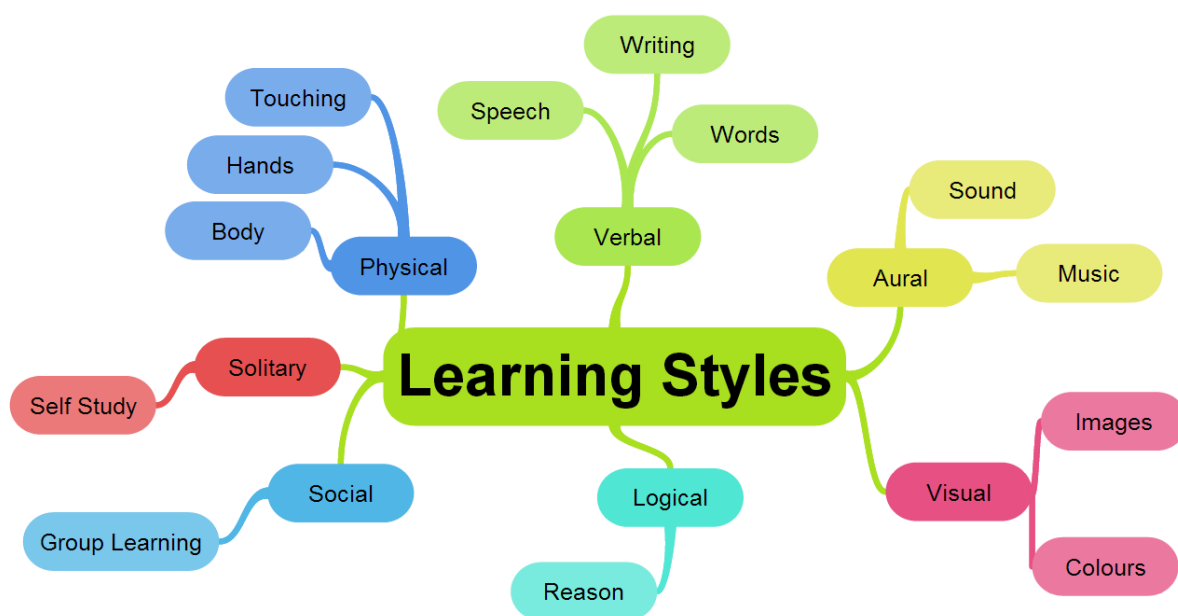


Samarkand region national center for training  
pedagogues in new methods

Ruziyeva N.Z

# Methods for developing reading skills



## **Methods for improving reading skills, Samarkand -2023, 45 pages**

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## Reading comprehension

Reading is the process of looking at written symbols and letters and understanding the meaning of them. It's one of the four main language skills alongside listening, speaking and writing. Reading is usually the third language skill that you learn in your language - it comes after listening and speaking.

When we read, we look at written symbols (letters, punctuation, spaces) and use our brains to convert them into words and sentences that have meaning to us. We can read silently (in our heads) or read aloud - speaking every word that we read.

To be able to read, we need to be able to:

- identify the words we see (word recognition);
- understand what they mean (comprehension);
- connect words and their meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate (fluency).



### What is reading comprehension?

Reading comprehension is the ability to comprehend or understand, what you are reading. This is an intentional and active part of reading and takes place before,

during and after you read something. By being able to comprehend what you are reading, you can extract meaning from the text and better realize what the author is trying to convey.

There are two components of reading comprehension: text comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary knowledge is the ability to understand the language being used, while text comprehension is using this language to develop an awareness of what the meaning is behind the text.

### **Why are reading comprehension skills important?**

Reading comprehension is important for several reasons and can provide many benefits. Being able to effectively read can improve both your personal and professional life and can increase your overall enjoyment of reading. Knowing how to understand a text can help boost your knowledge in certain areas and help you learn new skills and information faster.

Additional benefits of good reading comprehension skills include:

- Being able to understand, analyze and respond to documents and written communication in the workplace
- Improved your ability to write clearly and effectively
- The ability to comprehend and engage in current events that are in written form such as newspapers
- Increased ability to focus on reading for an extended period
- Better enjoyment of and motivation to read

### Different types of reading skills and strategies

Reading skills contribute to a child's reading ability - in other words, how well they can read and understand what they're reading. There's a wide variety of reading skills that children develop and work on throughout their primary education and beyond.

These skills can be placed into four main categories: decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and understanding sentences.

These main reading skills make up the bulk of a child's reading ability. Overall, they aim to arm children with the skills to be able to understand the meaning of

what they read. This is not only essential for their English lessons and their other school subjects, but also for all areas of life beyond their education.

Strategies of reading:

Reading strategies are teaching methods and activities that teachers and parents can use with their children to help develop language and reading skills. Strategies that improve decoding and reading comprehension skills benefit every student, but are essential for beginning readers, struggling readers, and English Language Learners.

There are many different reading strategies that you can apply to your reading sessions in the classroom. To improve reading comprehension, teachers can introduce the 7 cognitive reading strategies for effective readers. These focus on encouraging skills such as activating, inferring, monitoring-clarifying, questioning, summarizing, and visualizing. Read more about strategies of reading with Twinkl below.

1. **Keep a sharp eye on visual clues:** Does the book or text include any images that represent the text? Readers use the clues from the text to create a picture in their head. They use all their senses and imagination to create their mental image. Encourage your students to take a look at any visual clues in the text to see if they give you any clues that will help them to decode the text.
2. **Sound it out:** If your children are struggling with a particular word, break it down phonetically and say each sound separately aloud. This should help them piece together tricky words and understand how sounds interact. (Remember to look for digraphs and trigraphs as you read.)
3. **Summarising:** Summarising allows the reader to digest small snippets of information in a simple structure. This means that they're able to understand the basics of the text without needing to read it all. Using summaries as a reading strategy can help children identify key information and phrases in a text.
4. **Ask questions:** Readers should learn to ask and answer questions to clarify meaning and ensure they understand what they have read. To help this reading strategy, encourage children to ask questions before, during and after reading.

5. **Make predictions:** Readers use written and visual clues from the text as well as their own personal experiences to make predictions about what might happen before, during and after reading. Using this strategy in reading helps children become more confident in understanding key features of a story and piece together clues in writing.
6. **Story Mapping:** Story mapping is a great reading strategy that teachers and parents can use when working with fictional texts. This strategy uses templates such as this [Story Mapping Boxes Worksheet](#) to create a visual 'map' of the story plot, characters, setting and themes.
7. **Comprehension monitoring:** Comprehension monitoring is a form of metacognition. This strategy involves the ability of readers to know when they understand what they read, when they do not understand, and to use appropriate strategies to improve their understanding when it is blocked.

## Essential tips for improving reading skills

Here are some simple and effective tips and ways to help students build reading skills to better understand classroom curriculum.

1. **Personalise reading materials:** Students can increase their understanding by seeing how the material connects with their life. Have your students make personal connections with the text by writing it down on the page. You can also help students comprehend the text by helping them see an association with current events.
2. **Problem-solving perfection:** Blend real-world problem-solving skills into your curriculum. Have your students write out solutions to the problem and discuss their ideas as a class or in small groups.
3. **Engage all five senses for different types of learner:** Add in activities that reinforce learning and comprehension by using more senses as they read. Remind students to read with a pen or pencil to annotate the text. Have your students take turns reading out loud. Use projectors to guide your lesson and write down questions for those who are visual learners.

4. **Set reading goals to motivate students:** Have each student set their own reading goals. This can help them take action in building reading skills and students will be more mindful of how they are improving.
5. **Try student led reading activities:** Your students process reading material and curriculum in very different ways. As you implement reading activities to help your class learn complex materials, you will learn what works best for each student individually.
6. **Revisit and reread confusing sentences and texts:** Revisiting the parts that were confusing for your child (or that might simply need a quick refresher) can help your child gain a more complete picture of what he or she is learning. This also helps ensure your child is able to understand upcoming material in the text. You can also keep a record or list of words that your students are unfamiliar or struggling with. You can then encourage your child to look these words up in a dictionary to learn what they mean. Then, find ways to use them in a sentence that your child can write themselves.
7. **Talk it out:** When your child has finished reading, talk about what he or she just read together. Ask your child what he or she learned and his or her thoughts. For longer reading materials, like novels for book reports, make discussion questions you and your child can talk about together after each reading session.
8. **Breakdown reading:** Long, complex reading can be more digestible by breaking it up into pieces. Shorter segments will help students retain the information as the class discusses the materials. It can also help students build confidence in understanding a complex subject. When teaching how to improve reading in short bursts, why not check out our [60-second read packs](#) that offer short and manageable reading materials to build reading skills. Our 60-Second reads to help your primary students practise their fluency and comprehension on a daily basis. With only 90-120 words and four short comprehension questions, this is the perfect way to dramatically improve English fluency.

