
UNIT 1 THE READING SKILL

Structure

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1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you should be able to:

- discuss and describe the different approaches to reading;
- identify and list out the different purposes of reading English as a second language in India;
- explain the skills involved in reading;
- employ various strategies for improving reading; and
- practice different tasks and activities to develop the reading skills.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

When we say we are educated and *know* a language, the first question we would be asked is ‘can you speak, *read* and write in it?’ Reading has been recognized to be one of the primary skills to be mastered in a language. Perhaps that is the reason why it has been given a lot of importance from the early stages of learning. It is believed, and rightly too, that reading can open up a wealth of information and knowledge to young learners. As students we need to know how to improve our reading skills. In this unit we shall study about reading skills and how to practice and develop them through tasks and activities. We shall examine how the purposes of reading are related to both *what* we read and *how* we read.

1.2 REASONS FOR READING

Take a piece of paper and, in about five minutes, list all the different kinds of things you have read during the last five days or so, in any language – timetable, notices, letters, etc. How many of the things on your list were actually in English? Now think about the things you have listed. You must have included even things like menu of a restaurant, labels on medicine bottles, engagement diary and instruction leaflets. Why did you read each one? What did you want to

get from it? Were you interested in the pronunciation of what you read? Or were you interested in the grammatical structures used? Most probably, you read them because you wanted to get something from the writing: facts, ideas, information, enjoyment, even fellow feeling. You will thus find that you had a variety of reasons for reading, and if you compared notes with other people, you would find different reasons again. All these are **authentic** reasons for reading, that is, reasons that are not concerned with language learning as such, but with the uses to which we put reading in our daily lives outside the classroom.

Can we list some of the reasons why we read in our daily life? We normally read because

- a) we want information for some purpose, or because we are curious to know about some topic, the answer to a question, or the solution to a problem;
- b) we need instructions in order to perform some task in our workplace or in our daily life (we want to know how an appliance works or how to make a model airplane. We are interested in a new recipe for baking a cake; we have to fill in forms).
- c) we want to keep in touch with friends through messages, or understand official correspondence;
- d) we want to know when or where something will take place or what is available (we consult timetables, programmes, announcements, notices, and menus, or we read advertisement);
- e) we want to know what is happening or has happened (newspapers, magazines, reports);
- f) we want to play a new game, do a puzzle, act in a play, or do some other activity which is pleasant, amusing and enjoyable;
- g) we seek enjoyment or excitement (short stories, novels, songs, and poems). The term 'reading' thus embraces a wide variety of tasks, activities, skills and mental process.

Reading also occurs at different levels. A child may read easy material fluently without help. S/he may also read more difficult material, calling for concentration and special effort. S/he may read materials which require outside help such as instruction by the teacher.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What are the different kinds of materials we normally read in our daily life?

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2) How is 'reading' traditionally used in the classroom?

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3) Mention at least five purposes for which we read in real life.

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4) Why do you think we need to learn 'reading' as a skill?

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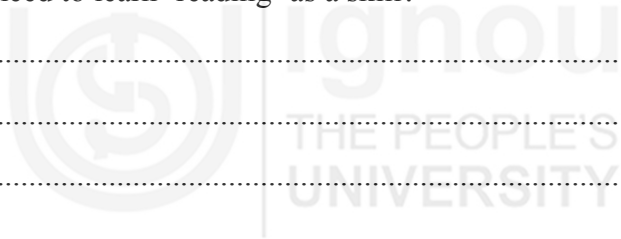
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1.3 THE READING PROCESS

Let us try to understand what 'reading' means. As a first step, it might be useful to find out what you think about reading. Here are some statements about reading. Which of these statements do you think are true? Which of them are false? Can you explain why you think so?

- 1) Reading involves looking at a text and saying the words to yourself
- 2) Reading involves putting the words in print on the page into sentences and making sense of them.
- 3) To understand a word, you have to read all the letters in it, to understand a sentence you have to read all the words in it.
- 4) To understand a text, you need to know the meaning of all the words in the text.
- 5) The teacher can help students to read a text by reading it aloud while they follow the text in their books.

- 6) When we read for meaning, we do not need to read every letter of every word, nor every word in each sentence.
- 7) There are no major differences between how one reads in one's mother tongue and how one reads in a second or foreign language.

