see a shark, try not to be scared. Even if you fall into the water, it may not attack you.

(Correct sequence: 1, 2, 4, 5, 3, 6)

Main idea (1): 2

Subordinate idea (2): 1, 5, 6

Illustration (3): 4

Digression (4): 3

Passage 2

Does your family rear cattle? What kinds of products do we get from cattle?

Here is a passage on livestock farming in Kenya. The paragraphs are all numbered. Discuss them with a partner, and say which paragraphs deal with main ideas, subordinate ideas, illustrations and digressions.

(Note: Some passages may not contain all these categories. In the passage below, for example, there is no digression. Draw the students' attention to this during the discussion and make sure they understand that it does not signal a weakness in the text.)

Beef and livestock farming

1 Beef farming is the rearing of cattle for meat production whereas dairy farming is the rearing of cattle for milk production. Kenya has a cattle population of about 10 million herds.

2 Beef farming is widespread in Kenya but more common in drier parts of the rift valley: North-Eastern, Eastern and Nyanza. About 90 per cent of beef cattle in Kenya are kept by subsistence farmers and pastoralists. There are cattle ranches in Laikipia, Trans-Nzoia, Malindi, Molo, and Kajiando.

3 Examples of breeds are Zebu and Boran; crossbreeds include Hereford, Aberdeen Angus and Galloway. Beef is consumed countrywide. Canning and freezing are done in Nairobi, Thika and Nakuru.

4 Dairy farming is important for the following reasons:

- **i** It provides milk which is a source of protein
- **ii** Milk is used in the production of the other products such as chocolate, biscuits, sweets, butter and cheese
- **iii** The animal waste is used as manure
- **iv** It has also led to the establishment of industries and Kenya Meat Commission that offers employment

5 The following are the most common dairy breeds in Kenya.

Friesian: White and black in colour. The forehead and the feet are usually white.

Ayrshire: White and red in colour.

Jersey: Brown in colour and the smallest of the four breeds.

Guernsey: Brown in colour. Some are white on their lower abdomen.

Teacher question and answer

Feedback

Question: How do I help students transfer the sub-skills they have learned here to help them read material on other subjects efficiently?

Answer: You can encourage your students to apply their new skills to other subjects by having them bring passages from other subject textbooks to the class. Encourage them to bring to the class passages or texts that they have been finding difficult to understand or remember.

Engage them in peer activities like reading the text quickly for an overall idea, and then working together to locate the main ideas and illustrations. You can even ask one pair to read the text in detail and make up a set of scanning questions to ask another pair, and so on. This will ensure that everyone reads the texts actively, and learns to use their sub-skills efficiently.

Unit 4: Reading — Study Reading: Strategies for Reading across the Curriculum

Introduction

Unlike their experience in early school, where "reading" is restricted to recognising letters and words and understanding simple sentences, students at the JSS level need to comprehend and respond to whole texts (paragraphs, sections, lessons and books) that deal with a variety of subjects. They will use, for example, textbooks on Mathematics, Geography, Biology, Economics or English Literature — reading material that encodes meaning in different ways, such as paragraphs, diagrams, tables, lists, graphs and so on. An efficient reader can decode the information given in a text and store it in a way that allows him or her to retrieve the information when necessary, transform it into graphical form if necessary and use it for real-life purposes. For example, a student may be required to list the uses of aluminium in a Science exam, draw and label landforms in a Geography exam, compare and contrast the two world wars in Social Studies or summarise a poem in English Literature.

In other words, reading is an active skill that involves processing information effectively and using it in various contexts and forms. Memorising and repeating whole chunks of texts is not the sign of an efficient reader: at best, these help develop pronunciation skills. When we teach students to read effectively, we train them in using certain strategies that allow them to pay maximum attention to meaning so that they can comprehend a text and use the information in it effectively. By teaching students reading strategies, we empower them to decipher meaning in any kind of reading material on their own. In this unit, we will discuss and demonstrate strategies that you can use to improve the reading skills of your students to help them read well across the curriculum.

Unit outcomes

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- survey semantic markers notes,
- teach students to survey a text to predict the content,
- enable your students to recognise the functions of discourse markers, and
- teach students to take notes from a passage efficiently.

Terminology

Terminology

Surveying: Using several strategies such as scanning and skimming together to get an overall idea of a book/article/passage. It includes such activities as reading the first and last paragraphs of a text, the index page, the foreword, etc. Surveying is a preparatory activity; it is done before one reads the book or article. This aids comprehension because it tells us what to expect to read even before we have read a page of the book or article.

Linking devices: These are sometimes referred to as **discourse markers** or **linkers**. They are words and phrases used in speech and writing to help people understand the message by connecting one idea to the next. These words usually come at the beginning of a sentence and function like signposts on a road. For example, *at first*, *finally*, *in short*, *however*, etc.

Summary note card: A rectangular card, about 5 inches by 3 inches in size, that is used to note short summaries of books or passages, including publishing details, for later use.

Case study

Case study

English teacher Miss Winnie Rodgers of Hilltop High School was happy with the progress the slower readers in her class were making with her special reading programme. They practised using the skills she had taught them, such as skimming for the overall idea of a text and scanning a text for specific information. They looked noticeably more confident and were engaged actively in the learning experience. Some students brought newspapers, magazines and books from home to school to add to the collection in the book corner. She was especially pleased about this.

When other subject teachers complained in the staff room about the students' poor comprehension in their subjects, Miss Rodgers shared with them the techniques she had used to transform poor readers into efficient ones. With her colleagues' encouragement she decided to give her students practice in using the same strategies to read other school subjects. She selected three passages: a science experiment that included a diagram, a comparative passage on two periods in history and a passage from an Economics text that discussed, with the help of a table, the effects of rising costs on the lifestyle of the poorer sectors of society. For each passage, she devised sets of exercises that made students survey the text for gist, scan for specific information, transfer the information from the table and diagram into paragraph form, and so on. After two weeks, she asked her colleagues if these practice sessions had made any

difference in their students' responses and comprehension. She was thrilled to hear from each of the teachers that the students had performed much better on their class tests, and had been more engaged in reading the textbooks in the class. The students' overall performance improved dramatically that year, and the principal organised a week's orientation for all subject teachers to use these strategies regularly in class.