# Types of reading skills to improve

## 1. Decoding

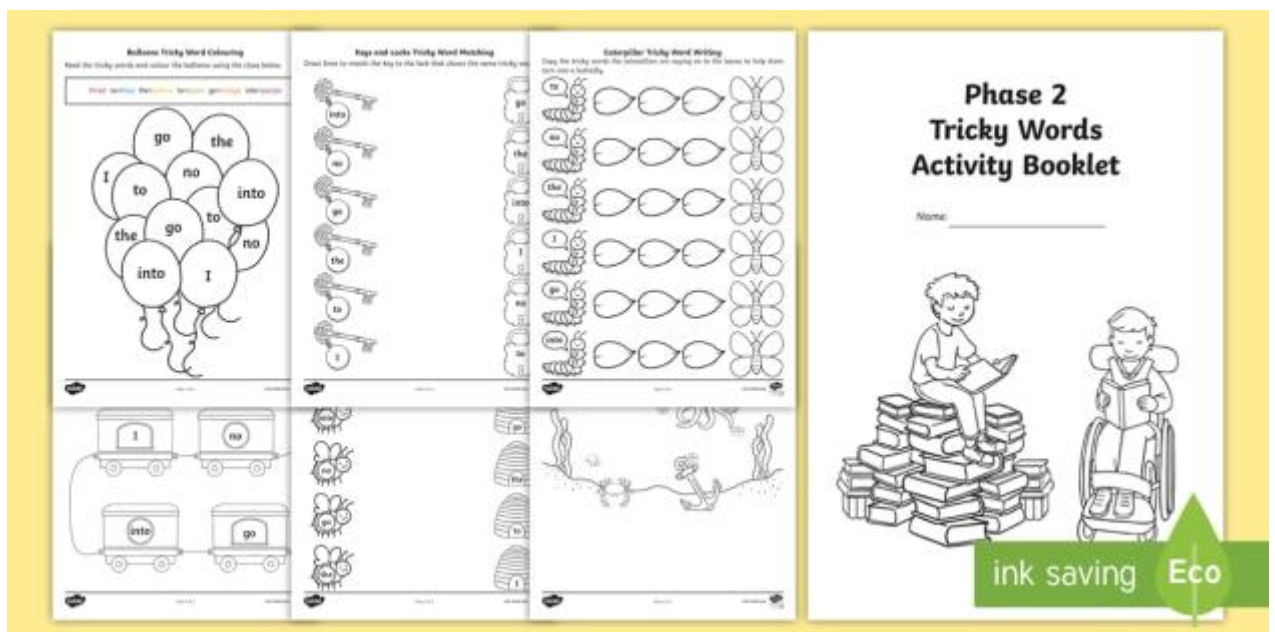
This is a vital reading skill that acts as a foundation for other skills. It relies upon early language skills learned through the use of phonics. Children use decoding to sound out words that they may have encountered before but not read aloud.

Children also need to be able to connect individual sounds to letters, so that they can then piece them all together and sound out the full word.

Being exposed to rhymes, sounds and books at school and at home will help most children pick up phonological awareness. Some children may need further help through specific phonics lessons at school.

Here are some great Twinkl resources all about phonics for KS1:

- [Halloween Jokes Phonics Mini Mystery Game](#)
- [Autumn Themed Colour by Phoneme Activity](#)
- [Phase 2 Phonics Tricky Words Activity Booklet](#)



## 2. Fluency



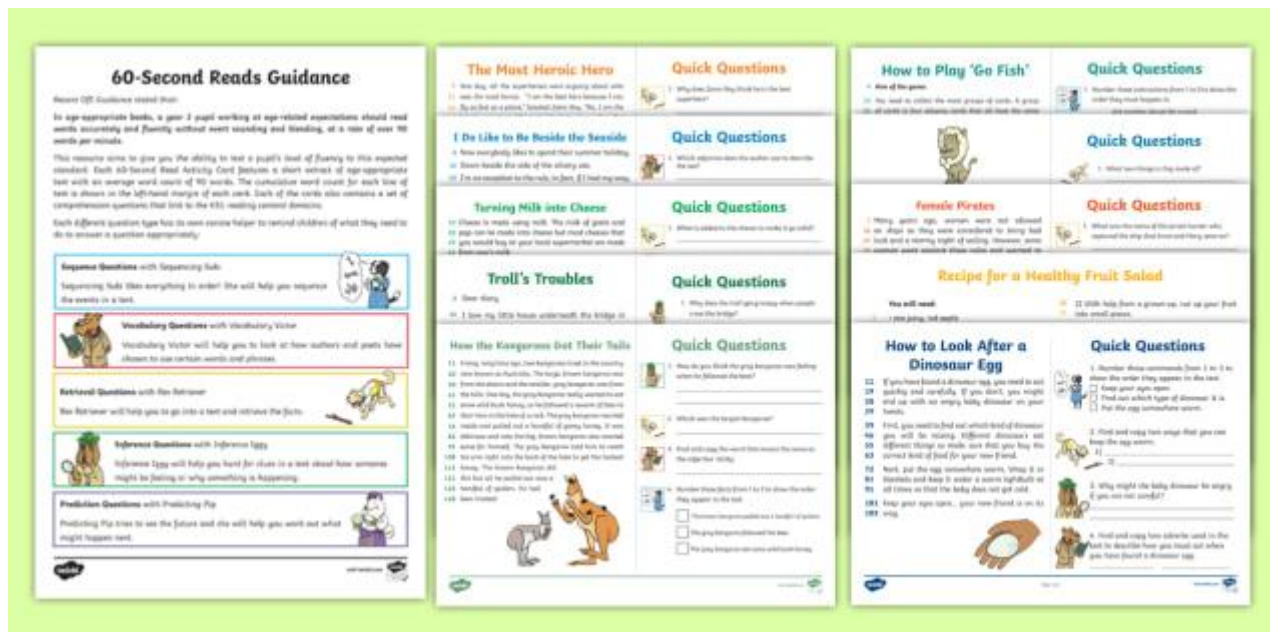
Fluency is a useful skill that speeds up a child's reading and understanding of texts. It's also important for when they encounter irregular words, like 'of' and 'the', which can't be sounded out.

If a child is a fluent reader, they read smoothly and at a good pace without too many pauses. You'll find that they can group words together easily and use the correct tone when reading aloud.

Word recognition can be an obstacle when it comes to fluency. Children need to have seen a word a number of times before they remember how to say it - the number can be even bigger for a child with dyslexia.

To improve this skill you need to encourage children to practise their reading regularly. This means that they'll be exposed to more words more often.

This 60-Second Reads Bumper Pack is great for short bursts of text that aim to improve reading fluency at KS1.



### 3. Vocabulary

Children need to understand most of the words in a text to understand what they're reading. Key to this understanding is having a strong vocabulary, which in turn creates good reading comprehension.

They tend to learn vocabulary in many ways: from what they hear their friends and family say, or maybe what they hear on the television, internet or radio.