What is actually involved in the process of reading?

It is important to understand this if we really want to develop reading skills in a second or foreign language (or in any language for that matter). If we know how 'efficient readers' read, either in their own mother tongue or another language, perhaps we can use some of the techniques employed by these readers to acquire the reading skills.

In considering the reading process, first we have to distinguish between two quite separate activities: **reading for meaning** (or 'silent reading') and **reading aloud**. Think of your own experience as a student. In many classrooms, the reading lesson is used as an opportunity to teach pronunciation and encourage 'expression speaking', i.e., speaking with feeling and emotion. For early readers, reading aloud is of course an important aid; beginners have to discover how reading is associated with the spoken words they have already learnt to use. But the early reading stage does not last long — normally, two or three years at the most. Do children have to read aloud after that? If they do, what are the contexts in which they may be required to do it?

For most of us, once we have passed the early reading stage, reading aloud is not an activity we engage in outside the classroom, unless of course, we are actors/actresses or newsreaders. The purpose of reading aloud is not just to understand a text but to convey the information to someone else who has no access to it, such as reading out parts of a newspaper article to a friend, or reading a notice to other people who cannot see it clearly, or reading to someone who has lost his/her spectacles.

Obviously, reading aloud involves looking at a text, understanding it, and also saying it. It is a much more difficult activity than reading silently because our attention is divided between reading and speaking. We often stumble and make mistakes when reading aloud in our own language, and reading aloud in another language is even more difficult. Moreover, it slows down the reading process and may even affect comprehension to a certain extent.

Reading for meaning, on the other hand, is the activity we normally engage in when we read books, newspapers, road signs, posters, etc.; it is what you are doing as you read this Unit. It involves looking at sentences in a text and understanding the message they convey, in other words, making sense of a written text. It does not normally involve saying the words we read, not even silently inside our heads.

Now read the first part of the text **silently**.

The Discovery of Penicillin

Pasteur discovered germs and Lister killed them. These two men together revolutionized the theory and practice of medicine. Germs can be destroyed by heat. They can be poisoned by certain chemicals called antiseptics. Carbolic acid is one such antiseptic used by Lister. The object of antiseptic method was

to stop germs from entering the body. But the cure of disease was a more difficult problem, for here the germs had already entered the body. It means that injecting carbolic acid into the body in as much a dose as would kill all the germs, would kill the patient also. It was a bacteriologist named Matchnikoff, a pupil of Pasteur, who revealed the true nature of the problem. He discovered the white cells of the blood, which are called leucocytes. He showed that these cells run out to join battle with the germs, like soldiers answering a bugle-call. It was necessary to find something that would attack only the germs and not destroy the fighting leucocytes. The man who took up the problem was Alexander Fleming.

Now read the second part **aloud**, or follow while someone else reads it aloud to you.

As luck would have it, Sir Almroth Wright and Fleming worked together. They had some doubts with regard to the efficacy of injecting antiseptics. They felt that the surgeon's aim should be not so much to kill the germs with an outside agent as to help the leucocytes to do their natural germ-killing work. And in 1922, after about 20 years of research, they discovered an antiseptic manufactured by the body. Wright made the discovery by what he modestly called an accident. He was suffering from Catarrh and began to examine his own nasal secretions, cultivating them on plates spread with agar, a jelly-like substance used as a nutrient in germs culture. In these secretions he discovered the substance that destroyed the microbes in the culture plates. He called it lysozyme. This was the first natural antiseptic that was harmless to the cells of the body; Penicillin was the second.

Another accident helped Fleming discover penicillin. If Fleming had not developed a finer sense of observation and awareness he would have missed it. The more a scientist is observant the greater his chances of discovering new things. One morning, as was usual with him, he took out the plates on which had grown colonies of Staphylococcus, a common germ.

Which technique makes it easier to understand the text?

Which technique is more helpful in developing reading ability?

Another important aspect of reading is that when we read for meaning, we do not need to read every letter of every word, nor every word in each sentence. This is because we can guess much of what is said as we read it, provided the text makes sense. For example, if you are given merely a string of words that makes no sense at all like this: [man jumping tiger the on lake help to] then obviously you have to slow down and read every single word, as you can no longer make guesses. But try to read this sentence.

A m — was walk — d—n the s —t, c— r - ing a gr—n —.

