

READING COMPREHENSION

‘ Reading Comprehension involves getting the meaning from written material. It requires the use of prior knowledge combined with the printed material ’

The use of strategies is the best way to improve reading comprehension.

- **"Before"** strategies activate prior knowledge and set a purpose for reading.
- **"During"** strategies help make connections, monitor understanding, generate questions, and stay focused.
- **"After"** strategies provide an opportunity to summarize, question, reflect, discuss, and respond to text.

Before Reading = Preparation and Organization for Pre-Reading

Mature Readers	Immature Readers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about what they already know about a subject • Know the purpose for which they read • Are motivated or interested to begin reading • Have a general sense of how the BIG ideas will fit together • Choose appropriate strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to read without thinking about the topic • Do not know why they are reading - purpose • Lack interest and motivation to begin reading • Have a little sense of how the BIG ideas will fit together • Read without considering how to approach the material

During Reading = Synthesizing & Monitoring while Reading

Mature Readers	Immature Readers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus attention and pay simultaneous attention to words and meaning • Read fluently • Concentrate well while reading • Willing to “risk” encountering difficult words and able to grapple with text ambiguities • Construct efficient strategies to monitor comprehension • Use contextual analysis to understand new terms • Use text structure to assist comprehension • Organise and integrate new information • Stop to use a “fix-it” strategy when confused • Reading skills improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over attend to individual words; miss salience • Read slower and at the same rate of speed • Have difficulty concentrating / easily distracted particularly during silent reading • Unwilling to “risk” easily defeated by difficult words and text • Unable to construct efficient strategies to monitor comprehension • Seldom use a “fix-it” strategy; plod on ahead, eager to finish • Reading progress is painfully slow – often don’t realise that they don’t understand

After Reading = Reviewing and Summarizing

Mature Readers	Immature Readers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how the pieces of information fit together • Summarise major ideas • Able to identify what's salient • Interested in reading more • Reflect on what was read • Feel success • Seek additional information from outside sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not understand how the pieces of information fit together • May focus on the extraneous peripheral • See reading as distasteful • Stop reading and thinking • Feel success is a result of luck

Four Roles/Resources of the Successful Reader

Roles/Resources	What successful readers know and do
<p>Code breaker decoding the codes and conventions of written, spoken and visual text</p>	<p>Understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the relationship between spoken sounds and written symbols • the grammar of texts • the structural conventions of texts
<p>Text user understanding the purposes of different written, spoken and visual texts for different cultural and social functions</p>	<p>Know that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different types of texts have different purposes • these purposes shape the way texts are structured and formed <p>Apply this knowledge in using (eg comprehending, creating, transforming) text</p>
<p>Text participant comprehending written, spoken and visual texts</p>	<p>Make meaning by drawing on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • own experiences and prior knowledge • knowledge of similar texts
<p>Text analyst understanding how texts position readers, viewers and listeners</p>	<p>Is aware and can identify how</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • texts are not ideologically natural or neutral but are crafted to represent the views and interests of the writer • information, ideas and language in texts influence reader perceptions • texts empower or disempower certain groups

Try out these simple strategies to help improve your comprehension skills:

Prediction and Anticipation

Before you start to read something, ask yourself these questions.

- ◆ What is the title?
- ◆ Look at the pictures, diagrams, main headings etc.
- ◆ What do I think this article might be about?
- ◆ Write down your prediction, refer to this during reading.
- ◆ After reading confirm or disconfirm your prediction.

Story Webs / Mind Mapping

Aid comprehension by completing a diagrammatic representation as you read.

- ◆ Construct a graphic representation to illustrate relationships between main ideas and important details
- ◆ Complete it during and after reading

This strategy can also be used as a motivator for writing.

Visual imagery

- ◆ Construct a mental picture of what you are reading,
- ◆ underline important words in sentences and paragraphs,
- ◆ form mental images from these key words.

K-W-L Strategy – Rule a page up into three headings. Comprehension will improve by having a focus for reading.

K	W	L
What I Know	What I Want to Find Out	What Have I Learned

SQ3R – Survey, Question, Read, Recall and Review.

- ◆ **Survey-** Look through what you are reading. Take note of the subheadings, pictures, tables and charts, read the introduction and the summary to get an overview.
- ◆ **Question-** Convert each heading into a question. Ask the following questions for each heading: who, what, why, how, where and when?
- ◆ **Reading-** When reading, look for answers to all these questions. Keep your eyes open for 'key' sentences which contain the main idea of the paragraph – usually at the beginning or the end of the paragraph.
- ◆ **Recall-** After reading, close the book and remember the answers to the questions you asked. Write them down in your own words. Then, check that you have answered all the questions
- ◆ **Review-** After each section try to recall all the important concepts and facts gained from the chapter.

Skim the text – to get the general impression of the main ideas

- Read the introductory paragraph
 - Read the first sentence of each paragraph
(Topic sentence = main idea)
 - Read the last sentence of each paragraph
 - View the illustrations, captions, tables, diagrams
 - Read the concluding paragraph
- Scan the text** for quickly finding specific details such as name, date, keywords
- Awareness of the structure and organisation** of texts assists you in knowing where to find information eg. Home page / top / side of websites

For additional examples of strategies and proformas to use to improve your reading comprehension click:

CLASSROOM STRATEGIC READING INSTRUCTION

MONITOR or evaluate your own comprehension ability.

- ◆ Ask yourself questions about your reading
- ◆ Be aware of when you are not understanding what you are reading

Click here for a Self Monitoring Checklist to improve your use of Before, During and After Strategies

STRATEGIC READING – SELF MONITORING CHECKLIST