

Reading Comprehension Section Preparation

Comprehension is an important aspect of reading. When you read, strive to understand and extract meaning for better overall awareness of what you are reading. By learning and implementing reading strategies and changing how you read, you can improve your reading comprehension abilities and make reading easier and more enjoyable.

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

7 reading strategies you can use to improve your 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.
2. Come up with questions about the text you are reading.

3. Use context clues.
4. Look for the main idea.
5. Write a summary of what you read.
6. Break up the reading into smaller sections.
7. Pace yourself.

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.

Reading Comprehension Sample Questions

Read the following paragraph to answer the next two questions (Questions 1&2).

Tailgating another vehicle is unsafe and illegal. Many rear-end collisions are caused by drivers following too close to the vehicle in front of them. The rules state that a driver must keep sufficient distance from the vehicle in front in order to stop safely and avoid a collision. Drivers should allow a minimum two seconds' gap between their vehicle and the one ahead. At sixty kilometers an hour, this equates to thirty-three meters; at a hundred it equates to fifty-five meters. More distance is needed to safely stop in rain or poor visibility.

1. Tailgating another vehicle is unsafe because:

- A: all rear end collisions are caused by drivers following too close to the vehicle in front.
- B: it may not allow sufficient time and space to stop and avoid a collision.
- C: it is against the road rules.
- D: it is a reckless practice.
- E: None of these.

2. 'More distance is needed to safely stop in rain or poor visibility.' We can infer from this that:

- A: people drive faster in rain and poor visibility.
- B: the writer is merely calculating on the safe side.
- C: braking is more hazardous in rain and poor visibility.
- D: the road rules state that this must be so.
- E: All of these.

Read the following paragraphs to answer the next four questions (Questions 3 & 4).

Among predatory dinosaurs, few flesh-eaters were bigger, faster and nastier than the "tyrant lizard" of popular imagination, the Tyrannosaurus Rex. At least, that is what we have been led to believe. Now research suggests that, far from being the Ferrari of dinosaurs, Tyrannosaurus Rex, whose ferocious reputation has fascinated generations of schoolchildren, was in fact a cumbersome creature with a usual running speed of twenty-five kilometers an hour. This is a mere snail's pace compared with modern animals such as the cheetah. Unlike some of the predators of today's African savannah, which can change direction almost immediately, the dinosaur would have had to turn slowly or risk tumbling over. And while a human can spin forty-five degrees in a twentieth of a second, a Tyrannosaurus would have taken as much as two seconds, as it would have been hampered by its long tail. Thankfully, however, all its prey, such as triceratops, would have been afflicted with the same lack of speed and agility.

The findings were reached after researchers used computer modelling and biomechanical calculations to work out the dinosaur's speed, agility and weight. They based their calculations on measurements taken from a fossil dinosaur representative of an average Tyrannosaurus and concluded the creatures probably weighed between six and eight tons. Calculations of the leg muscles suggest that the animal would have had a top speed of forty kilometers an hour, which is nothing compared to a cheetah's one hundred kilometers an hour. It is sobering to reflect, though, that an Olympic sprinter runs at about thirty-five kilometers an hour, not sufficient to outrun a Tyrannosaurus, should Man have been around at that time!

3. Being known as the 'Ferrari of dinosaurs' means Tyrannosaurus Rex:

- A: wore shoes.
- B: was a quick and agile creature.
- C: was a hunting machine.
- D: was the most ferocious of dinosaurs.
- E: None of these.

4. The overall theme of the passage is:

- A: Because it was cumbersome, Tyrannosaurus Rex was lucky to survive.
- B: Tyrannosaurus Rex's speed and agility were still superior to those of other dinosaurs.
- C: Tyrannosaurus Rex's fierce reputation is now laid to rest.
- D: Compared to modern predatory animals, Tyrannosaurus Rex was slow and cumbersome.
- E: None of these.