Even though more than half the letters are missing, you could probably read the sentence without difficulty, and even guess the last word without the help of any letters. You may also have noticed that as soon as you guessed the second word, it helped you go guess the whole of the first part of the sentence. This example is only an isolated sentence. If you are reading connected sentences in a text, each sentence helps you to guess what the next one will be, and so on through the whole text.

Reading is thus an active process. When we read, we do not merely sit as passive receivers of the text. We also draw on our own knowledge of the world and of the language to help us guess what the text will say next.

Look at this very simple mode of the process of communication.

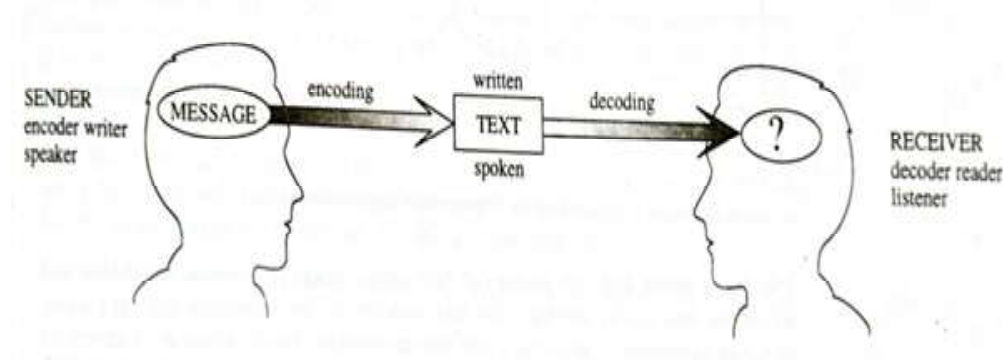


Figure 1: The Communication Process

We can use the more general term **encoder**. The encoder has a message in his/her mind (it may be an idea, a fact, a feeling, etc.) which s/he wants to communicate to someone else. In order to make this communication possible, s/he must first put it into words: that is s/he must encode it. Once it is encoded, in either written or spoken form, it becomes available as a text to any other person who reads or hears it, i.e., the person who decodes, the message it contains. Once it is decoded, the message enters the mind of the decoder and it is understood; communication has thus been achieved.

Do you think that this model explains the communication process satisfactorily? You will realize that the model is obviously too simple. Things can go wrong at any stage in the process. For instance, we cannot be sure that the decoder has received the message as it was intended by the encoder. The decoder may not have understood the language and style in which the message has been enclosed, or the encoder may not have encoded his/her message properly, in an organised manner. However, one thing is clear from this model, namely it assumes that reading means getting out of the text as nearly as possible the message that the writer put into it.

This is fairly widely held view of reading. According to this view, the text is full of meaning conveyed through words, and the meaning can be absorbed by the reader's mind like a sponge absorbs water. To put it in another way, the reader's mind is an empty vessel into which the text pours ideas, facts, etc. Or it is like a blank slate on which the text imprints the words, the ideas, etc. The writer has done all that is required for understanding his/her message and the reader need not make any effort, but has only to let his/her mind absorb it passively. The reader's role is thus seen to be a passive one. Obviously, we know that it does not happen like this. All the meaning in the text does not actually get into the reader's mind. We know from our experience of reading that a text which may be easy for one person will be difficult for another. Problems arise when there is a mismatch between the presuppositions of the writer and those of the reader. The text will, therefore, not be understood by anyone who lacks this knowledge. But is it possible for the writer and the reader to have identical experiences of life? Not necessarily. Look at the figure below,

