

LANGUAGE AND READING COMPREHENSION

READING AND ITS MEANING

To read without reflecting, is like eating without digesting—

Edmund Burke (1729-1797)

According to **Dechant (1991)**, reading is a visual process that begins with one's ability to use one's vision to interpret graphic symbols. Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols to construct or derive meaning from text. It is finding relationship between the ideas conveyed in the text. It involves skill in the visual recognition of words and comprehension of their content. According to **West**, reading is a process for 'sight-sound scene'. The knowledge of language is essential for reading. The process of reading requires continuous practice, development and refinement. Visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, motor-ocular discrimination, facilities available for language learning and teaching, interest, intelligence, motivation, and home background influence the acquisition of reading ability. According to **National Reading Panel, (2000)**, the fundamental elements of reading are as under :

Elements of Reading	Meaning
Phonemic awareness	Ability to hear and manipulate individual sounds in oral language;
Phonics	Understanding and connecting letters of written language with sounds of oral language;
Fluency	Reading text accurately and quickly;
Vocabulary	Oral or reading language needed for effective communication;
Text comprehension	Purposeful and active strategies for understanding written language;

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The specific elements of reading are to drill difficult words with correct pronunciation, proper stress and intonation. Using dictionary and other reference tools helps in maximizing reading speeds.

Reading is carried on in a phase wise manner which is given below briefly –

Phase	Clarification
Pre-reading	Activation of background knowledge, set the purpose, understanding the vocabulary, previewing the text;
Reading	Adopting reading types and strategies;
Responding	Referencing, discussing, sharing, relating;
Exploring	Rereading, quoting, identifying, examining;
Applying and retaining	Evaluating and creating;

Aims of Reading

The aims of reading are—

1. to read with comprehension
2. to recognize and grasp the meaning of each word or structure
3. to locate key words, key phrases and key sentences in a passage
4. to distinguish the main ideas from subsidiary information
5. to grasp the central the idea and to predict the nature of the text
6. to locate significant facts and ideas, their sequence and relationship
7. to read with accuracy and fluency
8. to read with correct pronunciation
9. to widen the 'eye-span' (number of words caught in one eye movement)
10. to extract specific information for summary or note-making
11. to know how to use an index, a table of contents, etc.
12. to diagrammatically display the information through transcoding
13. to understand the layout of the text
14. to form a habit of reading
15. to read for pleasure

Benefits of Reading

Owing to explosion and access in technology, habit of reading has taken a backseat. We find little or no time for reading. However those who have developed reading as a hobby are aware of the innumerable advantages coupled with it. Reading broadens the thinking horizon, improves vocabulary and cultivates sensitivity towards people of different cultures. Benefits of reading are given as under :

- (i) Reading exercises the mind by keeping the muscles of the brain in good shape.
- (ii) Reading gives immense satisfaction while reading a book of his/her choice.
- (iii) Reading expands the power of imagination by making a person more confident and self assured.

- (iv) Reading enhances the ability to focus on practical situations of life. Challenges of life are looked at in an objective manner and take better decisions.
- (v) Reading improves knowledge on varied fields.
- (vi) Reading helps to achieve goals in life. Good reading habits since childhood helps children grow with determined goals in their lives. It also eases them to switch from general books to their course books.
- (vii) Reading produces efficient orators as effective reading helps to gain sound knowledge.
- (viii) Reading teaches the art of living. Reading biographies of legendary individuals help to learn the art of living.
- (ix) Reading helps to accent other cultures and religions to accept them in a better and overwhelming manner.

The habit of reading not only refreshes the mind but also proves to be a good hobby.

THE VALUE OF READING

The more you read, the better you get at it;
The better you get at it, the more you like it;
And the more you like it, the more you do it.
And the more you read, the more you know;
And the more you know, the smarter you grow. (Jim Trelease, 2001)

According to **Sir Richard Steele** (1672-1729), "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." Reading is fundamental to function in today's society and is a part of everyday living. Reading enhances social skills by being better cultured, and having a more interesting background for debates and conversations. It enables to acquire information, interact and understand the world around us. **Mortimer J. Adler** (1903-1981) suggests that reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life. Reading is a means of language acquisition, of communication, and of sharing information and ideas. It improves spelling and helps to enrich the vocabulary of the reader. Reading has a deep and proportionate relationship with writing. It develops important language skills.