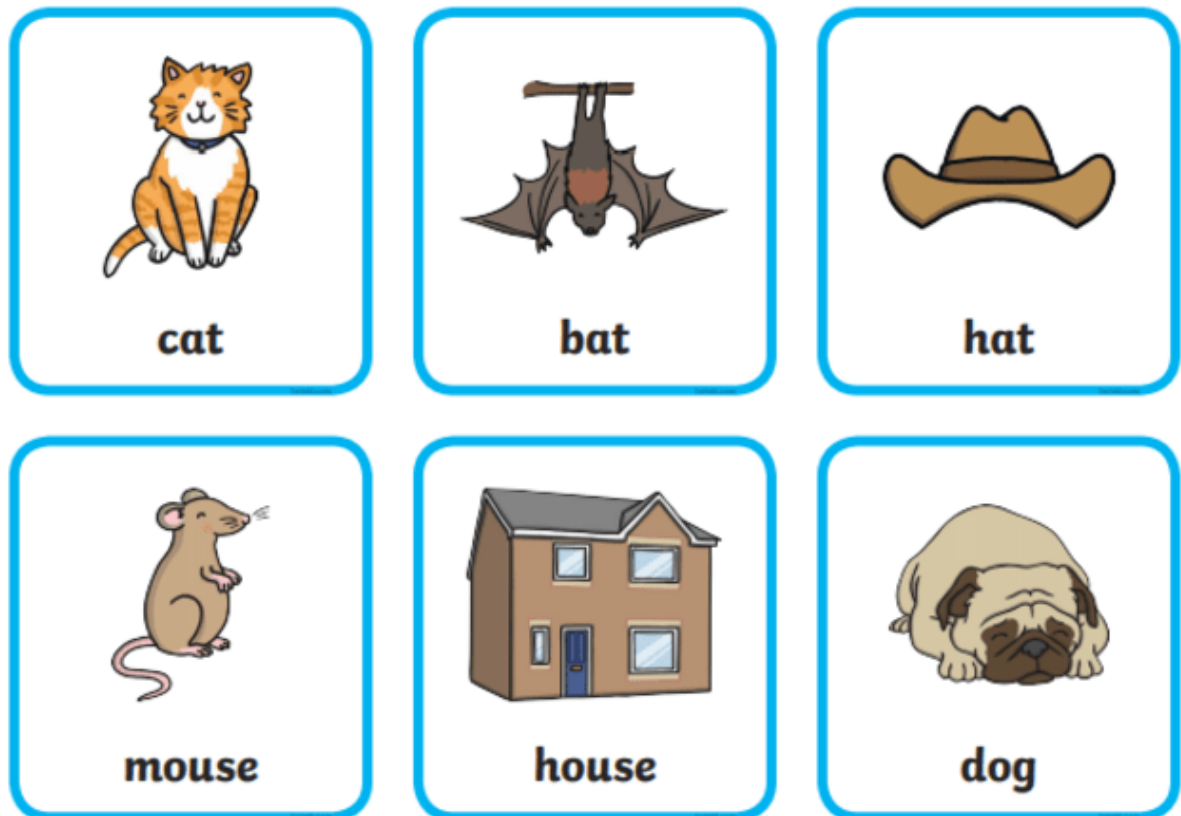
A child's vocabulary can be increased easily by exposing them to more words. This should be a conscious effort by the adults in the child's life by having conversations about lots of different age-appropriate topics.

When a child reads along with an adult or older sibling it can be useful to stop at more difficult or new words and explain what they mean to create some context that the child can refer back to.

Another good idea is for the adult to read the text beforehand and note down any words that the child might struggle with. Then, you can practise this vocabulary before reading the text.

Keeping a vocabulary log of new words and their meanings is a fantastic way for children to track how many words they've learnt. This would be a great tool to refer back to as well.

Word games and flashcards are especially useful to use in class and there are lots of different options and themes for KS1.



#### **4. Understanding Sentences**

Learning about how sentences are formed isn't just useful for writing. Knowing how an idea links with another within sentences helps with reading as

well. Being able to connect the sentences together easily to understand their meaning increases reading fluency. This skill is called cohesion and it can help with coherence further down the line. (Coherence is the ability to connect ideas to other ideas across a large piece of writing).

Here are some fantastic examples of resources that can help teach sentence structure:

- [Writing super sentences differentiated worksheet pack](#)
- [Simple sentence writing prompt pictures PowerPoint](#)
- [Build a sentence activity PowerPoint](#)

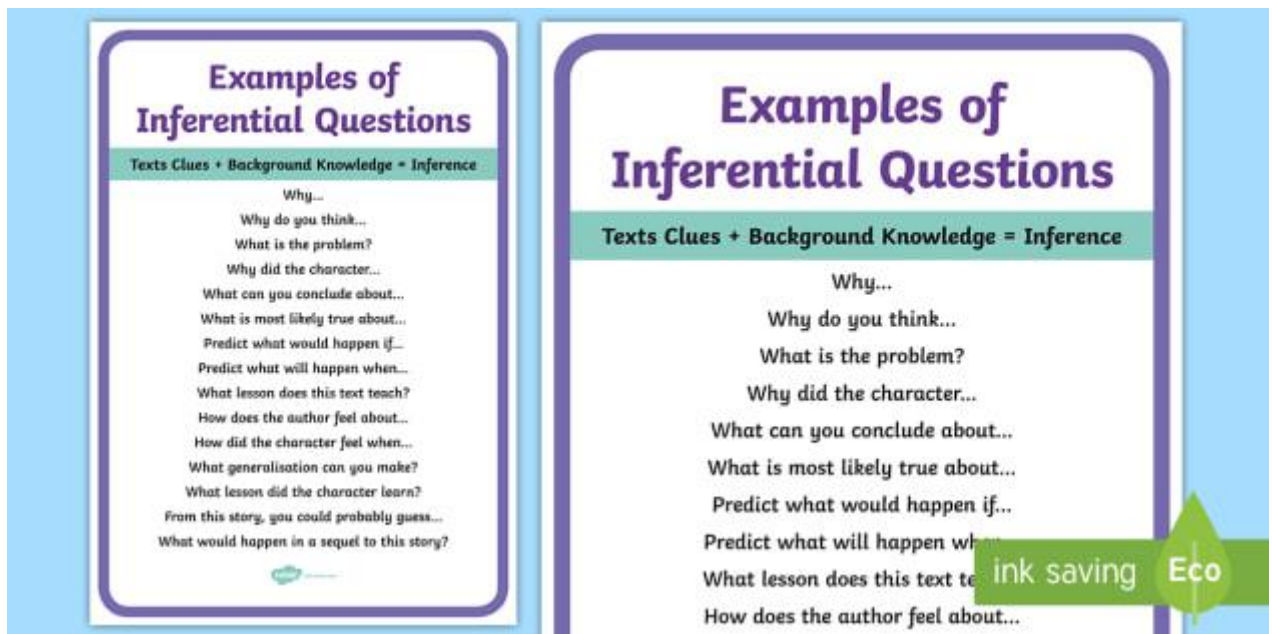
## **5. Using Background Knowledge and Reasoning**

Having background knowledge and knowing the context of things can greatly help with a child's reading ability. It allows them to read between the lines, make inferences and draw meanings from texts, even when the meaning isn't literally spelt out for them.

For example, when reading *Oliver Twist*, it's helpful to know what the world was like when Dickens was writing the novel. Learning about the Victorian era can help us to understand the context on a deeper level, which means we can understand more about the plot and the characters. It also allows us to see what message Dickens was trying to convey during this time.

Building up a child's background knowledge can be done in a variety of ways. They can learn through life experience, what they see on TV, or they can do research into specific topics.

Having this knowledge is just the first step to developing a child's reading ability though. They then have to learn how to use this knowledge to their advantage, so that they can get more out of what they read. You can support children with this by asking them [inferential questions](#) about what they've read.