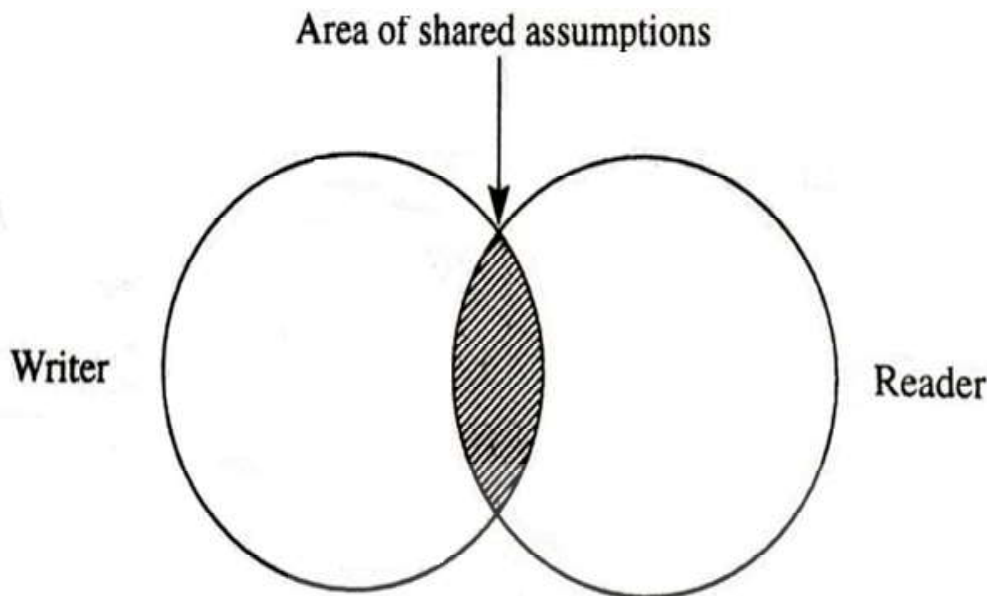


Figure 2: Presupposition and Communication

The figure shows how two people can have certain things in common, the shaded area where the two circles overlap. This area includes all the knowledge that they share, including knowledge of language, it also includes attitudes, beliefs, values and assumptions that they share. The unshaded areas represent experiences that are unique to each individual.

It is clear, therefore, that the greater the size of the shaded area, the easier the communication. That is, if the writer and the reader are from closely similar backgrounds with similar attitudes, beliefs and assumptions, the reader can interpret the text with apparently no conscious effort. There is, however, the danger that a careless reader may assume that the extent of the shaded area — that common ground — is bigger than it actually is. In that case s/he is likely to misunderstand the text, trying to read into it meanings that are not there. Similarly, a writer may assume that his/her reader is likely to share a great deal of his/her knowledge, beliefs, etc. but the reader may actually struggle to make sense of the text.

It should now be clear that the meaning of the text does not merely lie in it, waiting to be passively absorbed by the reader. On the contrary, the reader has to be actively involved in getting the meaning out of the text.

1.4 STRATEGIES USED BY GOOD READERS

Good readers interact with the texts that they read. They have personal expectations about what they want to get out of a text, and they bring those expectations to bear on what they read. They actually create meaning by constructing, or generating relationships between what they read and what they already know.

In generating these meanings, they draw on their prior knowledge of and beliefs about the subject – their “World knowledge” so to speak, that relates to the subjects. Readers have networks of prior understanding about a topic, what

theorists call **schemata**. In reading, they add to those networks, filling in some of the gaps with what they know, or in their existing schemata: The prior knowledge a reader already has about a subject has as much to do with what s/he gets from a text as the actual words in the text.

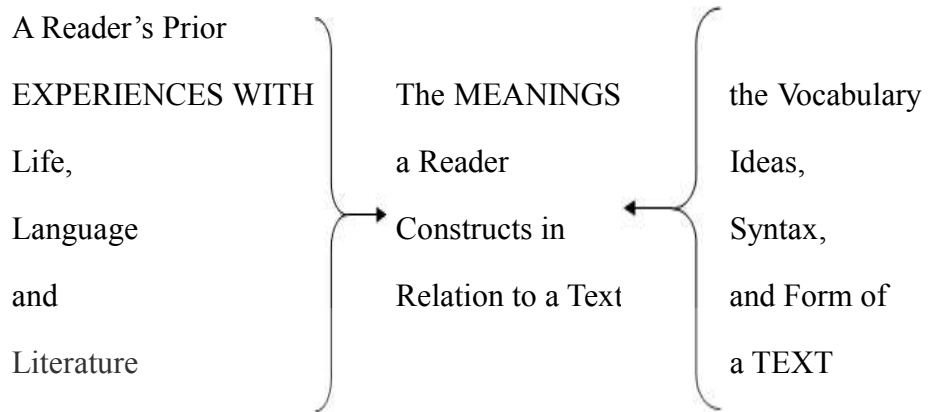


Figure 3: The Relationship Among Prior Experiences, a Text, and the Meaning a Reader Constructs – Schema Theory in Action.