Points to ponder

1 Do you think it is possible to use the same skills to read textual information found in school subjects, and non-academic texts such as advertisements or travel brochures?

2 Have you ever tested whether your students comprehend other subject texts as well as they do with their English textbooks? If they do not, do you think you could help them?

Activities

Activity 1: Surveying text

Activity 1

Reading is a skill that we use to get information from a text and also for our pleasure or entertainment. We read a variety of texts with different purposes, at different speeds and with different levels of comprehension. When we teach students to read efficiently, we not only train them to recognise words and structures in a particular language (in this case, English), we give them strategies to comprehend and recall the information they read on various topics and subject areas. In this activity, we will introduce you to some strategies that your students can use to get information about the text they are going to read, even before they actually read it. This not only motivates them to read, it helps them comprehend the text better, as they can anticipate what they are going to read about.

Before beginning this activity, have the students think about this: when they go to a shop to buy a jar of fruit jam, and the shopkeeper shows them various brands, how do they decide which one to buy? Separate them into pairs and ask each pair to list three things they do to help them take a decision. They should mention looking at the printed price, the ingredients list, the manufacture date, nutritional information, etc.

Draw their attention to the fact that we use these same strategies when we buy or borrow a book to read. This process is called **surveying** — finding relevant information about the contents of the text before actually reading it. Now show them the front and back covers of a book and ask them, still working in pairs, to note what kinds of information they can find about the book, beginning with the *name of the author*, *the price of the book* and so on. You can bring your own book, or use the pictures of the book given in **Resource 1.**

Discuss the following:

- **The factual details:** The name of the author, full name of the book, the publisher's name, the price, the address of the publisher, the ISBN/ISSN number and so on.

- **The reviewer's comments:** On the back cover/jacket of the book, we usually find quotes from famous reviewers who have read the book in advance and promote it.

- **The publisher's blurb:** This is also on the back cover/jacket and is a short description of the book written by the publisher.

Discuss the information the students gather — point out that they now have some important information about the book, which will help them decide if it will interest them.

Now give them any book from your library, and tell them to note what we call the pages that come before the chapters begin. They should be able to mention the **Contents** page, the **Preface** and the **Foreword** or **Introduction**. Some books may even have an **Epilogue** at the end. If the students are not sure of the meanings of these words, briefly explain to them, or have them look up the words in a dictionary.

Now announce that they are going to read a book called *The Heavenly Boy* by Manuela Smith. To prepare themselves to read efficiently, they should do the following:

1 **Predict**: Write down two things that you expect to read about in the book. (For example: *Is the book about a boy who goes to heaven?*)

2 **Survey**: Read the information about the book given in **Resource 2**:

   a Look at the information on the front and back covers

   b Read the publisher's blurb on the book jacket

   c Read the Contents page

   d Read the Preface

   e Read the Foreword

3 **Summarise**: Recall or read what information you noted. Summarise the book in one sentence. (For example: *This book describes the journey of...*)

Collect the students' responses and draw their attention to how much information they have about the book even *before* having read it. Encourage them to repeat this activity with other books. As a homework assignment, ask each student to make a summary note card noting information about one book from their class/school library, so that they have a whole collection of cards with neatly recorded information for future use.

Activity 2: Understanding the use of discourse markers

Activity 2

As we all know, when we read a text, we do not read only the important words to understand it; we are guided by some words and phrases that serve as **signposts** and guide our understanding of the information. These signposts are especially useful when we read texts that tell us about objective facts, processes and procedures. For instance, descriptions of physical events such as earthquakes or eclipses, the function of the system, or the consequences of the atom bombs dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki need our active concentration, especially if we are reading them for academic purposes. In this activity, we will discuss some functions of these signposts, which we call **discourse markers**, and have students practise reading texts with attention to these discourse markers. These words and phrases perform various functions such as introducing a topic, listing, adding a point, summarising, clarifying and so on.

Introduce the concept of **linkers** and **cohesive devices** that are used as discourse markers by bringing up text types the students are familiar with, like a fairy tale or fable. Elicit from them typical markers found in familiar texts. Ask them questions like, "How does a fairy tale start? What are the exact words used? And, how does a murder mystery begin?" Make them aware that they recognise such texts easily because of certain fixed and familiar phrases such as *Once upon a time..., A long, long time ago..., Musa heard a scream...*

Now give **Resource 3** to the students, working in pairs, and ask them which passage is clearer and easier to understand, and why. They should notice that the second passage sounds better as it contains certain expressions that help us understand it more easily.

To show them another example of how discourse markers work, give each pair the passage in **Resource 4** about making tea, and have them do the accompanying task. At the end of the task, have a discussion on how the use of expressions such as *firstly, then, after that, finally, however,* etc., gives the second passage a direction, and makes it easier for us to read, understand and remember the information. Explain to them that such expressions (words or phrases) that help the reader to "navigate" through a text are called **discourse markers**. Such expressions are found in most prose texts, including texts for other subject areas. The ability to recognise the functions of these discourse markers in a text improves both reading speed and reading efficiency.

Now divide the students into small groups, and give them a passage from any subject textbook written in English and which contains such discourse markers. (Such passages are common in Social Studies or History textbooks.) Or you could give them the passage in **Resource 5.** Working with a partner, the students should underline all the discourse markers they find. Then they should say what function these markers are performing in the text. **Resource 6** has a table showing the functions of various discourse markers. Work through this with your students at the end of the activity. Give your students a copy of this handout so that they can consult it later, and use it to improve their reading skills.