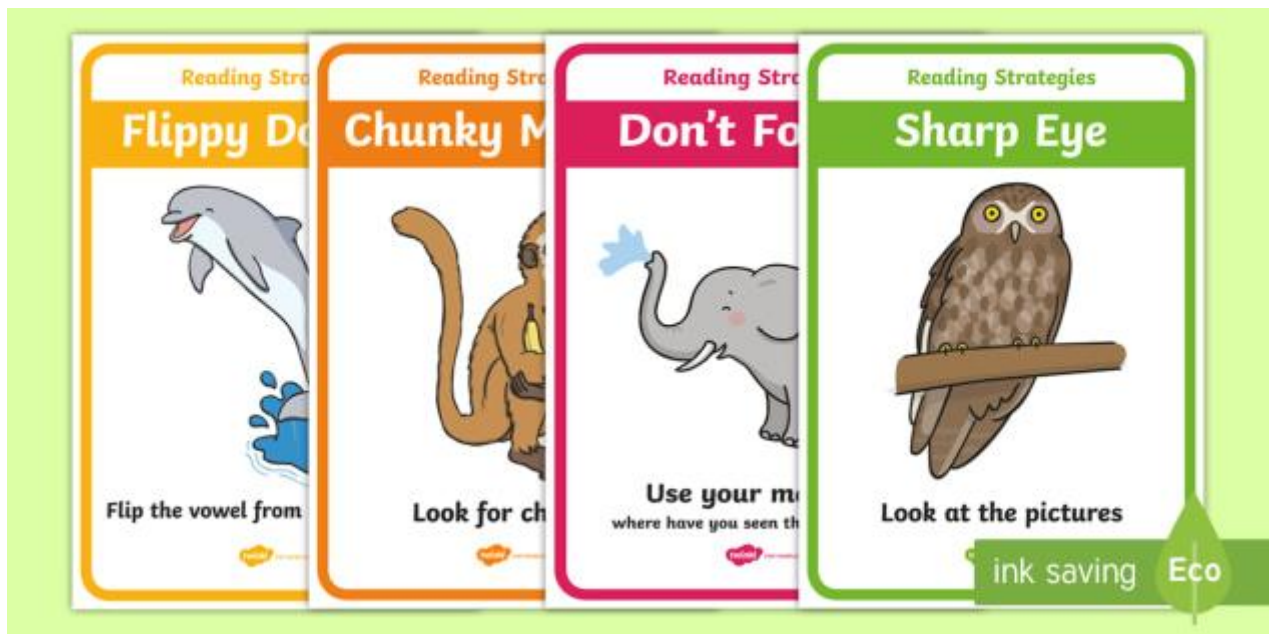


## 5. Paying Attention

Paying attention and focusing when reading is a key skill. If you're reading, but your mind is elsewhere, you won't take in anything at all. That's why it's an important skill for children to learn when developing their reading ability.

Plus, if a child pays attention to what they're reading, they're much more likely to remember what it is that they've learnt from that text. They'll also realise if they don't understand what they've read that they need to go back and reread the text to fully understand it.

Getting a child to pay attention while they're reading is easier said than done, however. The key is finding reading material that they're truly interested in and fascinated by.



Ways off improving reading skills at home.

The best way to boost a child's reading skills is to read, read and read some more! Reading practice means children will encounter more words, practise pronunciation and develop their fluency. This does wonders for a child's reading ability.

However, getting a child to read in the first place can be a difficult task. Here are some tips to help you:

- Find out what your child loves to read. They'll be much more willing to practise if they're interested in what they're reading about. 41% of parents say that their children do not enjoy reading. That's a lot of kids! And when kids don't like reading, they are less likely to put the time in to improve. This leads to a cycle of poor reading skills, lowered comprehension, more frustration and even less love for reading.
- Mix things up. Read short stories, poetry, or even newspaper articles. There's so much vocabulary to discover.
- Get into a routine. Reading regularly is essential, so find a time to read and stick to it. This could be every day, every few days or every week.
- Create a positive environment. Reward your child when they do well and encourage them when they need more support.

# **Strategies to improve your reading comprehension skills**

There are several reading strategies that you can begin implementing today to improve your reading comprehension skills. The more you practice, the better you will become at understanding what you are reading. The following are seven simple strategies you can use to work on your comprehension skills:

## **1. Improve your vocabulary**

Knowing what the words you are reading mean can improve your ability to comprehend the meaning of the text. To improve your vocabulary, you can:

- Take an online vocabulary quiz to assess your current level of vocabulary understanding
- Use flashcards to quiz yourself on words you don't know once or twice a week
- Make a point to use newly learned words in verbal and written communication
- Read as much as possible to improve your ability to guess what a word means in a certain context
- Make a list of unfamiliar words as you read and look them up in the dictionary

## **2. Come up with questions about the text you are reading**

Asking questions about what you are reading can help improve your reading comprehension by allowing you to become invested in the text. It can also broaden your overall understanding of what you are reading by enabling you to explore themes, motifs and other components of text that you otherwise wouldn't inquire about. The following are examples of questions you could pose as you read:

- Why did the author begin the book at that location?
- What kind of relationship do these two characters share?
- What do we know about the main character up to this point in the book?
- Are there any themes that have consistently come up throughout the book? If so, what do they mean?

The more specific your questions, the more likely you will gain further insight into the text and its meaning.

### **3. Use context clues**

Using context clues is a great way to understand what you are reading even if you don't know all the vocabulary being used. Context clues can be found in the words and sentences surrounding the word that you aren't familiar with. To use context clues, you can focus on the key phrases or ideas in a sentence and deduce the main idea of a sentence or paragraph based on this information. You can also look for nearby words that are synonyms or antonyms of the word you don't know.

### **4. Look for the main idea**

Identifying the main idea of a paragraph or article can help you determine the importance of the article. Understanding why what you're reading is important can give you a better comprehension of what the author is trying to convey. When reading, pause every few paragraphs and see if you can decipher what the main idea is. Then, try to put the main idea in your own words for even further understanding.

### **5. Write a summary of what you read**

A great way to increase your knowledge of what you have read is to write a summary. Summarizing requires you to decide what is important in the text and then put it in your own words. Summarizing allows you to determine if you truly understand what you have read and better remember what you have read in the long term.

### **6. Break up the reading into smaller sections**

If you are reading longer or more challenging text, consider breaking it up into smaller sections. For example, you could read two paragraphs at a time and then pause to quickly summarize what you just read in your mind. Breaking up what you are reading can help you feel less overwhelmed and give you a better chance of truly comprehending the information in the text.

### **7. Pace yourself**

Pacing yourself is also an effective way to work on your reading comprehension skills by allowing you to set realistic goals for your reading practice and habits. This is especially true for books or other literature that you find challenging. Set a goal for yourself that you know you can meet each day. For example, rather than saying that you want to read an entire book in two days, say that you will read three chapters a night. This allows you to reach your goals and also provides adequate time for you to process what you are reading between each session.

### **Tips to make the most of your reading comprehension practice**

Reading is a fundamental part of everyday life. The more you incorporate and prioritize reading and understanding what you read, the better your overall reading comprehension will become. These tips can help you make the most of your time when practicing your reading skills.

#### **Eliminate distractions**

When you are distracted, your ability to comprehend what you are reading is negatively impacted. When reading—even if it's a simple email—eliminate distractions and focus solely on the text. This will help you learn to hold your attention to what you read and enable you to know whether you understand what you are reading.

#### **Read a book below your reading level**

Starting with books below your reading level will allow you to develop a baseline of your reading comprehension and build on that. Instead of starting with books or other text that you find challenging, read something that is comfortable and that you can easily comprehend. You can take an online quiz to establish the reading level you are currently at.

#### **Re-read text to ensure understanding**

If you finish a sentence or paragraph and realize that you don't understand what it was trying to convey, take the time to re-read it until you do. Try to read more slowly the second time around and look up definitions for any words you don't know the meaning of.

#### **Read aloud**



Reading aloud incorporates both visual and audio learning into your reading comprehension practice. It also forces you to slow down and gives you more time to process what you are reading.

- How to help your child become a better reader

Reading is the foundation for success. When children develop reading habit early in their lives, they are more likely to be successful in school, work, and life in general.

That said, learning to read isn't always an easy task for children, and that's why it is crucial that you, as a parent, work with your child and encourage the habit of reading early in their lives. Spend time with them to ensure that your child develops the following essential reading skills.

Essential skills for reading success

The different types of reading skills are:



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### **Decoding**

Decoding is the ability to sound out words children have heard before but haven't seen written out. This is a vital step in the reading process as it forms the foundation for other reading skills.

Decoding heavily relies on an early language skill called phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate different sounds into words. Children develop this awareness when learning about syllables, words, and sounds (phonemes).



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## **Phonics**

Phonics is the ability to recognize the connection between sounds and letters they make. This process of mapping the sounds in words to written words is a very important reading skill. Children first decode the words into sounds and encode the sounds into words as they write and spell.



## **Vocabulary**

A good vocabulary is a fundamental part of academic success. This reading skill is necessary to understand the meaning of words, their definitions, and their context.

The more words a child knows, the better they are at reading and understanding the texts they read.