Reading builds up the mental capacity of the reader by improving his/her imagination, creativity and logic. According to **Neil Postman** (1931-2003), reading teaches us to think in a logically connected way. Reading creates interest to read for pleasure and profit. It develops good self image. Reading enhances judgment and appreciation capacities. Reading is to build the background knowledge. It cultivates a sustained attention span. Readers learn to think in terms of abstract ideas, objective truth and sustained reflection.

Reading is especially necessary with today's technology. Where some thought that the advent of computers would make the reading less important, the exact opposite is true; it has made reading even more important. Gathering information on the web or even communicating via email and social media all require reading and writing. Even texting requires reading and writing skills.

SUB SKILLS OF READING

The sub skills of reading with a brief clarification for each are given as under :

Sub Skills of Reading	Clarification
Reading for detail	To read a text in order to understand most of what it said, to grasp the meaning of the text;
Predicting	To use clues like headlines or pictures or general knowledge about the text to make it easier to understand what is read;
Deducing meaning from context of reading	To guess the meaning of an unknown word by using the information in a situation and/or around the word to help, using the context in reference;
Skimming	To read a text quickly to get a general idea of what it is about;
Scanning	To read a text quickly to pick out specific information, e.g. finding a phone number in a phone book;
Proof-reading	To read a text in order to check whether there are any mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. requires many pauses;
Reading for gist, global understanding	To understand the general meaning of a text, without paying attention to specific details;
Inferring attitude, feeling, mood	To decide how a writer or speaker feels about something from the way that they speak or write, rather than from what they openly say or the words they use;
Paraphrasing	To say something that has been read using different words;
Summarizing	To bring out the main points of a long text, and retell them in a short, clear way;

MECHANICS OF READING

“The habit of reading is the only enjoyment in which there is no alloy; it lasts when all other pleasure fade.”

—Anthony Trollope (1815-1882)

Mechanics of reading is a study of the processes through which printed letters undergo transformation into ideas through complex subconscious operations. The eye acting as a signal-instrument, mechanics of reading is an investigation of ‘dominant letters,’ ‘word-wholes,’ ‘ideographs,’ and ‘recognition-units.’ During the mechanism of reading, the symbols of individual words and phrases produce their intellectual reaction in individual brains giving rise to a concept.

Skillful mechanical reading requires :

1. A minimum number of fixations within a line;
2. Wide eye span encompassing phrases and thought sequences rather than isolated words;

3. A complete absence of lip movements and vocalization;
4. Infrequent regressions;

Fixing and Eye Movements

When a person reads consecutively and conscientiously following each line from left to right and swinging back again like an oar between strokes, the eye jerks like those of the hands of the clock, three to five times in an ordinary line. In between the jerks, there are pauses where the eye signals are sent to the brain by groups of letters and words. This translates alphabetic symbols into virtual **ideographs** (a graphic character that indicates the meaning of a thing without indicating the sounds used to say it) each with its association. By **fixing** this association, the brain recording is turned on. A combination of these two results in reading. Every individual evolves his/her own ideographs with different fixations, association and meaning. Through experimentation, the average duration of pauses for fast readers was found to be 0.185 second, but with variations.

The eyes move consistently forward, in a regular and rhythmic manner by picking up groups of words rather than isolated words. This rhythmic movement follows from the beginning to the end of a line and returns to the beginning of the next line quickly. Practice is needed to sweep and fix the number of words that are picked in one single view. Constant practice widens the **eye span**. During the process of reading, the eyes act as an engine like the **vitagraph** or moving picture machine. They usually take care of as much as nearly half a line at one exposure. While reading a column of newsprint, two fixations per line are ideal. The length of fixation and span is determined by the type of material read. However, the words and phrases are recognized by certain 'word-wholes' that act as 'recognition units'. These are the 'dominant letters,' which are the most 'obvious parts optically'.