Activity 3: Study reading (taking notes from a reading passage)

Activity 3

When we read something to make use of the information later, such as subject textbooks, reference books, reference articles from a journal or the Internet, for example, we need a way to record the main points for future use — that is, we need to **take notes**. Note taking involves several strategies like **reducing content** by **leaving out unimportant words, using abbreviations and symbols, listing, paying close attention to discourse markers in the text** and **summarising**.

It is an important reading skill, as the strategies can be transferred across the curriculum, when one is studying other subjects. At school, however, we rarely teach students to take notes, preferring to explain the lessons ourselves and then testing students' comprehension through the accompanying questions. Active reading involves **collecting, sequencing** and **remembering** information in a way that can be used later. If students are not encouraged to read and note information by themselves while at school, their reading skills will not improve through college.

As a pre-task exercise, divide the students into groups to brainstorm on the different ways in which they remember what you teach them in class. Expected answers would include *underlining important sentences, ticking the important points, writing Imp or * next to an important point*, etc. Draw their attention to the fact that **they do all these in the textbook itself**, and that they need to learn **how to take notes in their notebooks** so that they can revise the important points easily before their exams.

Now give them, in their groups, the passages in **Resources 7a** and **7b**. These include two versions of notes taken on a passage by two students. Your students have to read them and decide (i) which student has taken notes in a better way, and (ii) why they think this version is better. During the discussion, elicit points like using numbering, listing, giving headings, using abbreviations and symbols etc., so that they understand how best to take notes.

For the final step of this activity, choose a passage from any text suitable for their level. Make sure the passage has at least a few discourse markers so that the students can practice understanding their functions in texts. Ask them to take notes on the passage using strategies like those used in **Resource 7b**. You can have them refer to **Resource 8**, which has a list of a few commonly used abbreviations and symbols. Then have them summarise and reconstruct the passage from the notes. **This is very important**, as it will help them understand whether they managed to take notes on all the important points.

Unit summary

Summary

In this unit we tried to introduce you to strategies and methods that can be used to encourage students to read efficiently across the curriculum, and should wean them away from bad practices like mugging and cramming. The unit should have given you a variety of activities and resources so

that you can give your students plenty of practice in improving their study skills. The unit also took you through a sequence of teaching points — beginning from surveying a text and recognising the functions of discourse markers to taking notes. All of these steps should prepare JSS students to improve their reading skills in different subject areas.

Reflections

Reflection

- Do you reflect on your reading style or method? Do you think it is useful to do so?
- Have you already been using the techniques introduced in this unit with your students? If you have, has their reading efficiency improved? Can you think of any problems with using such techniques? To what extent is instruction on reading like the strategies given in this unit useful? Do you think our practices of reading are formed in early childhood/adulthood and cannot be changed?
- To what extent do you think you will be able to use ideas and methods presented in this unit in your class? Why?

Assessment

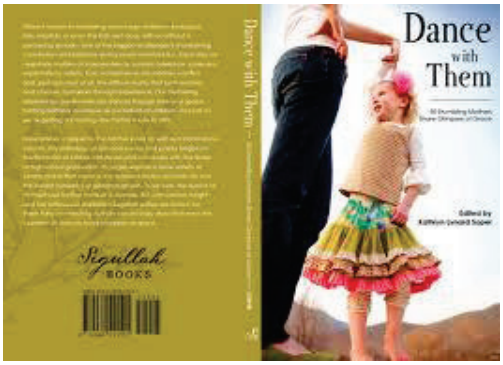
Assessment

- Think of a situation in your own life when you had to struggle to understand and remember information in a course book. Note the strategies you used to get over the problem. Did you use any of the skills described above?
- Do you think the study skills described in the unit can be used to study poems or plays, or are they just for texts written in prose? What kind of discourse markers would you find in a play?