## **Fluency**

Fluency is the ability to read aloud with understanding, accuracy, and speed. It is a skill needed for good reading comprehension. Kids fluent in reading know how to read smoothly, at a good pace, using proper tone, and without making too many errors.



## **Sentence Construction & Cohesion**

Sentence construction and cohesion may seem like a writing skill, but it's an essential reading skill. Connecting ideas between and within the sentences are called cohesion, and these skills are essential for reading comprehension.



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## **Reading Comprehension**

Understand the meaning of the text – both in storybooks and information books. In fiction books, children imagine the characters and share an emotional and adventurous journey with them. In non-fiction books, children gain new information, which deepens their understanding of new topics and concepts. Reading comprehension is a complex skill that requires time and practice to develop fully.



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## **Reasoning & Background Knowledge**

This skill helps the child use the background knowledge to make inferences and draw conclusions. Most readers can relate what they have read to what they know. They can also read between the lines to pull out the information when it's not literally spelled out in the text.



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## **Working Memory & Attention**

These skills are closely related but different and are part of a group of abilities known as executive function. When children read, attention helps them absorb the information from the text, and working memory allows them to retain that information. This helps them gain meaning and build knowledge from what they read.

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## **Different types of reading techniques**



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### **Skimming**

Skimming, sometimes referred to as gist reading, means going through the text to grasp the main idea. Here, the reader doesn't pronounce each and every word of the text but focuses their attention on the main theme or the core of the text. Examples of skimming are reading magazines or newspapers and searching for a name in a telephone directory.



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### **Scanning**

Here, the reader quickly scuttles across sentences to get to a particular piece of information. Scanning involves the technique of rejecting or ignoring irrelevant information from the text to locate a specific piece of information.



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### **Intensive Reading**

Intensive reading is far more time-consuming than skimming and scanning as it needs the reader's attention to detail. It involves close reading that aims at the accuracy of comprehension. Here, the reader has to understand the meaning of each and every word.



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### **Extensive reading**

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Extensive reading lays more emphasis on fluency and less on accuracy. It usually involves reading for pleasure and is more of an out-of-classroom activity. It is highly unlikely for readers to take up the extensive reading of text they do not like.

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### **Common reading problems**



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#### **Issues with decoding**

Beginner readers may struggle when they meet new or unfamiliar terms, but typically decoding becomes easier with repeated practice of reading the text out loud. If a child continues to struggle, there may be an underlying difficulty or a physical impairment that does not allow them to hear the sounds or see the letters.



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#### **Poor comprehension of reading skills**

Some children can read like a pro but may not be able to tell you what they have read. This indicates a problem of incomprehension. These children may find the same difficulty when their teachers or parents read aloud.



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#### **Speed**

The more children read, the more they expand their vocabulary. They begin to recognize more words by sight, enabling them to read faster. If speed is the issue with your child, slow processing of information could be the problem. Since reading is a cognitively demanding task, it involves holding information in the mind while continuously processing the text. This can exhaust the children with slow processing. Such children may require extra time to complete tasks that require extensive reading.

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### **Mixed reading difficulties**

Mixed reading problems in kids include decoding words and difficulty with comprehension. They have challenges when it comes to reading words, retaining information, and understanding the text. These problems could be due to a reading disorder. Although some kids learn slower than others, if you notice any difficulty that affects your child's daily life, it should be evaluated by a professional.

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## **• How to improve reading skills of a child**

Whatever reading problems your child is going through, there are always ways to help. Here are some ways you can help your child overcome their reading problems:

- Take note of what you are seeing when your child is reading. When you observe your child, you may start seeing patterns. Talk with your child's teacher or caregiver to find out if they have observed something similar.
  
- Work on building reading skills at home. Teach sight words for fluency and quick recall. Use flashcards, point out words on the hoardings, brand names, or store names
  
- Always remember that if your child is struggling with any skill, it can make them feel inferior, and that can take a toll on their self-esteem. As your child works on their reading skills, make sure you praise their efforts and celebrate their small wins.
  
- Choose books that contain detailed visual illustrations to help your child connect the text with the scene.

- Get your child enrolled in online classes. PlanetSpark's programme uses the essential skills for reading success to unlock all aspects of reading focusing on phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and reading for meaning.

Kids must master a number of key skills, like decoding, to fully understand what they're reading.

There are ways to help struggling readers build these skills at home and at school.

Some people think of the act of reading as a straightforward task that's easy to master. In reality, reading is a complex process that draws on many different skills. Together, these skills lead to the ultimate goal of reading: reading comprehension, or understanding what's been read.

Reading comprehension can be challenging for lots of reasons. Whatever the cause, knowing the skills involved, and which ones your child struggles with, can help you get the right support.

Here are six essential skills needed for reading comprehension, and tips on what can help kids improve this skill.

## **1. Decoding**

Decoding is a vital step in the reading process. Kids use this skill to sound out words they've heard before but haven't seen written out. The ability to do that is the foundation for other reading skills.

Decoding relies on an early language skill called phonemic awareness. (This skill is part of an even broader skill called phonological awareness.) Phonemic awareness lets kids hear individual sounds in words (known as phonemes). It also allows them to "play" with sounds at the word and syllable level.

Decoding also relies on connecting individual sounds to letters. For instance, to read the word sun, kids must know that the letter s makes the /s/ sound. Grasping

the connection between a letter (or group of letters) and the sounds they typically make is an important step toward “sounding out” words.

What can help: Most kids pick up the broad skill of phonological awareness naturally, by being exposed to books, songs, and rhymes. But some kids don't. In fact, one of the early signs of reading difficulties is trouble with rhyming, counting syllables, or identifying the first sound in a word.

The best way to help kids with these skills is through specific instruction and practice. Kids have to be taught how to identify and work with sounds. You can also build phonological awareness at home through activities like word games and reading to your child.

## **2. Fluency**

To read fluently, kids need to instantly recognize words, including words they can't sound out. Fluency speeds up the rate at which they can read and understand text. It's also important when kids encounter irregular words, like of and the, which can't be sounded out.

Sounding out or decoding every word can take a lot of effort. Word recognition is the ability to recognize whole words instantly by sight, without sounding them out.

Connect with experts and other parents on this topic in the Wunder app.

### Digital tools for dyslexia

There are so many digital tools that can support someone with dyslexia. There are tools that support reading, such as audiobooks, text-to-speech programs (Bookshare.org), and speech-to-text software, such as Dragon Naturally Speaking, on a device. Tools that help with writing and spelling include word prediction tools like Co:Writer Universal or digital recording pens like Livescribe Smartpen.

When kids can read quickly and without making too many errors, they are “fluent” readers.

Fluent readers read smoothly at a good pace. They group words together to help with meaning, and they use the proper tone in their voice when reading aloud. Reading fluency is essential for good reading comprehension.



What can help: Word recognition can be a big obstacle for struggling readers. Average readers need to see a word four to 14 times before it becomes a “sight word” they automatically recognize. Kids with dyslexia, for instance, may need to see it up to 40 times.

Lots of kids struggle with reading fluency. As with other reading skills, kids need lots of specific instruction and practice to improve word recognition.

The main way to help build fluency is through practice reading books. It’s important to pick out books that are at the right level of difficulty for kids.

### **3. Vocabulary**

To understand what you’re reading, you need to understand most of the words in the text. Having a strong vocabulary is a key component of reading comprehension. Students can learn vocabulary through instruction. But they typically learn the meaning of words through everyday experience and also by reading.

What can help: The more words kids are exposed to, the richer their vocabulary becomes. You can help build your child’s vocabulary by having frequent conversations on a variety of topics. Try to include new words and ideas. Telling jokes and playing word games is a fun way to build this skill.

Reading together every day also helps improve vocabulary. When reading aloud, stop at new words and define them. But also encourage your child to read alone. Even without hearing a definition of a new word, your child can use context to help figure it out.

Teachers can help, too. They can carefully choose interesting words to teach and then give explicit instruction (instruction that is specialized and direct). They can engage students in conversation. And they can make learning vocabulary fun by playing word games in class.

For more ideas, watch as an expert explains how to help struggling readers build their vocabulary.

### **4. Sentence construction and cohesion**

Understanding how sentences are built might seem like a writing skill. So might connecting ideas within and between sentences, which is called cohesion. But these skills are important for reading comprehension as well.