Twitching of the eye muscles, burning sensations in the eyelids, fading, or blurring of print are the signs of eye fatigueness. Under such circumstances, a momentary rest to the eyes by looking away from the reading is necessary.

Avoiding Sub Vocalization

Vocalization is the sound made by the vibration of vocal folds modified by the resonance of the vocal tract. While reading, if you are actually "hearing" the words as you read, this is vocalization. Vocalization reduces the rate of reading speed. Hence, it should be avoided and reading should be carried on with the mouth tightly closed. Attempts should be made to restrict the movement of the larynx, tongue, and lips. This can be eliminated only through determination to use only the eyes and the **meaning centers of the brain.**

Regressions

Regression is a return to an earlier state. While reading, regressions often occur, if long spans are used. This results in missing certain essential words and relationships. If this is noticeable in reading, the span of reading should be shortened. Practicing by covering the reading material which is just read with a plain card will avoid regression and force to concentrate on essential words and essential relationships

in the sentence or paragraph. Practice of reading easy materials also gives no time for regressions. However, some regressions are essential to establish the relationships within the selected piece of reading.

READING COMPREHENSION

Comprehension is an ability to understand completely the *meaning* or importance of something. It is an interactive process of building understanding. Reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with the written language. According to Dechant (1991), reading comprehension refers to understand what is read, so readers must be able to cognitively process the words by drawing meaning from their own experience and knowledge to understand the author's message. If the vocabulary is good, it is likely to be good at comprehension. Comprehension entails the following three elements:

1. The **reader** who is doing the comprehending;
2. The **text** that is to be comprehended; and
3. The **activity** in which comprehension is a part.

Further, reading incorporates decoding, comprehension and retention. **Decoding** is the process of translating a printed word into a sound. **Comprehension** is defined as the level of understanding of a text or message. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text or message. Comprehension relies on a mastery of decoding. Good readers 'make movies' in their heads when read to comprehend. The readers may use morpheme, semantics, and syntax and context clues to identify the meaning of unknown words. **Retention** is the condition of retaining something. It could be in the short term memory or long term memory. The ability to retain relies heavily on decoding proficiency and ability to comprehend what is read.

Micro Skills for Reading Comprehension

1. Discriminate among the distinctive graphemes and orthographic pattern of the language.
2. Retain chunks of language of different lengths in short term memory.
3. Process writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.
4. Recognize a core of words, and interpret word order patterns and their significance.
5. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.
6. Deduce the implied meaning through grammatical structures like cause, result, etc.
7. Grasp the meaning of each word or structure.
8. Locate key words, key phrases and key sentences in a passage.
9. Find significant facts and their interrelationships.
10. Distinguish between main and subordinate ideas.
11. Establish the sequence of events.
12. Understand the layout of the text through index, a table of contents, headings, etc.

13. Grasp the central idea and find a suitable title, where necessary.
14. Extract specific information for summary or note-making.
15. Infer the context that is not explicit by using background knowledge.
16. Recognize the role and functions of discourse markers, *e.g.*, therefore + conclusion, however + contrast, etc.
17. Infer links and connections between ideas, deduce cause and effect, detect such relations as main idea and supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
18. Make predictions and interpretations based on self knowledge.

Comprehension Breakdowns

Comprehension breaks down if there is inconsistency in the background knowledge of the reader with that of the author's expectation. When there is confusion about the meaning of words and sentences, the reader will not be able to relate the ideas in a passage. Inappropriate discourse markers loosen the differentiation of major and minor details. Lack of concentration during reading weakens reading comprehension. If the reader has few strategies to make the comprehension processes work together, then also comprehension breaks down.