Resources

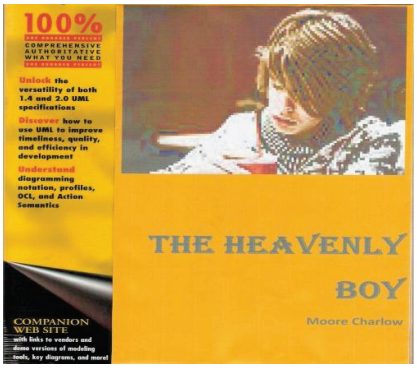
Resource 1: A book cover

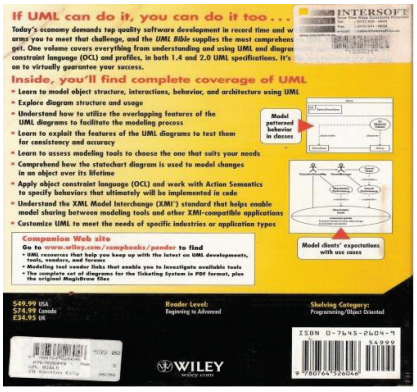
Resource 1

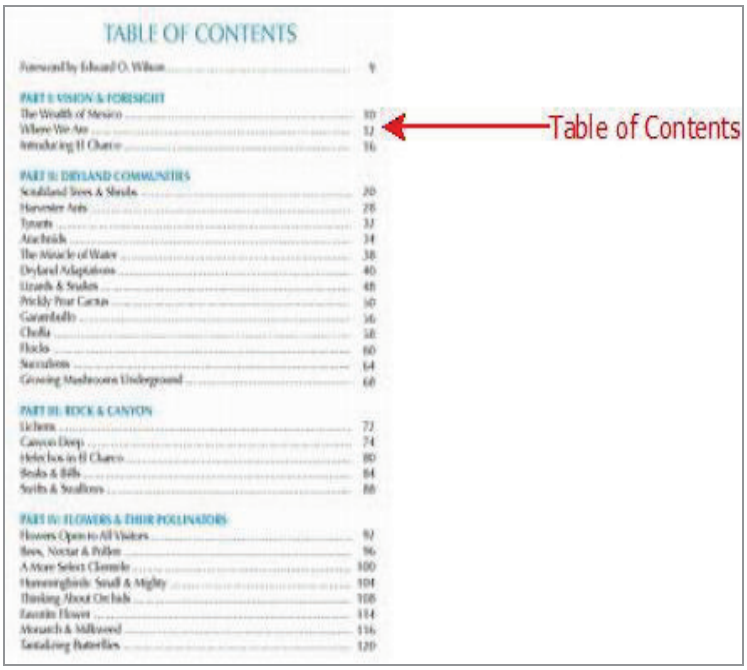


Resource 2: Surveying a book: Finding information about content

Resource 2







Resource 3: Understanding the function of discourse markers

Resource 3

Passage 1a

The outermost layer of the Earth is not uniform. It is fragmented. Each fragment is called a plate. These plates are in continual motion. They brush past one another. A plate goes under another due to collision. They cause disturbances in the earth's crust. These disturbances show up as an earthquake on the surface of the earth. We know for sure what causes an earthquake. It is not yet possible to predict when and where the next earthquake will occur.

Passage 1b

The outermost layer of the earth is not uniform, but fragmented. Each fragment is called a plate, and these plates are in continual motion. Sometimes they brush past one another, or one plate goes under another due to a collision. When this happens, they cause disturbances in the Earth's crust, which show up as an earthquake on the surface of the Earth. Although we know for sure what causes an earthquake, it is not yet possible to predict when and where the next earthquake will occur.

Resource 4: Making an omelette

Resource 4

Look at the sentences below. They describe the process of making an omelette. However, **they are not in the correct order**. The box above the sentences contains some words that we use to express what comes after something. Discuss this with a partner and rewrite the sentences in your notebook **in a paragraph**, according to the correct steps. Remember to add

the words from the list where necessary, so that the process of making an omelette is clear to someone who is making one for the first time. You may also join two sentences if you want, like this:

When the batter begins to leave the side of the frying pan, carefully lift one end of the omelette with a flat ladle and fold it.

first	*then*	*finally*	*after*	*some*	*time*		
next	*when*	*after*	*that*	*if*	*you*	*like*	*and*

Making an omelette

1 Take two eggs.

2 Remove it from the heat.

3 Chop an onion into fine pieces.

4 Add a pinch of salt and a dash of black pepper.

5 Carefully pour the egg batter into the frying pan and spread it around the pan.

6 Beat the mixture thoroughly with an egg beater or a fork.

7 Pour a teaspoon of cooking oil into the hot frying pan.

8 Break them carefully into a wide bowl.

9 The batter begins to leave the side of the frying pan.

10 Spread the oil carefully all around the pan so that the egg batter does not stick.

11 Serve with tomato ketchup.

12 Add the chopped onion to the eggs.

13 Carefully lift one end of the omelette with a flat ladle and fold it.

14 Heat a frying pan.

15 Fold it in the middle, and turn it again.

16 Both sides of the omelette turn golden brown.

Resource 5: How to make a telephone call from a public telephone

Resource 5

Making a call from a public telephone is not very difficult. All you need to do is keep some coins ready to insert in the slot, remember the number you want to call and then follow the instructions carefully. To start, lift the telephone receiver and listen. If you hear a continuous dialling tone, it means the phone is working. Otherwise, you will have to go to another booth. When you hear the dialling tone, press the keys of the number you want to call. Then wait for a few seconds for the number to start ringing. If the person on the other end is on another call, you will hear an "engaged" tone. However, if the person picks up to answer your call, you will hear a series of beeps — for example, a "pip-pip" sound. At this point, you will have to drop your coin into the slot. The beeps will stop, and you will hear the voice of the person you are calling. After some

time, when your 60 seconds are nearly over, the beeps will begin again to warn you that if you wish to continue speaking, you must put in another coin. You will have another 60 seconds to speak. Finally, when your call is over, replace the receiver and leave the booth so that next caller can make their call.

Resource 6: Functions of discourse markers

Resource 6

Discourse marker	Function
First, at the beginning, to start, to begin, next, then, to begin with, in the end, finally	Listing, indicating order/sequence
Also, moreover, above all, in addition	Adding/reinforcing
In other words, to put it in another way, that is to say	Rephrasing/reformulating
Then, at that time, after that, previously, at that moment	Time relationship
For example, for instance, let's take	Illustration
Therefore, because, so, thus, since	Cause and effect relationship
If, unless	Condition
However, but, although, on the other hand, otherwise	Contradicting/going against something previously mentioned
I would like to draw	Emphasising
To sum up, in other words, to summarise, to round up my lecture	Summarising

Resource 7a: What causes earthquakes?

Resource 7a

Outermost layer of earth is fragmented

Plates are in continual motion

Brush past one another

One plate goes under another

Disturbance causes earthquake.

Tremors occur when a volcano erupts

Or meteor

Or nuclear explosion

Resource 7b: Making notes on a passage: What causes earthquakes

Resource 7b

Causes of earthquakes

1. Structure of earth's crust

a. Not uniform — fragmented

b. Fragment — called a PLATE

2. Movmnt of plates

a. in cont. Motion

b. sumtimes — brush past another}

c. sumtms — 1 plate under anthr } — cause disturbances

3. distrnbancs cause erthqks

4. othr causes:

i. tremors frm volcano eruptns

ii. meteor hitting earth

iii. undrgrnd nuclear explosn

Resource 8: Commonly used abbreviations and symbols in note taking

Resource 8

Word	Abbreviation
Important	imp
Very important	v imp
For example	e.g.
Et cetera, and so on	etc.
That is	i.e.
Namely, such as	viz.
Note well	N. B.
Examination, destination, cancellation	Eaxm^{tn}, dest^{tn}, cancel^{tn}
Though	tho
Through	thru
Great	gr8
Some, something,	Sum, sum^{thg}
Improvement, measurement, instrument	Imprv^{mnt}, measr^{mnt}, instru^{mt}
First, second, third…	1st, 2nd, 3rd …
Suddenly	sudn^{ly}

Word	Symbol
Therefore, thus, so	∴
Above	↑
Because, since	∵
Is equal to, the same	=
Is not equal to, not the same as	≠
Plus, more	+
Minus, less	-
Greater than	>
Less than	<
From…to	→
Percentage	%
Divide, divided by	÷
Multiply, multiplied by	×
Insert (something left out)	ʌ
Parallel to	||

Teacher questions and answers

Feedback

Question: What do I do if the students' other subject texts do not contain discourse markers like the ones described in this unit?