Knowing how ideas link up at the sentence level helps kids get meaning from passages and entire texts. It also leads to something called coherence, or the ability to connect ideas to other ideas in an overall piece of writing.

What can help: Explicit instruction can teach kids the basics of sentence construction. For example, teachers can work with students on connecting two or more thoughts, through both writing and reading.

## **5. Reasoning and background knowledge**

Most readers relate what they've read to what they know. So it's important for kids to have background or prior knowledge about the world when they read. They also need to be able to "read between the lines" and pull out meaning even when it's not literally spelled out.

Take this example: A child is reading a story about a poor family in the 1930s. Having knowledge about the Great Depression can provide insight into what's happening in the story. The child can use that background knowledge to make inferences and draw conclusions.

What can help: Your child can build knowledge through reading, conversations, movies and TV shows, and art. Life experience and hands-on activities also build knowledge.

Expose your child to as much as possible, and talk about what you've learned from experiences you've had together and separately. Help your child make connections between new knowledge and existing knowledge. And ask open-ended questions that require thinking and explanations.

## **6. Working memory and attention**

These two skills are both part of a group of abilities known as executive function. They're different but closely related.

When kids read, attention allows them to take in information from the text. Working memory allows them to hold on to that information and use it to gain meaning and build knowledge from what they're reading.

The ability to self-monitor while reading is also tied to that. Kids need to be able to recognize when they don't understand something. Then they need to stop, go back, and re-read to clear up any confusion they may have.

What can help: There are many ways you can help improve your child's working memory. Skillbuilders don't have to feel like work, either. There are a number of games and everyday activities that can build working memory without kids even knowing it.

To help increase your child's attention, look for reading material that's interesting or motivating. For example, some kids may like graphic novels. Encourage your child to stop and re-read when something isn't clear. And demonstrate how you "think aloud" when you read to make sure what you're reading makes sense.

### **More ways to help with reading comprehension**

When kids struggle with one or more of these skills, they can have trouble fully understanding what they read. Find out how to tell if your child has difficulty with reading comprehension.

Learn about what can cause trouble with reading in kids. Keep in mind that having reading difficulties doesn't mean a child isn't smart. But some kids need extra support and encouragement to make progress.

## Methods of improving reading comprehension

### Method1

#### Pre Reading

##### 1

**Make sure you understand the type of text you have.** Ask yourself: What type of work am I reading? Is it information-based, like a newspaper, textbook, or manual? Or is it more creative/artistic, like a novel or short story? This matters![\[1\]](#)

- For instance, if you're reading to follow instructions (like a recipe or assembly guide), you'll need to understand the exact meaning of each step.
- If you're reading a text that has lots of information, like a textbook, then you'll be reading most of all for new information on things you don't know or understand.

##### 2

**Decide on the purpose of your reading.** The reason why you're reading has an impact on how you read. For instance, reading a novel for a class can be different than reading a novel for pleasure, since you'll be expected to understand and remember the text rather than just enjoy the experience of reading it. Ask yourself: What am I reading for?[\[2\]](#)

- If you're reading to gain information (for instance, to meet work or school requirements), you'll probably want to try extensive techniques.
- If you're reading to practice pronunciation, learn vocabulary, or study grammar, you'll probably want to try intensive techniques.

##### 3

**Scan your reading before you begin.** Whatever the purpose of your reading is, taking a few minutes to look the piece over is very helpful. Check and see how the work is structured and presented. These are easy ways to increase your understanding.[3]

- Does the work have a title?
- Is there a table of contents you can scan?
- Is the work divided into separate sections?
- Does the work have any “extras,” like bolded key words, illustrations, or graphs?

## Method2

### Reading Intensively

1

**Read intensively if you want to practice the fundamentals and learn vocabulary.** Intensive reading is focused more on individual details of what you’re reading. If you want to practice pronunciation, study grammar, or learn vocabulary, you’ll want to read more slowly and focus more on individual words and sentences.

2

**Look for just the gist of a text's meaning.** For intensive reading, it’s not always important to worry about what something means in a deep way. Just trying to get a general sense of what the reading is about. As you read, you’ll focus more on details like spelling, pronunciation, and the rhythm of sentences.

- Don’t get too caught up in parts you don’t fully understand. If you can summarize the main point of what you’re reading, then you’re doing ok.

3

**Read out loud.** This can improve your reading skills because it makes you be involved with the text in two ways: with your eyes, as you look at the words, and with your ears, as you listen to them. Reading out loud is also key if you’re trying to practice pronunciation.

4

**Try to guess the meaning of any new words.** When you come to a word you don't know, try not to reach for the dictionary right away. Instead, try to guess the meaning of the word based on the other words around it (the context).

- For example, say you read the following sentence and wanted to know what "pessimist" means: *My mother is always happy and optimistic, the total opposite of my brother, the pessimist.*
- From the sentence, you can gather that "pessimist" means the opposite of happy: being moody and angry.

5

**Write down new words you want to learn.** If you come to any words that you can't figure out, write them down and look up their meaning in a good dictionary. That way, you can study the words later, too.

6

**Read as often as you can.** The more you read, the easier it becomes. Practicing for at least 15 to 30 minutes a day, every day, will make a big difference

- Read whatever interests you, if you're just trying to improve your basic skill.
- Rereading things you've already gone through can build your confidence.

### Method3

#### Reading Extensively

1

**Try extensive reading if you're looking for understanding.** Extensive reading works when you're trying to determine the meaning of what you're reading. This technique focuses on the overall picture. It's best for things like studying a textbook, reading a newspaper article for information, or reading a book for school.[9]

2

**Take notes on your reading.** If you want to read to understand something on a deeper level, like studying a textbook, it helps to read more actively. Keep a notebook out and make notes on important things you notice as you read.[10]

- For instance, you can make bullet points to summarize every time you come to a major idea.
- If there are key terms or dates in whatever you're reading, make a note of those as well.
- If there are parts you don't understand, write down the questions you have and come back to them later.

### 3

**Annotate your reading.** If you're able to write in or mark up whatever it is you're reading, this can also help increase your understanding. For instance, you can underline or highlight important passages. You could also try things like circling key terms and writing notes in the margins.<sup>[11]</sup>

### 4

**Review what you're reading by summarizing it.** Every so often, stop and write a few sentences in your notes to summarize what you've read so far. Putting the main ideas into your own words and writing them out is a way of checking that you understand what you're reading. Going back over the material also helps you remember what you've read.<sup>[12]</sup>

- If you have trouble summarizing or remembering any part of what you've read, go back over it again.
- You can also try writing out a summary in an outline form, rather than full sentences.

### 5

**Identify key words and concepts.** When you encounter a word or concept that seems essential to a text's meaning, make a note of it. If you are reading a textbook, these might even be set apart in bold print, or in a separate vocabulary section. You can write the words or concepts down to study them later, or even make a set of flash cards

- If you come across a word or concept that seems important but is not clearly defined in the text, look up its meaning in a dictionary or encyclopedia (either online or print).

- If you see certain words being used over and over again, that's another sign that they're important for what you're reading and worth looking up.

## Method4

### Staying Focused and Motivated

1

**Read with a friend.** Getting through a text can be easier and more fun when you're not doing it alone. For instance, you can try reading the same section of a text as your partner, then talking about it to make sure you both understood the main ideas. You can also share your thoughts and ideas to help you practice and know what you are reading,

- To improve reading aloud you can even pair yourself with someone you feel is a better reader. While your partner is reading, listen to their pronunciation, speed, and rhythm. Take a turn yourself, then ask for feedback.

2

**Choose the right reading environment.** If you really want to concentrate on your reading, step away from television, music, phones, computers, and chatty people. These distractions make it hard to focus, dragging out reading and causing frustration.

- Try reading in a quiet, well-lit place with a desk and comfortable chair, if you can.

3

**Use a pointer while reading if you have trouble focusing on the page.** Take a bookmark, ruler, or small piece of paper and set it on the page you want to read. Slide it down so you can only read one line of text, then move it down to read the next line, and so on. Doing this can make reading feel more manageable.

4

**Read something you're interested in, if you have a choice.** It's no surprise that you'll be more motivated to read a text that you genuinely care about. If you're given the chance to select books or other things to read for yourself, seek out topics you are interested in.