Most fluent readers focus their attention on making connections among the ideas in a text and between these ideas and their background knowledge. Therefore, they are able to focus on comprehension. Less fluent readers focus their attention primarily on decoding and accessing the meaning of individual words. Therefore, they appear to have little attention left for comprehending connected text.

Ways to Improve Reading Comprehension

According to Best, effective comprehension is facilitated by :

- Identifying the difference between knowing and understanding, in other words differentiating fact finding and making meaning within the stipulated time.
- Reading and reflecting on the text to bring the information to life with personalized and consolidated words.
- Sharing the ideas and concepts through interpersonal interactions and verifying the depth of understanding.
- Finding and analyzing the significance and relevance of the topic through intrapersonal interpretations.
- Visualizing through graphic and visual organizers like mind mapping, concept mapping, charts and graphs.
- Considering and accepting the information.

In addition to the above, reading comprehension is enhanced by -

- Identifying the purpose of reading.
- Word knowledge.
- Reading and rereading inductively /deductively.

- Skills related to eye movement and visual discrimination.
- Kinesthetic reading / hearing the text inside your head.
- Using graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up decoding.
- Adopting efficient silent reading techniques for relatively rapid comprehension.
- Spotting and underlining the key words.
- Annotating a text – by adding explanatory notes or critical comments.
- Visualizing the text / mapping the text.
- Ruminating or pondering on the predetermined reflection points over and over again.
- Marking marginal notes within the text.
- Adopting reading strategies like skimming and scanning.
- Generating association skills.
- Guessing when uncertain in reference to context.
- Distinguishing literal and implied meaning (reading between the lines).
- Appropriate interpretation abilities.
- Detecting discourse markers, and activating **schema** (an internal representation of the world; an organization of concepts and actions that can be revised by new information about the world) for interpretation of texts.
- Capitalizing the discourse markers to process relationships: enumerative, additive, logical sequential, explicative, illustrative, contrastive, etc.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING AND WRITING

Theoretical Basis

Research has found that when children read extensively they become better writers. Reading a variety of genres (a kind of literary or artistic work) helps children learn text structures and language that they can then transfer to their own writing. Research also confirms that students benefit from a strong reading and writing connection. When students respond through writing to what they have read, writing and reading improve. Written responses require higher-order thinking and critical-thinking skills. Reading and writing are essentially similar processes of meaning construction involving the use of cognitive strategies. **Holt & Vacca** (1984) propose that reading and writing are interdependent processes that are essential to each other and mutually beneficial. According to **Goodman & Goodman**, 1983; **Shanahan**, (1988) literacy instruction needs to explicitly present the relationship between reading and writing.

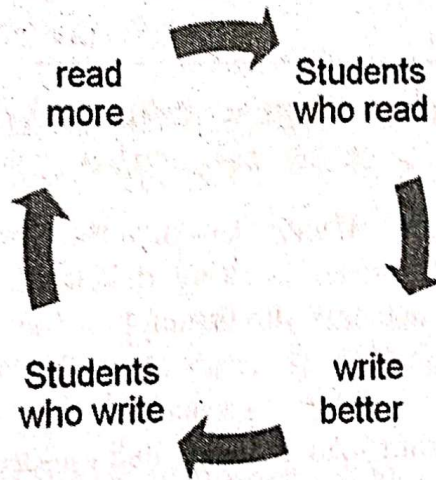
Research also authenticates that reading and writing should occur naturally to construct meaning in everyday situations. Reading and writing are clearly related, and each has been shown to benefit from instruction addressing the other (**McCardle, Chhabra, & Kapinus** (2008)).

On Considering the Relationship between Reading and Writing : *"The relationship between reading and writing is a bit like that of the chicken and egg."*

Reading and writing can be described as parallel processes. There is a connection between what readers do and what writers do. Writers want to give information and readers want to seek information metaphorically, readers and writers meet at the text. Hence, the reader has to think of the writer and the writer has to think of the reader. A reader reads to hear the message from the writer, whereas a writer writes to convey a message to the reader. A child's literacy development is ultimately dependent on this interconnection between reading and writing.