Figure 3 shows the relationships among prior knowledge, a text and the meanings a reader constructs in relation to the text. It summarizes what is known as **schema** theory. The figure also shows that, in creating meaning, good readers rely also on their prior knowledge of how language works, of how ideas are organised in writing and of how different forms are structured.

Thus schemata are knowledge structures which represent a generalized knowledge about objects or events, or even about a language system which are activated while processing a text. An important function of schemata is therefore to help readers to match what they know with what the written text tells them, i.e., to monitor their comprehension. If there is some deficiency at the level of analysing print i.e. decoding problems like poor word recognition, the higher-level knowledge of the topic (i.e. schemata) will compensate for the deficiency. Reading is thus an interactive process; there is a simultaneous interaction of the reader's prior knowledge and his/her sampling of the text; this is done constantly while reading.

Let us see this process at work with a simple example. Here is the beginning of a short text you are required to read:

Keshav was on his way to school last Wednesday.

Who, do you think Keshav was? How did you arrive at this conclusion? Was it based on textual information or on your prior knowledge? Now, the next sentence of the text reads like this:

He was really worried about the English lesson.

Who was Keshav? Have you now changed your view about Keshav, or not? Why? The third sentence:

Last week he had been unable to control the class.

Are you now sure who Keshav was? Which part of the text has to be matched with what kind of prior knowledge to help in the inference?

The fourth sentence:

It was unfair of the English teacher to leave him in charge of the class.

What further changes in your inference have you made? Why?

The last sentence:

After all, it was not a normal part of a computer operator's duty.

Are you now clear in your mind about who Keshav was?

You will have realized from this short exercise what is actually involved in reading a text and making sense of it.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Distinguish between 'silent reading' and 'reading aloud'

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2) Which of the two techniques of reading is to be preferred for understanding a text? Why?

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3) What is the role of 'prediction' in reading? Illustrate it with an example of your own.

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4) Explain the importance of shared assumptions between writer and reader.

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5) What are ‘schemata’ and what is their role in reading?

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6) What is the nature of the reading process - passive, active or interactive? Explain.

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1.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF READING

What do we mean by efficient reading? What are the characteristics of reading?

- 1) **Reading is purposeful.** That is, there is always a reason for reading. In general terms, we read either for information or pleasure. Your purpose in reading a textbook is obviously different from your purpose in going through a novel, or in reading a poem. But there is nothing like totally purposeless reading - even when you read a novel during travel, you read it to pass your time, and that is the purpose.
- 2) **Reading is selective.** That is, the type of reading you do or the way you read a text varies according to your purpose in reading. You quickly scan a page in the RWA telephone directory to locate a name, a telephone number, or an address, but you have to pay careful attention to every word in a legal document. To put it crudely, we scan for specific information, noting only what is relevant to our purpose at the given moment and rejecting or ignoring the majority of what appears on the page because it is irrelevant to our purpose. We skim, attempting to extract the gist of a text. Or we read intensively with the aim of decoding the whole of the writer’s message.
- 3) **Reading speed varies** according to content and purpose. Efficient readers use the minimum number of clues in the text - semantic and syntactic - to extract the information they need. You will agree that you generally read a novel or a short story faster than you read your textbook or study material, unless you are a literature student.
- 4) **Reading is silent.** Reading aloud is a specialized skill used, for example, by actors and newsreaders, but seldom by the general reader. If it is used,

its purpose is to communicate to another person a written message to which that person does not have access.

- 5) **Reading is text-based.** It seldom involves the mere decoding of individual sentences isolated from context. Look at this set of sentences:

The mind of a thinker may work in many ways. The experiments proved his theory of ring structure. However, water is only a solvent and not a reagent.

What is wrong with this? We cannot make sense of these sentences, because they are together without any relationship among them. They do not constitute a text at all and so we cannot ‘read’ this set meaningfully.