5



**Track your progress.** Keep records, like a list of books or articles you've gone through, and how many minutes you read each day. Seeing how much you've accomplished over time can encourage you to keep making progress.

## Ways for improving reading skills

### 1. Make special time to read

If you're reading to improve your comprehension, you need to focus and study.

This means making a special time for reading without risk of being interrupted.

You should try to spend at least 30 minutes every day on focused reading.

#### **To turn your reading process into a ritual:**

- Find a quiet, comfortable spot with bright lighting to sit.
- Get everything you might need ready before you sit down, such as a pen, notebook and something to drink.
- Decide how long you will read.
- Put all your electronics on silent mode (or turn them off) and put them away.

If you have a specific process for reading practice, then your brain will know when you're about to work on your comprehension. As a result, you'll be more focused before you even start.

### 2. Use a good dictionary

If you're a beginner learner, choose an English dictionary that translates words into your native language. There are also learner's dictionaries, which explain words using simple terms.

For more advanced learners, I recommend using a *monolingual* dictionary—one that has definitions only in English with no translations. Monolingual dictionaries force you to think in English rather than relying on your native language.

For online content, you can use **LingQ**'s built-in translation features. LingQ allows you to **choose unknown words in any text, get an automatic translation** and then convert those words to flashcards.

### 3. Use context clues

Just because you find a good dictionary doesn't mean you should look up every single new word!

Using context clues means trying to understand a new word by looking at what's around it. If you're stuck on a word you don't know, **try looking at the whole sentence for a hint about what it means.**

Don't stop to look up every new word. It's harder to focus on your reading if you keep interrupting it. You can write down the word and look it up later. Only look up a word if without it, you can't understand what you're reading.

#### **4. Learn to read english with the right books**

When you're choosing books (and other texts) to read, keep two things in mind:

1. What you're interested in
2. Your reading level

Whenever you can, you should read things that you enjoy. You should also **choose books that are at an English level just above the one you're most comfortable with.** You want to challenge yourself enough to learn new things, but not so much that you frustrated with your reading.

You can use [this test from the British Council's Learn English website](#) to get a general idea of your reading level:

- **Beginners** should aim for texts specifically made for beginner learners. These include dialogues, short readings about common topics or children's books.
- **Intermediate learners** can read longer texts, news articles and popular novels with simpler language.
- **Advanced learners** can read almost anything, but should approach some classic literature such as Shakespeare's plays with caution.

Not sure where to start? There are lots of places online where you can find recommendations for books to learn English reading:

- **Listopia** on Goodreads is full of lists created by people just like you.
- **What should I read next?** gives you book recommendations based on a book that you like or even a list of your favorites.
- **Jellybooks** helps you discover new books and sample 10%, which means you can try the book and see if it's a good fit for you.

- **Whichbook** is a very different kind of website—you choose the kinds of things you're looking for in a book (happy/sad, beautiful/disgusting) and the website gives you suggestions based on that.

I've also added a **detailed list of reading recommendations per level** at the end of this post.

## **5. Check the Difficulty Level**

Once you've picked a book, double-check its difficulty level by making sure that it has **no more than 10% unknown words**.

Count the number of words on a page or paragraph, and then count the number of words you don't recognize. Divide the number of unknown words by the number of total words, multiply by 100, and you'll see what percentage of words you don't know.

Here's a rough guide:

- **0-2% new words:** The text is too easy for you.
- **4%-6% new words:** The text is just right.
- **8% new words:** This text might be too hard for you. (You might try it anyway if it's something you really want to read.)
- **10% (or more) new words:** This text is too hard right now. Set it aside for later, when you've learned more English words.

## **6. Do both intensive and extensive reading**

There are two kinds of English reading that you have to practice:

### **Intensive reading and extensive reading.**

**Intensive reading is when you try to understand every word on the page.**

This is the kind of reading you do when you have some time to focus. Most of the tips below are about how to make the most out of intensive reading.

When you practice intensive reading, pick a fairly short text that interests you. If you have a really long text—or you just don't care about the topic—you might give up before you finish.

Aside from intensive reading, you also need to do **extensive reading**, which simply means casually reading anything you see in English. Don't stress. Don't worry about what every word means.

Read a new recipe. Read an email. Read a blog post.

Read billboards along the highway. Read newspaper headlines.

It doesn't matter *what* you read—just read in English. Anything. Everything.

The more extensive reading you do, the more comfortable you'll be with reading in English.

### **7. Read more smoothly with sight words**

Fluency is how smoothly you can read. When you read in your head, you should have a certain rhythm to the words, understanding full sentences rather than going one word at a time. The words should flow together naturally, like when somebody is talking.

To improve your fluency, look out for “sight words.” These are **words that you should know by sight** and should not have to think about how to read them.

Find a good list of sight words, like [this one](#), and take about a minute or two every day to read the words as fast as you can.

### **8. Get familiar with English spelling conventions**

**English spelling often doesn't reflect the actual sounds of a word.** When you read in English, the voice in your head can get stuck on new words that you don't know how to pronounce.

Don't be discouraged!

By learning common spelling conventions, that reading voice will maintain the flow of English and you'll improve your overall reading ability:

- **kn:** The *kn-* at the beginning of a word is pronounced as simply *n*, as in the words “know” and “knife.”
- **wh:** The *-h-* in *wh-* words such as “what” or “when” is silent and isn't pronounced.
- **c:** This letter typically sounds like *s* before the vowels *e*, *i* or *y*, like in the word “city.” Otherwise, it typically sounds like *k*, like in the word “cat.”

### **9. Focus on repeated words**

It's important to be smart about which words you look up as you read. I recommend **looking up words that are repeated more than three times in a passage**, or words that appear crucial to the meaning of a sentence.

In other words, don't look up every single unknown word while you're reading. Think about it—it'll get boring and break up the flow of reading.

When you read a text for the first time, **underline or highlight unknown words**.

Once you're done reading, go back and identify the repeated words and words that are crucial to understanding. Now you can look those up and write down translations or definitions.

Finally, read the text again with your word list and watch as you understand the text more fully.

## **10. Remember vocabulary with Flashcards**

A great way to build up your vocabulary and reading fluency is to create flashcards of important words. But don't just stop there: **Review these flashcards often**.

While reading, keep your word lists or flashcards handy. You can refer to these if that word comes up again while reading for fast translation.

As you come across these words while reading new content, move them to the back of your flashcard pile. This counts as review, and you don't need to review words if you feel you've already learned them!

**Anki is a great app for creating your own digital flashcards** and accessing them on the go.

## **11. Make a language Journal**

Aside from making flashcards, you can use a language *journal* (notebook) for practice.

In the pages of your journal, **try writing sentences with your new English vocabulary**. Make your own definition for each English word you've learned. Use colored pencils to draw pictures of what the words mean.

Every once in a while, look back at older pages in your language journal. Review words to keep your memories of them strong. And feel proud of how much you've learned!

## 12. Ask yourself questions

Taking notes and asking yourself questions can help you really understand an English text.

**Before you read**, here are a few questions you can ask yourself to prepare:

- Are there any words in **bold** or *italics*?
- Are there titles or subtitles?
- What are some of the names mentioned?
- Is there a lot of dialogue?
- Are the paragraphs short or long?

**While you're reading**, try asking these questions:

- What's happening now?
- Who's speaking here?
- Why did he do that?
- What is she thinking?

**After reading**, the questions below can also get you think about what you did and did not understand:

- What was the text about?
- What are the most important things that happened in the text?
- Did anything confuse you?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Are there any parts you didn't understand?

## 13. Look for clues to "Get the Gist"

The *gist* is the overall meaning. Practice using clues to get the gist of a text quickly and effectively. Use these tips to improve your overall understand of what you're reading.

For example:

- Use a highlighter to **identify important information or main ideas** in the text.

- **Pay attention to verb tenses** so that you understand the timeline of the story. (Are past, present or future events being described?)
- **Examine any images** that accompany the text. These images often give vital information and can help your understanding.

#### **14. Break Up Readings into Chunks**

Reading can be tiring, so **break it up into manageable *chunks*** (pieces). Aim for between one and three paragraphs to start. As you build your skills, you can start reading with longer and longer chunks of text.