Reading and writing are not solitary acts. Their development is intertwined in learning. The physical act of writing letters and words enhances reading ability. The complementary relationship between reading and writing continues as they cannot exist without one another. Both skills enhance engagement and reasoning. Reading and writing involve using knowledge of language structure, including word structure, and text structure (syntax and style) (**Reading Research in Action**, (2008)). The link between reading and writing can be depicted through the following picture :

The link between reading and writing



Reading shapes our writing style. The areas of reading and writing both involve the knowledge of letter recognition, letter sounds, letter formation and the ability to hear sounds in a word. Without one, the other is not possible. Reading and writing must go hand in hand. Reading and writing are mutually supportive processes; therefore, gaining insight in reading deepens insight into writing and vice versa. For example, when a reader develops an understanding of a structure, an organizing principle, a reading strategy, or insight into the elements of story, he/she also gains a window into understanding how to assemble texts as a writer. Basically put, reading affects writing and writing affects reading.

Good readers make good writers. Reading helps students their schemata or background knowledge (Mckay, 1994). Therefore, adopting good reading strategies strengthens writing and vice versa.

Reading and writing involve construction of meaning. Since, writing is the act of transmitting knowledge in print, we must have information to share before we can write it. Therefore, reading plays a major role in writing. At the same time, practice in writing helps children build their reading skills. Better writers tend to be better readers and better readers tend to be better writers.

Reading and writing are reciprocal processes. The children appear to be more likely to derive learning benefits across reading and writing when they understand that a connection exists. Reading is the receptive side of knowledge, while writing is the productive side. Thus, writing skill is a predictor of academic success along with reading comprehension.

Translating Reading Traits into Writing

Reading Traits	Translated Writing
Make connections	Connects to topic or thesis
Self-questioning	Writing process or organization of drafts
Visualize	Create a picture or plan
Determine importance	Must determine the evidence or supporting details
Make inference	Audience, readers' concerns, counter arguments
Synthesize	Research or create
Monitor comprehension	Diction, syntax, cohesiveness

STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING READING AND WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

According to Louisa C. Moats (1997), "effective teachers will recognize where their students are in reading and writing development and will tailor instruction accordingly." Therefore, teachers should explain how a relationship exists between two essential academic and life skills and how they reinforce and strengthen each other. They should allow children to select their own books to read to encourage ownership over their reading and writing. The children should be given chances to read and write what is interesting and important to them.

Some examples of activities that promote reading-writing connections are given as under :

1. Reading and researching informational text to inform an essay.
2. Writing interpretations or analysis of informational text.
3. Journal writing : making predictions, making personal or text-text connections.
4. Note taking.
5. Writing book reviews - have students write about texts they read.
6. Writing from the perspective of a character.
7. Writing alternative endings for a story.
8. Writing in a style that emulates a model or a mentor text.
9. Writing responses to persuasive essays that have been read.
10. Using "stop and jot" during a read aloud or shared reading engagement.

READING TO LEARN

"The things I want to know are in books : my best friend is the man who'll get me a book I have not read".

—Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865).

Reading is an essential part of language instruction at every level because it supports learning in multiple ways. Reading remains effective and supports student learning if they adopt and bear in mind the following points :

1. Reading has to be carried with a clear purpose.
2. Silent reading should be preferred to other modes of reading.
3. Reading should be carried on phrase wise rather than word wise.
4. Only important bits of information should be concentrated upon, while skimming the rest and skipping the irrelevant parts.
5. Different reading tasks should be taken up with varying speeds and strategies.
6. Information is to be perceived in the target language rather than mentally translate.
7. It is important to guess the meaning of new and difficult words from the context or ignore them.
8. Background knowledge and information are linked to understand the text.

While reading to learn, the students need to follow the following four basic steps :

1. Figuring out the purpose for reading :

- Activating the background knowledge of the topic, in order to predict or anticipate content and identify appropriate reading strategies.