Answer: Even if such passages are not easily found in your students' course books, your students must learn how they function in texts, as they will have to read and understand texts themselves after they leave school. The skills described in this unit are ones that have relevance throughout life.

Question: Why do I need to teach my students how to take notes if I am there to help them understand the subject texts?

Answer: A popular description of a successful teacher is one who "progressively makes herself unnecessary for the students." Your students will not have you by their side all through their lives, and if you continue to "spoonfeed" them, they will never learn to eat themselves. Our job as teachers is to equip them with the skills that will help them read better through life. Teaching them to take notes now will help them when they go to college, or even when they start work.

Unit 5: Extensive Reading: Encouraging Lifelong Learning

Introduction

In this final unit on success in reading, we will look at ways of sustaining the habit of reading with efficiency, and of using this habit to read texts outside the curriculum.

Several analogies have been used to describe reading. It has been compared to a battle because a reader selects strategies to "attack" a text; victory is won when the text "surrenders," or yields meaning. It has been compared to marching; both activities require you to move purposefully and rapidly towards a destination. It has been compared to solving a puzzle; it requires a reader to draw on all of his or her background knowledge and focus on the textual cues to work out the meaning. Reading can also be like a pleasurable stroll, especially when you are reading literature. You stop by words and expressions to appreciate their beauty, and notice how they contribute to making your journey worthwhile. And it has even been compared to peeling an onion. A reader has to skim off the surface, working through layers of meaning to reach the core. These analogies highlight the different characteristics or processes involved in reading: it is rapid, purposeful, flexible, interactive and evaluative, and it involves comprehending and learning. In this unit, and in the preceding four, we have tried to give you strategies to engage your students in "attacking" a reading text, uncovering the various meanings in a text and taking a great deal of pleasure in the process.

Unit outcomes

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit you will have:

- helped build a "reading culture" in the class, to enable your students to sustain the habit of reading,
- helped your students follow the logical sequence of ideas in a narrative,
- helped your students recognise some of the common styles of reading passages, and the functions and directions of each, and
- encouraged students to read a variety of academic and non-academic texts outside the curriculum for both knowledge and pleasure.

Terminology

Terminology

Jigsaw reading: A popular way of making students read in class. Students are divided into groups and each member in the group is asked to silently read a different part of the text. The full picture is then pieced together when all the members of a group come together to discuss and complete the task.

SQ3R: Survey(S), Question (Q), Read, Recite, Review (3R): A technique used for efficient and active reading. Students begin by **surveying** a text by reading the cover pages and introductory pages of a book, or the first and last paragraphs of a passage, to form an idea of the contents before actually reading the book/passage. This is followed by them asking two or three **questions** to guess what to expect in the book. Then comes **reading** the book, using skills like skimming, scanning and guessing meaning from the context. After that comes **reciting** — recalling consciously what has been read. Finally comes **reviewing** — evaluating their overall experience of reading the book.

Teacher support information

This unit should help you encourage your students to use the strategies, information and ideas presented here beyond the current academic year. We appreciate the problems a teacher faces in trying to make room for extensive reading along with all the other components of the regular English curriculum for the school, but we hope that the ideas in this unit will help you take up the challenge and extend your students' reading programme to the next form or year. Why? Because you may be the only way your students are exposed to English. Your encouragement and guidance will help them maintain the reading skills they learn from you throughout their life. If you can actively engage your students in the activities in this unit, as well as those in the previous four units, it will contribute immensely towards their lifelong learning.

Case study

Case study

Angela was in her last year of school. She came from a very humble background: her parents could not afford to buy her books or magazines to read in her spare time. Angela did not want to let her family situation stop her from studying for a professional degree, but she realised that she had very little knowledge of things happening outside her region. Then

her teacher, Mr Kimolo, who had always encouraged her to go on to college, stepped in.

Mr Kimolo realised that Angela's problem was not unique — most of her classmates came from similar backgrounds and for many of them, this school year might be their last chance to gain some world knowledge. He discussed the situation with his colleagues, family members and friends, and asked everyone to contribute something in English — storybooks, novels, magazines, newspaper supplements, travel guides and brochures, and any other reading material that would give his students insights into real life outside the classroom. Mr Kimolo also wanted his students to realise that there was a variety of reading material beyond their textbooks, and that they needed to read and understand the information presented there to improve both their knowledge and experience.

Mr Kimolo then had his students design a modest bookcase which they put in a corner of the room. All the reading material was kept there, and each student was responsible for the book he or she borrowed. Mr Kimolo encouraged them to read and discuss the books, both in and outside the class, using the reading techniques he had been teaching them during the last year. He encouraged them to consciously use terms like "skimming," "scanning," "silent reading," "SQ3R," etc., while reading and discussing the books. Being able to understand and use such "adult" knowledge made them feel important, and helped them to stay disciplined in their reading habits.

By the end of the year, the students had developed the habit of passionately discussing, arguing about and criticising books during their leisure hours. Mr Kimolo was also pleasantly surprised to hear them discuss the day's events, review films, plays and other social events happening in their town, and so on. He realised that, with just a little encouragement, he had opened a door to a different world for them. He was confident that they had become efficient readers, and would be able to benefit from this throughout their lives.