- 6) Reading involves **complex cognitive skills**. Readers do not merely decode the message. They make predictions and inferences - they anticipate based on what they read. They build assumptions about the overall content at the macro-level and predict what is likely to come next in the text at the micro-level. That is why reading is called “a psycholinguistic guessing game”. Readers may also impose their own organization on the information they extract from a text. At a more sophisticated level, they react to what they read, assessing the accuracy of the facts presented, the value of the opinions stated, or the quality and appropriacy.
- 7) Effective reading also involves **chunking** of information that the well-developed schema makes possible. When we read, our eyes take in whole phrases at a time which are meaningful; they do not move from word to word in a straight line, but move backwards and forwards over the text. You will understand this if you do a simple exercise. Try covering a text with a piece of paper and read it literally word by word. Move the paper along the text, revealing only one word each time. You will find that it is almost impossible to read and understand a text in this way. You soon lose track of the meaning and you need to keep looking back across the text to take in whole sentences. Your reading slows down so much in this attempt to read only one word at a time; you lose the sense of what you are reading.
- 8) Reading is based on **comprehension**. That is, understanding meaning is integral to reading rather than the result of it. The more we comprehend, the more we can, and tend to read.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) How would you say that reading is ‘purposeful’?

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2) How is one 'selective' in reading?

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3) What does the reading speed depend on? How?

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4) In what sense is reading called "a psycholinguistic guessing game"? Explain.

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1.6 LEVELS OF MEANING

Having begun to read, good readers operate cognitively at four highly interrelated and overlapping levels of meaning: the literal, the interpretive, the critical, and the creative. What is involved is understanding meanings at each of these four levels. Let us find out about these levels:

Literal: Literal comprehension involves the reader in understanding the information stated directly in a text. That information may be facts and details, sequences of events, main ideas and generalizations, causes and effects. The key element in comprehension at this level is that the information is present "in black and white" in the text. The reader does not have to dig too deeply to get at it. S/he should be able to state exactly what the passage is saying, to make sure that s/he understands it. For example, if the piece of writing is about someone digging the earth, the reader should be able to state what the person is actually doing- "digging the earth".

Literal comprehension is of fundamental importance. It requires a thorough understanding of paragraph, sentence and word meanings and is required for higher levels of comprehension.

Interpretive: To read at the interpretive level, on the other hand, is to read ‘between the lines’, to recognise ideas and information not directly stated. In doing so, the reader must make inferences. S/he may have to infer time relationships - the year, time of day, and season; geographical relationships; cause and effect relationships; the ages, feelings and familial relationships of characters; main ideas and generalizations if these are not stated explicitly in the text. In other words, the reader must study the facts given in the text and put two and two together in making the inference.

Writers do not always state facts directly. They imply emotions and attitudes, and suggest points of view. For instance, an author may not state directly that a particular character is bad, but the words s/he uses to describe that person and the situation s/he presents him/her in may convey the author’s attitude towards that character. A perceptive reader should be able to recognise this attitude. S/he must be able to get beyond the surface meaning of words and see what the implications of such words are. For instance, the same persons could be called “terrorists” or “freedom fighters” according to the writer’s attitude towards them. Similarly, in describing someone eating, a writer may use the words, “wolfed down” “guzzled” or “slobbered”. If the writer is describing a baby eating, these words may be merely a statement of fact, but if they are about an adult, these may well be a suggestion of distaste towards the person who is eating.

Interpretive reading also involves ferreting out meanings expressed through literary allusions, idiomatic expressions, and figures of speech. The writer who writes of a character, “He had no heart”, does not mean this literally but is relying on an idiom to communicate meaning. Another author who describes a person as having a “Midas touch” is communicating something special, something meaningful, only to the reader who recognises the allusion to the king who wanted everything he touched to turn to gold. The poet who speaks of “crossing the bar” is referring metaphorically to death; he is not speaking literally of crossing a sand bar. The scientist who refers to the earth as a lifeboat to explain relationships aboard a planet troubled by the problems of limited resources and increasing population is also relying on a metaphor to put his/her message across.

One of the most difficult interpretations a reader must make is in terms of these kinds of inferences. The reader must bring to bear his/her previous experiences with language, literature, and life in constructing meanings.

Critical: Critical reading requires making judgements with regard to a text. The reader may judge the accuracy of facts, the validity of conclusions drawn, or the effectiveness of the author’s style. For instance, a writer may use very flowery language to create an atmosphere, or s/he may write ‘tongue in cheek’.

Critical reading also requires giving reasons for the judgement and stating the criteria used in making it, commenting on the views expressed in the passage and the appropriateness and effectiveness of the treatment of those ideas.