2. Sorting out relevant and irrelevant :

- Attending to the parts of the text that are relevant to the identified purpose and ignoring the rest. This selectivity enables students to focus on specific items in the input and reduces the amount of information they have to hold in short-term memory.

3. Selecting appropriate strategies :

- Selecting appropriate strategies and using them flexibly and interactively. Students' comprehension improves and their confidence increases when they use top-down (concept or meaning driven approach) and bottom-up (data or text driven approach) skills simultaneously to construct meaning.

4. Checking comprehension :

- Self-monitoring while reading and when the reading task is completed. Monitoring comprehension helps students detect inconsistencies and comprehension failures, helping them learn to use alternate strategies.

READING BEYOND THE TEXTBOOK

Going beyond the textbook means identifying the resources necessary for introducing the material students need to grapple with, and to support them in their efforts. It is important to remember, that going "Beyond Textbooks" does not have to mean abandoning books, nor texts. It is rather a philosophy of teaching and

learning that transcends text books to strengthen support for communities of teachers, facilitate teaching and learning, and improve student growth and achievement. This comprehensive approach begins with a “shoulder to shoulder”, rather than “top-down” curriculum development process.

Stambaugh & Trank (2010) put forward the idea that in our modern information age, textbooks are no longer sufficient for conveying information in a timely and interesting manner, as most textbooks, by their traditional nature, are very institutionalized and resistant to change. Additionally, the long shelf life of the average textbook means that the audience it is written for may be significantly different than the audience that uses the book several years later (Teten, 2010). Therefore, it is imperative that teachers find new methods of instruction that utilize a variety of resources. For example, according to **Foley & McPhee, (2008)** research regarding science pedagogy suggests that textbooks fail to provide the hands-on, inquiry-based learning that is necessary to master scientific concepts.

The textbook has been one of the centerpieces of education. Earlier, many textbooks were written in a monotonous manner and were very dry. With many child-friendly reforms in place in varied boards of education, textbooks are becoming more and more interesting. In addition, they are encouraging discussion and active learning activities. Moreover, it is very important to encourage students to read and learn beyond the textbook. This will prepare them well to have a comprehensive knowledge about different topics. It is hopeful that in near future more and more textbooks will become digitalized with more audiovisual inputs which will make learning even more joyful. Accordingly, reading beyond the text book is to bring about a transition from textbooks into the world of digital content delivery. With digital educational tablets becoming more and more a reality, students will be able to store excellent reference books/excerpts and also browse the internet, in order to learn about and have greater insights on topics. Students will then be better equipped to deal with the complexities and challenges of world situations with greater depth and sensitivity.

When students read and learn beyond the textbook, learning becomes even more **interesting** and **motivating**. Students will develop a greater understanding and appreciation of topics when they *learn and read beyond the textbook*. They will also have a much more comprehensive knowledge about topics. It will also empower them with good research skills and also deepen their critical thinking skills. Furthermore, it will encourage them to read up further to do innovative assignments and projects.

Loud/Oral Reading

Loud reading is talking out loud to read it. This type of reading goes on when you are on the top of your voice. It helps especially the beginning readers, in oral expression in a smooth and effortless manner. Oral reading is spoken rather than written. Oral reading is one of the techniques for improving word identification skills. It is a critical component that is required for successful reading comprehension. As the goal of language education is to create autonomous learners, the single most

important activity of building required for children's eventual success in reading is reading aloud (Anderson, et al 1985).

Research has demonstrated that when teachers constantly monitor the progress of the students for instructional decision-making purposes, students achieve more, teacher decision-making improves and students tend to be more aware of their performance. Monitoring student progress in reading can be motivating to the students and useful in setting instructional goals, Reading aloud contributes young learner's language development (Jim Trelease, 2001). According to Elley (1989), reading aloud also facilitates increase in vocabulary, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, expressive ability, verbal fluency, writing ability, enhanced emotional intelligence, or even learning interests among the students.