You can also simply break up your reading by time. In particular, I recommend **trying the Pomodoro method**. For every 25 minutes of reading, take a five-minute break to give your brain a rest.

#### **15. Write a summary**

After reading a text, you can write a short summary of what you've read. This can just be **a couple of sentences that present the main ideas**.

Writing a summary is a great way to reinforce what the text was about as well as use new vocabulary in context. I like to write summaries down in my notebook and then underline the new vocabulary that I learned from reading the text.

Writing summaries will also help you notice any parts of the text that you didn't fully understand, so you can go back and re-read.

#### **16. Discuss the text**

Call upon an English-speaking friend or conversation partner to help you understand what you read.

You can explain the text to them. Your friend could then ask you questions about what you've read.

By **talking about what you've read with a fluent English speaker**, you can make sure that you understood the text. Another bonus is that you'll practice listening and speaking in English.

#### **17. Reread Short Articles**

Sometimes reading a text just once isn't enough to understand it. Rereading is great for finding things you might have missed the first time and reviewing new words.

Try these out:

- **Choose something that takes less than five minutes to read.** This can be a story or a news article.
- **Read the text at your own pace,** then write down everything you can remember—every little detail, even parts of sentences if you remember them.
- **Read the text again** and write down what you can remember. Do you see how much more you remember the second time around?

Every time you read something, you understand more of it. When you want to get the most out of your reading, try reading three or more times:

- The first time, focus on understanding the words.
- The second time, focus on the meaning.
- The third time, you can start asking deeper questions like “what is the author really trying to say?” or “how does this news affect the rest of the world?”

### **18. Do reading comprehension exercises**

For more structured practice, you can do reading comprehension exercises, which are designed to **test how much you understand and improve your reading ability.**

Generally, these exercises start with a short text. Then you have to answer multiple choice or fill-in-the-blanks questions, or even longer written responses about the text.

Whatever your level, here are some useful places to find online reading comprehension exercises:

- **AgendaWeb** offers texts for all levels of English as well as short stories and fairy tales that include audio.
- **My English Pages** has hundreds of exercises for various topics including science, history and biographies.
- **The ESL Lounge** also has exercises broken into four levels.



To find even more online, look up “ESL reading comprehension quiz.”

### **19. Read Many Kinds of Texts**

Today we don’t just read books and newspapers. We read blogs, emails, Tweets and chats. **The more you read *anything* in English, the better you’ll get at the language.**

**Magazine Line** is a good place to go to find digital or print magazines on just about any subject. They give you lower prices on magazine subscriptions, and you may be able to save even more if you’re a student.

You can also check out **aggregators**—websites that take news and interesting articles and put them together for you to look through. A couple of useful aggregators are **Mix**, which helps you find new websites based on your interests, and **Digg**, which collects interesting stories from around the Internet onto one page.

### **20. Read and listen with subtitles**

It might seem strange, but another great way to practice reading is to **watch English videos with subtitles or transcripts**.

That way, you will read the words while hearing how a native speaker says them. Because English is not a phonetic language, the subtitles remind you how to spell a certain word, regardless of the sound.

### **21. Check Popular Forums and Blogs**

Do you know that **ChatGPT**, the chatbot that is making waves all over the internet because of how well it can communicate, read Reddit threads to teach itself language?

**Forums like Reddit, Quora and Yahoo Answers** contain English in its most natural forms, as it is all written casually by native speakers. Even if there are spelling and grammar mistakes, conversations are mostly enlightening, natural and full of everyday words.

Aside from forums, you can add some personality and fun to your English reading practice with **blogs in English**. They discuss all kinds of topics in a lively and

friendly way. You can even be part of the conversation—and practice your English writing skills—by leaving a comment now and then!

## **22. Be Consistent with Reading**

Perhaps the most important tip to learn English reading is to make sure you read consistently. Remember, **a little bit of reading every day is better than reading a lot once a month.** Aim to create a reading habit!

If you become frustrated or bored, I suggest changing your reading material. Reading things you're interested in will improve your reading skills tremendously, and the best way to become better at reading English is to read what you enjoy.

### **Recommendations by level**

Now that you know how to maximize your English reading, I'll show you what kind of English texts would work well for you based on your level:

#### **Beginner**

- **Children's picture books** — These books have simple words and pictures, and they teach you basic English words so you can talk about the world around you. Some of them are funny and some of them are *touching* (sweet or emotional).
- **Easy fairy tales** — These magical stories have been told for many, many years. They're a part of cultures all over the world. Chance are, you probably know a few of them already—which will make it even easier for you to understand them.
- **Simple short stories** — Aside from fairy tales, many short stories are easy enough for beginning English learners because they use simple language to make you think about big, important ideas.

#### **Beginner to Intermediate**

- **Graded readers** – These are specially made for learners, with lots of different themes. There aren't too many hard words, but you'll still find new ones to learn. Some of the readers come with audio, so you can listen to the stories as you read them.

- **Bilingual readers** – In these special books, the text is in both English and your native language. You can focus on the English text and only look at the translation when you need a little help.
- **Superhero comics** – Superhero comic books are exciting, filled with colorful characters and *illustrations* (drawings). You'll recognize the characters, like Superman and Batman, from television and films.

### **Intermediate**

- **Popular books** – Keep up with the crowd with these best-selling books. Find thrillers, suspense, romance and more. Popular books are some of the best books to learn English!
- **Translated books from your own culture** — You first read a book in your own language, from your own culture. Then you find an English translated version of it, read that through, and carefully compare the two versions. Some examples of books in a language pair are: “Le Comte de Monte-Cristo” (French) — “The Count of Monte Cristo,” “Ngược dòng nước lũ” (Vietnamese) — “Against the Flood” and “Cien años de soledad” (Spanish) — “One Hundred Years of Solitude.”
- **Short stories** — Challenge yourself in just a few minutes a day with intermediate-level short stories in English that you can read quickly. You can even find some new English words to learn with these *spooky* (scary) ghost stories in English.
- **Interactive Books** — Get extra adventure with these books that let you decide what happens. There are also text-based video games such as Zork that you can read like a book.

### **Intermediate to Advanced**

- **Long reads** — These are usually long articles that offers a wider and more complex perspective on contemporary issues. The quality of writing is high, so you can benefit from the best writing and best information. You can find long reads on websites such as Longreads and Reddit’s Longreads subreddit. My favorite source for long reads is *The Guardian* because the articles are also recorded and published as podcasts.

- **Funny stories** — These books take humor to a more grown-up level, with parody that *pokes fun at* (makes fun of) serious subjects and puns that play with English words. Humor can be hard to translate, so reading these will help you better understand English-speaking cultures.
- **Fantasy and science fiction** — These books often use imaginative ideas that take you beyond simple English words. Some fantastic reads for intermediate English learners are “Harry Potter”, “A Wrinkle in Time,” “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” and “The Martian Chronicles.”
- **TV tie-in books and movie novelizations** — Read novelizations (movies written as books) of your favorite films or choose stories with familiar characters from the television shows you love. There are series of novels related to popular shows, such as “A Game of Thrones,” “Star Trek,” “Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” and “Charmed.”
- **Simple poems** — Poems can say volumes in just a few short words. They often use words you won’t find in everyday English conversation, and they help you learn the rhythm of English. Try reading and studying a few poems perfect for learning English. You can also watch slam poetry performances with transcripts, like “A love poem for lonely prime numbers” and “If I should have a daughter...”

### **Advanced**

- **Classic books** — A book becomes “classic” because it stands the test of time. Reading the “classics”—important pieces of English literature—can help you better understand the culture of the English-speaking world. Most classic books are available for free to read online, on cool websites like Project Gutenberg. Some of my favorites include “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer,” “Emma” and “The Picture of Dorian Gray.”
- **Iconic plays** — A lot of English-language plays have influenced (made their mark on) how people think about certain subjects. Try reading some of these well-known plays aloud, since they’re meant to be performed: “Our Town,” “Romeo and Juliet” and “A Raisin in the Sun.”

- **Literary poems** — Literary poems can be tricky to read even for native speakers! If you're up for a challenge and want to read classic poems, study the works of Edgar Allan Poe, T.S. Eliot or Emily Dickinson. Another great source of literary poems is Poetry Foundation, which features a mix of classic and modern poems.

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