Creative: Creative reading calls for the generation of new ideas, insights, applications and approaches. It requires invention, prediction, and use of the

imagination. Proposing an alternative conclusion or generalization based on a reading text and suggesting related examples are exercises in creative reading. Composing orally, drawing, and writing stories with the same pattern or same words as in those that one has read are also exercises in creative reading.

Check your progress 4

1) What are the four levels of comprehension?

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2) Mention any two interpretive abilities with examples.

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3) What does 'critical reading' involve?

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4) Give two or three examples of 'creative reading'.

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5) What does flexibility of reading depend on?

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1.7 READING PROBLEMS

Miscues or decoding errors

Through one-to-one oral reading (or individual oral reading), a teacher can identify and interpret a child's miscues, or decoding errors. Miscue analysis, or the analysis of a reader's error patterns, provides valuable clues to a reader's interaction with a text. If you study the error patterns systematically, you will

realize that all errors are not equally significant. Take, for example, the reading of the sentence: *'He sat on the sofa after supper'*. A child who reads it as *'He sat on the bed after supper'* has used context clues to decode sofa incorrectly. However, she/he had not distorted the meaning of the sentence in any serious way. In contrast, the child who reads the same sentence as, *'He sat on the soup after supper'* has used knowledge of the beginning consonant sounds to come up with another word that distorts meaning significantly.

A teacher should therefore raise these questions in analysing a reader's miscues

- a) How well does the child use phonic information during reading? If the child says *rid*/for *ride* and *fum*/for *fume*, s/he knows the initial and final consonants and uses them appropriately, but s/he does not use the final construction to interpret the vowel correctly.
- b) How well does the child use syntactic information during reading? Supposing the text says: *'The boy looked sadly to the right'* and the child reads it as, *'The boy looked slowly to the right'*, the miscue is syntactically acceptable because it is syntactically similar to the text (both the words are adverbs). But if the child reads it as *'The boy looked sound to the right'*, not only is the meaning of the sentence changed, but the miscue is syntactically unacceptable.
- c) How well does the child use semantic information during reading? If the text reads: *'The day was very warm'* and the child reads it as *'The day was quite warm'*, the miscue has not significantly changed the meaning of the text. On the other hand, if the child reads it as *'The day wasn't very warm'*, the meaning of the text has been significantly changed.

So, analysis of a child's miscues provides the teacher with information on what to emphasize with that child: phoneme - grapheme relationships, use of context clues, or use of prediction based on what one knows about language. In this respect, miscue analysis is a valuable diagnostic tool.

Faulty reading habits

Certain faults in reading techniques have been noticed among second or foreign language learners. Many of these might have actually been acquired in L1 reading, for research shows that there is a strong transfer of reading habits from one language to another. Many of these early reading habits, when they continue into the later stages of reading, are known to slow down the reader and the reading process.

- a) **Subvocalization:** Subvocalization refers to forming the sounds of the words you are reading and even murmuring them aloud. With beginning readers, this offers the support of the spoken language when they try to interpret the written form. Beginners in L1 reading (and in L2 as well) are often encouraged to make use of it. But reading aloud or subvocalization is much slower than silent reading - our eyes move faster than our tongue - so efficient readers do not subvocalize. If you subvocalize, you will tend to read word by word instead of in sense groups, which slows you down.
- b) **Finger pointing:** Another faulty habit that slows down the reading process is finger pointing which children use to fix their concentration on the word

they are deciphering. Finger pointing is particularly common when the writing system in the second or foreign language is not the same as the one in L1. This again slows down the reading process.

- c) **Regressions:** Another reading habit that makes reading slower is the occurrence of regressive eye movements, i.e. the eyes move backwards to check previous words instead of moving steadily forward. Sometimes, even a skilled reader may have to return to earlier parts of a text and reinterpret them in the light of what has followed. In this case, regression may be a sign of an active reader at work. However, we must eliminate pointless and frequent regression by practising reading with easy material.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) What is meant by ‘subvocalizing’?

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- 2) What is ‘regression’? Is it always a sign of faulty reading technique?