Reading aloud develops the habit of self-correction easily and effectively. As more than one sense is used while reading aloud, the children are more likely to retain it. So, reading it out loud invokes both, your vision and hearing senses. Concentration and motivational levels are also amplified with loud reading. In addition to this, the power of imagination shoots up with loud reading.

Reading aloud should be carried on slowly and steadily with appropriate dramatic effects. Reading should be carried on with and for pleasure. Variety in texts chosen to read aloud brings in spice of life.

Aims of reading aloud are :

- To read with expression.
- To read with correct pronunciation.
- To prepare for effective silent reading.
- To test student's knowledge of words, phrases and sentences.

Process of Oral Reading

- Teacher gives model reading of selected material (age appropriate book or story) to train auditory nerves of students. For beginning readers, picture story books with interesting storyline but simple text are the first choice. For older readers, appealing series books or chapter books are very helpful.
- Students observe and listen to the teacher.
- Students read/imitate teacher first.
- Students continue to read later with speed and accuracy.
- In between teacher questions to ensure understanding while reading.
- Teacher checks posture of students while reading.
- Teacher verifies the accuracy in expression during reading.

Rewards of Read Aloud

Read aloud sessions should be incorporated into the routine of the children. It is a great way to improve their literacy level.

- (a) Reading aloud creates a bond with reading when teachers and parents spend quality time with the children. They feel loved, important, and thus improve their self-esteem, so that they can read out aloud in class with confidence.

- (b) Reading aloud improves the vocabulary of the children. By reading text aloud, the children will learn new words that they come across. Where necessary, they refer dictionary and improve their performance.
- (c) Reading aloud helps in better writing. It may create interest in literature to become a prolific writer. It is a known fact that better readers become better writers.
- (d) Reading aloud improves listening skills as reading and listening are carried by the same person.

Advantages of Oral Reading	Limitations of Oral Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow model reading of teacher/ imitate teacher. ● Skill of speech develops. ● Pronunciation errors are corrected. ● Trains eyes, ears, mouth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No training for meaning. ● No good help for extensive reading. ● Not allowed in public places/in libraries. ● Pronunciation drill is essential before loud reading. ● Well trained teachers are required.

To conclude, reading aloud is a valuable asset of instruction, a capital of which the teacher should make the most profitable use. The teacher, who can do justice to a story, approaches in the power the rhapsodist (the epic poem adapted for recitation). There are two essential features of what a teacher can do to improve the oral reading capacities of students. They are provision of ample opportunities for practice; and guidance and instant feedback to the students. This should preferably be followed with sustained silent reading as according to **Jim Trelease** (2006) reading aloud and silent reading are natural partners when we are making effort to make our children autonomous learners. This inculcates free reading habits among the children.

SILENT READING

Silent reading is also called as independent reading. Silent reading is reading without pronouncing words out loud. The reader reads silently. It is reading to oneself. It is more on reading inside the head. It is claimed that **Saint Ambrose** (337 AD) invented silent reading. The basic requirement for silent reading is that the reader should know the basic structures, *i.e.* recognition of the words, understanding the meaning, and pronouncing correctly.

According to research studies, the students who were given time to read silently and understand their topics had far better grades than the other students. Independent reading promoted good achievements in higher academic education. Silent reading facilitated mastery of language and subject knowledge. Therefore, stress should be on silent reading.

Salient Features of Silent Reading

- Loud reading is usually followed by silent reading.
- Silent reading uses only vision and produces no sound.

- During silent reading there should be no whispering.
- Silent reading should not involve any kind of murmuring.
- There should be no lip movement during silent reading.
- There is no necessity to make a long pause at punctuation marks.
- Eye span is usually high depending on the speed of reading.
- Eye movements run horizontally to vertical to diagonal while reading.
- Conducive environment is an important factor in promoting silent reading.

Aims of Silent Reading

- To read without sound/movement with minimum fatigue.
- To read with :
 - Appropriate speed.
 - Complete accuracy.
 - Ultimate ease.
 - Maximum fluency.
 - Utmost understanding / comprehension.
- To expand vocabulary and gain confidence in public speech.
- To gather information from various sources of information.
- To read for pleasure and grow intellectually.