Points to ponder

1. How do students decide which books are important for them to read? Is this a decision that should be made only by their teacher, or should students also be allowed to experiment with various reading materials?
2. Nowadays children, especially those in urban areas, spend more time on their computers than with books. How can we make them do both — read books and use the computer? As a teacher, would you encourage your students to read e-books on the Internet and have class discussions on them?

Activities

Activity 1: Creating a "reading culture" in class

Activity 1

The main aim of this activity is to build the students' confidence in their reading skills by creating a relaxed atmosphere so that each student can read outside the class according to their own taste and pace. This activity is meant to foster the habit of extensive reading, which is an integral part of language development. Studies have shown that when students are "immersed in meaningful texts, without tight control over syntax and vocabulary, children appear to learn the language incidentally, and to develop positive attitudes to books" (W. Elley (1991). Acquiring Literacy in a Second Language: The effect of book-based programs. *Language Learning*, *41*, pp. 375–411.)

As we are all aware, most students talk more freely with their peers than with their teachers. We can use this habit to encourage group reading activities outside class hours, for "out-of-class" reading. We can then foster extensive reading in the class without sacrificing other aspects of our teaching.

For this activity, divide the students into small groups, allocating one or two stronger readers to each group, and allot one teaching period per week in the class timetable for the reading programme.

Encourage your students to create and set aside a corner of the classroom for a book corner with books collected as suggested in **Resource 1**. Ensure that it has a wide range of text types: comics, magazines, newspapers, short stories, abridged classics, children's literature, mystery books, science fiction, children's knowledge books, maps, illustrated tour brochures, etc. Remember to include some materials suitable for the weaker readers as well.

Give the students time in class to choose a book to read. Remind them to use the survey techniques they learned in **Unit 4**: ask them to skim the book jackets, scan the contents page, read the blurb, the preface, introduction, etc., before they select the book for "out-of-class" reading. Give them 20 minutes for this preparatory activity. Monitor the kinds of books they select, but help only if someone seeks your opinion directly, or you find that someone has chosen a text that he or she will not be able to cope with.

Allow a week for the students to read their chosen book at home. Tell them that they have to bring back the book to class for the next reading class, and to be prepared to join in a discussion on their reading within their groups.

After reading the book, they should prepare a short summary of the book in the style of a film trailer or promotional — that is, briefly introduce the book and then stop at an interesting point, leaving their listeners wanting to read the book. (For example, finishing their brief summary with a question or a hint about the ending: *What do you think Ryan decides at the*

end? To start afresh or to come back to Tracy? To find out what happened to Ryan, read on…/Jack Richards, the author, traces Ryan's life and keeps us in suspense until the end…

Activity 2: Jigsaw reading

Activity 2

This activity helps students to recognise the sequence in paragraphing in a reading passage. The task of selecting the right order will depend on an awareness of logical sequencing based on linguistic cues such as the use of linkers, cohesive markers, pronouns, tense forms, etc. The task can be done comfortably in the class and students can work either individually or in small groups. This can be used as a standalone task or a pre-reading task. The purpose of this task is to make students understand the logical sequence in which a story proceeds, or in which ideas are presented in a book. This is a crucial part of reading efficiency.

For the activity, follow the steps below:

1. Divide the reading passage paragraph by paragraph and make as many sets as there are groups in the class.
2. When you use this activity for the first time in the class, have a five-paragraph story, like the one given in **Resource 2**, so that there are five students in a group and each has to read a paragraph.
3. Shuffle the paragraphs and distribute the sets to the groups.
4. Tell the students that they have to put the paragraphs together in an appropriate order. Ask each of them to begin by reading their paragraph and telling their group what it is about.
5. Ask the groups to share with the class the ordering they have agreed on. Allow them to explain why they selected that particular order.
6. This activity can be a pre-reading task before reading a longer narrative. On the basis of the paragraphs they have read and ordered, the groups can be asked to predict how the story might continue. Each group should present their prediction to the class.
7. You can raise the difficulty level of the task by giving longer passages with more paragraphs, or with discursive or expository texts. This will draw the students' attention to a range of linkers and cohesive markers, and how they signal the structure of the text.
8. This task can be pitched at an easier level for younger students by using scrambled sentences instead of paragraphs.

Activity 3: Understanding text style: Types of passages

Activity 3

In real life, outside the classroom, we read a variety of materials, most of which are written in different styles. For example, a short story does not have the same style as a description of, say, a tourist spot. Or a magazine article comparing the spending habits of the middle class with those of the upper class will not have the same style as a report on a scientific discovery. Unless students are familiar with these various types of styles, they are unlikely to get the most out of what they read. In this activity, we will help you introduce your students to a few styles of prose passages such as **narrative, descriptive, comparative, expository** and **argumentative passages**. (See **Resource 3** for a description of these passage types.)

As a pre-reading activity, divide the students into pairs and give each pair the two passages in **Resource 4a** to discuss and note the differences in the way the passages are written. They should be able to notice *the use of certain discourse markers* (practised in **Unit 4**)*, the choice of words, the sentence structures, the beginning and the end*. Tell them that the first passage is called a **narrative** passage, and the second one is a **descriptive** passage. Draw their attention to the characteristic features of such passages from the information given in **Resource 3**.

Now have them sit in groups and identify one **narrative** and one **descriptive** passage from any of their course books, and say why they have defined the passages as narrative or descriptive. During the discussion try to bring out the aspects of the style that will help them identify similar passages in future. This technique is part of what we call *experiential* learning, where we engage students in tasks to discover something for themselves.