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1.8 LET US SUM UP

Reading is an important activity in our daily life and it is a skill that has to be developed in students earlier in school. We read different types of materials for different purposes. There are many authentic reasons for reading. Recognising words in print is only the initial stage of reading, but learners must be trained to read whole texts and not merely words and sentences in isolation.

Reading for meaning (or ‘silent reading’) is different from reading aloud. A general reader is seldom required to read aloud. When we read for meaning, we do not need to read every letter of every word, nor every word in each sentence, because very often we guess, anticipate, and predict as we read a text. A writer and his readers share certain assumptions about the world and about the language used for communication. Reading is an interactive process involving both bottom-up decoding of the text and top-down processing. The reader’s schemata interacts with the textual input.

Reading is purposeful, selective, and text-based. The reading speed varies according to one's purpose in reading and the content of the text. Reading involves complex cognitive skills. It is called "a psycholinguistic guessing game" because it involves making predictions. The teacher who teaches reading should recognize the learner's reading problems, including faulty reading habits, and should help them to overcome those problems.

1.9 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Time-tables, maps, diary, calendar, labels, notices, instruction manuals, newspapers, magazines, books, sign boards, forms, and so on - the range is very wide.
- 2) Traditionally, reading is used in the classroom to consolidate the oral work done by students earlier, to make them see the relationships between speech sounds and written symbols, and to answer questions in assignments and examination. (you may have your own answer)
- 3) We normally read to get information about a topic, to perform a task with the help of instructions or directions, to establish friendly relationships through correspondence, to know about programmes, goods and services, etc., and get enjoyment or excitement.
- 4) Reading is an important activity in which students are likely to engage themselves in during their study or later in their jobs or even in personal life. So it has to be developed as a skill to enable to cope with these demands.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) 'Silent reading' is reading for meaning and it is a more common activity than 'reading aloud', which is done in limited contexts. Silent reading is easier and faster than the other.
- 2) 'Silent reading' is to be preferred because it enables one to read faster and comprehend the text more easily.
- 3) The ability to predict what will come next in a reading text is central to the process of reading. It helps the reader to monitor his/her comprehension of the text. It also helps the reader to process minimum textual input to arrive at the meaning of the text.
- 4) The more the shared assumptions, the better the communication. Without shared assumptions, comprehension of the writer's message will be extremely difficult, if not impossible.
- 5) Schemata are mental structures embodying one's prior knowledge of the world, his/ her experiences, and also his/her knowledge of the language in which the message is enclosed. They help the reader in anticipating and predicting what will follow in a text. Textual input is matched against schemata to make sense of the text.
- 6) Reading is an interactive process involving a simultaneous interaction of bottom-up decoding of a text with the reader's schemata to produce meaning.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Reading is purposeful because it is the purpose which dictates and directs the way we read a text and process it. It suggests what strategy or technique of reading we need to employ to satisfy our needs.
- 2) A reader is 'selective' in reading in two ways. First s/he selects the kinds of texts s/he would be interested in reading. Secondly, s/he selects the minimum clues in the text to arrive at its meaning for his/her purpose without having to read every word in it.
- 3) Reading speed depends on content and purpose. Reading light fiction is easier, and hence faster than reading a philosophical or scientific text full of jargon. Similarly, if the reader's purpose is only to get the gist of a text, s/he needs to skim through the text fast. But if s/he wants to read for details, s/he has to read it with concentration and effort.
- 4) Reading involves basically making guesses and predictions about what might follow in a text, matching these against fresh textual input, and modifying them accordingly. It is in the sense that reading is called "a psycholinguistic guessing game" because the predictions are made possible by the schemata available in the reader's mind.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Literal, interpretive, critical and creative.
- 2) Interpreting or inferencing time relationships, geographical relationships, cause and effect, generalizations based on details/facts given, attitudes, emotions and points of view. Select any two and give your own examples.
- 3) Making judgements about the accuracy of facts, validity of opinions or inferences, effectiveness of style and organisation, etc.
- 4) Dramatising or role-playing, rewriting from a different point of view, etc.
- 5) The nature of the text to be read and the reader's purpose in reading it.

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) Subvocalization refers to the act of forming the sounds of the words we are reading and even murmuring them aloud.
- 2) Regression refers to the tendency of the eyes to move backwards over print instead of moving forward. No, sometimes, even a skilled reader may do it modify his/her earlier predictions in the light of fresh textual clues.