In the next step, show them a **comparative** passage (such passages are easy to find in History or Social Studies textbooks) and have them notice how two things, people, events or situations are compared. They should also underline the discourse markers used for comparison. This will help them realise how to identify a comparative passage, and how to differentiate it from a narrative or descriptive passage. Now show them the style of writing of a science experiment. Such an **expository** passage, which *informs, defines, describes* and *explains,* is commonly found in academic textbooks and the information given there is usually supposed to be remembered in detail. Finally, give them an **argumentative** passage (e.g., an essay on a great man, such as Nelson Mandela, or the one given in **Resource 4b**) and ask them, in their groups, to note down what is different in this passage as compared to the four passages they have already looked at.

After the students have spent some time comparing the styles of the different passages, have them draw up a table of the features they have noticed, and put these up in a chart on the display board.

To help the students carry their new knowledge beyond the classroom, have them search the book corner for each type of passage. After the whole class has made a selection, the students can classify and store passages under these headings. Of course, the students need to be shown

that not all passages can be clearly demarcated into different passage types, and that the same passage may have a combination of several types of writing styles. The important point here is for students to be able to recognise different types of passages when they see them, and to understand the function of each.

Unit summary

Summary

In this unit you learned that reading is a lifelong activity and that we need many different strategies to teach our students to read efficiently and fluently. The strategies demonstrated in the explanations, activities and resources can be used to continue reading programmes beyond high school. They not only help with reading but also provide strategies to improve one's writing skills. Understanding the sequence of ideas presented in a text, recognising the style of a text, understanding the role of discourse markers and using survey techniques to prepare to read — all foster lifelong learning, and should be introduced to students through extensive reading activities at the JSS level. This unit tries not only to teach some new strategies, but also to consolidate the learning points from the previous units. It should have helped you give some direction to your students' extensive reading habits.

Reflections

Reflection

- Do you think this unit has covered important reading strategies?
- Did you find the activities relevant to the unit?
- Were the resources useful?
- In your opinion, what should have been done differently?

Assessments

Assessment

- Give your students a descriptive passage and ask them to transform it into a narrative passage, following the guidelines about different types of passages given in **Resource 3**. Then record the decisions they took and the changes they made during the task.
- Select a few passages for weaker readers to read. Note down the particular aspects of the content and style of the passages that helped you select these passages.

Resources

Resource 1: Creating a book corner in the class

Resource 1

The school library has always been the centre of learning for both staff and students. However, logistics may prevent students from visiting it as much as they should. With the help of students and parents, teachers can start a book corner in the classroom. This initiative alone can improve students' confidence in reading.

A book corner need not always be expensive. Teachers can start by encouraging students to bring books that they or their siblings or friends have already read. Teachers should also bring in some of their favourites or some bought at used-book stores, garage sales, etc. Try to include fiction plus some non-fiction like biographies, history, travel, food, etc.

Various publishers and websites have lists that you can consult. For example:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_children's_literature_authors

Sometimes titles are reviewed by teachers and listed according to age-appropriate reading interests. See, for example, some of the titles listed at http://www.teachersfirst.com/100books.cfm:

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls
The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien
Summer of the Monkeys by Wilson Rawls
The Cay by Theodore Taylor
The Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare

Teachers can also visit websites that give tips to parents and teachers. For example:
http://www.teachersandfamilies.com/open/readingtips.html

The contents of this page are given below:

Encourage your children to read!

Building strong reading skills and an interest in reading is one of the most important things parents can do for their child's academic development. There are many ways to help children develop an interest in reading.

Let the child choose a book to read. Fiction is fine, but non-fiction titles — biographies, science, and history — are also great topics.

Show that you like to read. Set aside some time each week to read a book of your choice while your child reads also.

Read a story to your child. Try reading a chapter each night at bedtime for a great evening routine.

Visit your public library. It's the world's best summer entertainment deal!

Let your child build his own library by setting a shelf aside for his or her "special" books.

Do you have a reluctant reader? These strategies can help:

Look at a book before your child starts reading it. Guess what might happen and who the characters might be. When the child finishes the book, let him or her tell you whether your predictions were accurate.

Build your child's vocabulary. Introduce new words each day and use them!

Music and rhymes help young children develop strong reading skills, especially when reading aloud.

Encourage reading with a reading chart using stickers or other indicators of your child's progress. Remember, too, that there is no substitute for praising success at reading.

Copyright © 2003-2010 by The Source for Learning, Inc. All rights reserved.

Resource 2: Jigsaw reading: Sequencing paragraphs in a text

Resource 2

Here are five paragraphs from the novel *Wanderlust* by the Indian author Joydeep Choudhury. Divide the students into groups. Each student in the group should read one paragraph. Then the group should work together to decide on the correct sequence of the paragraphs.

a Rohit Malhotra had turned forty a few months ago but his looks did not betray his age. He looked a lot younger than his years. In these years of life, he had seen a lot and experienced every kind of lust. But no lust quite matched his wanderlust.

b His motorbike and he, a pair made for each other, had hit the roads every couple of months in their travels to the hills. Together, they had covered almost every inch of the hilly terrain in Himachal, Uttaranchal, Kashmir, the North-east and all the way down south in the Nilgiris. Even at the height of militancy in Kashmir, Rohit had followed the tug of his wanderlust and travelled on his trusty motorcycle, riding between the bullets and never once getting hit.

c He had slept in an abandoned shed alongside the road in Kausani and taken shelter from rains for two long days in a small nook in a hill near Dhanaulti — surviving off dry fruits and rainwater. He had also lived for four days with a local Naga tribal family in Tuensang when he ran up a high fever. Life always threw him a lifeline when he needed one.

d Rohit rode on, gently pulling the throttle and feeling the engine rev up. At this age, he no longer felt thrill in speed but quite enjoyed the powerful purr of his 250cc Yamaha. He rode leisurely, occasionally stopping by the side of the hilly tracks to soak in the ambience of the mountains. He had an intimate equation with the hills and his soul spoke a language of silence that only the pines and cedars could understand.

e Rohit had left Shillong a trifle late in the morning, after a hearty breakfast of toasted bread, boiled eggs and delicious steamed momos served with a pot of piping hot coffee. The sky was a clear blue with nary a speck of cloud in it. The breeze was cool but not chilly. This was July, the peak of the monsoon season in Meghalaya, hardly the best time for a biker to hit the roads.

(From *Wanderlust* by Joydeep Choudhury)

Resource 3: Types of passages

Resource 3

Type of passage	Description
Narrative	A **narrative** passage describes a sequence of fictional or non-fictional events. An important feature of narrative style is a chronological presentation of events, usually with a clear beginning, middle and end. A narrative passage includes descriptions of objects, people and events that resemble real life, people's conversations, a climax or interesting finale. We usually recognise a narrative style by its use of expressions like *Once upon a time..., a long time ago..., then..., after that..., in the end...,* etc. We also find familiar words, personal pronouns and informal language. Along with **exposition**, **argumentation** and **description**, **narration**, broadly defined, is one of four rhetorical modes of discourse. More narrowly defined, it is the fiction-writing mode whereby the narrator communicates directly to the reader.
Descriptive	A **descriptive** passage presents the characteristic features of an object, person, event or situation. It can describe the appearance of something, or how something works or behaves. Descriptive passages are usually of two types: **static** description and **process** description. Static descriptions describe the appearance of something, and usually contain verbs of **being** or **having** (*is, are, has, have, contains, shows, includes,* etc.). Process descriptions, on the other hand, describe how something works or behaves, and usually include verbs of **doing** (*works, moves, opens, closes, pour, stir, shake, twist,* etc). Descriptive passages do not include personal opinions or judgements; they try to give an objective account of the thing described. Descriptive passages also contain qualifying adjectives such as *beautiful, kind, strong, bright, soft, hard,* etc. In a process description we find discourse markers showing the sequence of steps, such as *first, secondly, then, after that, finally* and so on.
Comparative	A **comparative** passage, as the name suggests, requires us to compare two or more objects, people, events or situations. When we *compare*, we talk about both the similarities and differences between the things compared. When we *contrast* two or more things, we focus more on the differences than similarities. Comparative passages usually include discourse markers such as

on the other hand, when we compare, the difference between these, the similarities observed include, however, although, but and so on. A comparative passage can be written in two styles: describing all the features of the first thing under comparison in a paragraph or two, and following a similar step for the second object. Or, one by one, all the feature of both the objects are compared, showing the similarities or differences between the two.

Expository

Expository writing is used to inform the reader, to explain, describe or define a subject — but not to express the writer's opinion. College and university students use this type of writing a lot, but it is also used in recipes and other texts that have an instructional or directional purpose. Expository texts are usually written in the third person, but the second person may also be used.

Argumentative

An **argumentative** passage uses evidence, facts and data to convince readers of a writer's position on a subject. Argumentative passages usually contain discourse markers such as *if, since, because, therefore, however, on the other hand, in my opinion,* etc., to express a condition or cause and effect relationship, to counter a previous viewpoint, etc. Such passages usually do not include personal or informal language. Argumentative passages are never neutral — they always express a certain side of an argument.

Resource 4a: Narrative and descriptive passages

Resource 4a

A narrative passage

A long time ago, when the world as we know it now did not exist, two men were gathering fruit on the shore of an island. They followed the routine they had been using since childhood: harpooning the fruit on the tree with a sharp wooden harpoon, tearing it apart with their fingers and eating it up. The water lapped the shore of the island gently, the waves sliding up the shore and receding, never stopping still. Suddenly there was a deep rumbling from somewhere inside the earth, and then the earth shook. It was a sensation never before experienced by the two fruit-gatherers, and they were too shocked to even scream. Then the fruits began to fall off the branches. One by one, the fruit rained on the two poor men, and they could neither hide nor sit still. Slowly and quietly, the waves crept upon them, growing larger with each shake, until they looked like angry white columns. The earth boomed and cracked open, leaving deep cuts on its surface. A final tremor lifted the two men and carried them out to sea. After an agonising moment, the next wave deposited them back on the branch of a mango tree.

A descriptive passage

An earthquake is caused by the movement of fragments of the earth's crust, called *plates.* The plates can move due to an underwater eruption of a volcano, a meteor hitting the earth, or a nuclear explosion. When an earthquake occurs, sudden cracks appear on the surface of the earth. This may cause buildings to crack too. The movement of the plates also causes waves in the sea to rise up, trees to fall down, and the shape of the land can also change. Earthquakes can cause a lot of damage to property, and sometimes even loss of life. For example, when a building collapses, people can die under it. The sudden shaking can uproot trees or cause fruits to fall off the tree. Scientists have been working hard to study how earthquakes occur, but they have not yet been able to predict earthquakes. People all over the world, especially those living in "earthquake zones" like Japan or India, always live with the fear of earthquakes.

Resource 4b: An argumentative passage

Resource 4b

There is a general impression amongst the public that our schools and colleges educate students. That some kind of uncritical knowledge is imparted to them is beyond any doubt. Students are made to copy notes, learn them by heart and reproduce them during examinations. Those who learn by heart and reproduce their learning to the exact letter are considered to be the best. Those who do not succeed in the exercise are termed "failures." The examination results are all about grading in memory work that has nothing to do with education. An educated person is one who has developed the qualities of mind and heart, who can critically evaluate things and objectively decide the course of his or her action based on factual information.

Teacher question and answer

Feedback

Question: What if I cannot find enough passages in different styles (expository, narrative, etc.) in my students' course books to demonstrate the different styles of passages?

Answer: Since these activities are meant to encourage extensive reading, it is actually advisable for you to bring passages written in different styles *from outside the curriculum*. This will give students some much-needed exposure to a variety of literary and non-literary styles.