Procedure/Steps

- Teacher discusses the aims of silent reading its benefits.
- Time is allocated for reading approximately 10 to 20 minutes a day.
- Appropriate and varied texts/materials are chosen for silent reading, as not all students in the same grade read at the same level.
- Teacher asks the students to read silently preferably with self reading records.
- Teacher moves around the class and supervises.
- Teacher encourages to adhere to self-monitoring.
- Teacher later asks few simple/direct questions to ensure comprehension on the text read.
- Teacher may ask students to summarize the read part.
- The entire procedure is carried on within the specified boundaries of time and content.

Uses of Silent Reading

Silent reading is different from oral reading, as it involves students reading solely to themselves. This kind of reading is quite beneficial to both, the teachers and the students.

More benefits of silent reading are as given under :

- **Silent reading provides deeper insight** as the reader understands better of whatever he/she is reading. This is largely because the meaning of the text is more important to silent readers normally and hence they absorb the text content quickly.
- **Silent reading is more effective** as there are no delays that are linked to the vocalization of difficult words. Actually, vocalization limits and reduces the speed at which oral readers read their materials, an issue that does not affect those who silently read.
- **Silent reading avoids distraction** as accent problem is lacking. Silent reading is the most appropriate option where the students are encouraged to read at a pace that is comfortable to them.

Advantages of Silent Reading	Limitations of Silent Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saves time. • Saves energy. • Initiates self education and deep study. • Helps in later life. • Sometimes uninteresting. • Helps to read in public places/ libraries. • Enables to attend and concentrate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No help for juniors/beginners. • No check on pronunciation. • No check if real reading is going on (pretention of reading). • It cannot understand some passage, difficult then.

It is necessary that silent reading should be carried on as a sustained school-based recreational activity, so that students learn to read by reading constantly.

INTENSIVE READING

Intensive reading is reading with specific learning aims and tasks (Brown, 2007). Intensive reading is looking intensively **inside** the text. It calls attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, rhetorical relationship, and the like. The analogy to intensive reading can be treated as a “zoom lens” strategy. It is rather a slow and careful reading of a small amount of difficult text. Intensive reading occurs when the learner is focused on the language study, rather than the text. It lays stress on mastery of words, hence develops active vocabulary.

Intensive reading is reading for detailed meaning, developing reading skills in vocabulary and grammar knowledge. The learner may be answering comprehension questions, learning new vocabulary, studying the grammar and expressions in the text, translating the passage (sometimes called ‘careful reading/in-depth reading’).

Intensive Reading – Aims

- To build more language knowledge, rather than simply practice the skill of reading.

- To enable the students to speak correctly.
- To improve and extend the knowledge.
- To increase active vocabulary.
- To read for details and extract specific information on particular topics.

Intensive reading focuses on :

Area	Explanation
Comprehension	Understanding literal and implied meaning, drawing inferences, reacting and reflecting.
Regular and irregular sound-spelling relations	Phonemes and phonemic awareness.
Vocabulary	High frequency and low frequency words, guessing from contexts, dictionary reference, time limit and word limit.
Grammar	High and low frequency grammar items.
Cohesion	Reference words and substitutes, comparisons, lexical cohesions
Genre features	Communicative effect and purpose of the text.
Strategies	Prediction, skimming and scanning, exploratory reading, critical reading.

Before beginning intensive reading, an introduction on the passage/text selected for reading is given. This is followed with an advanced explanation of new words, phrases, antonyms and synonyms; and grammar items that are beyond the reading ability of the student. Questions are raised for comprehension (for meaning, for vocabulary). The teacher mainly acts as an organizer, observer, and prompter.

Advantages	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provides base to study structure, vocabulary and idioms. • Increases active vocabulary-possibly the fastest way to build vocabulary. • Helps in learning grammar contextually. • Explains meaning contextually. • Improves power of expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large amount of time is spent on reading a small amount of text. • Procedure is long and uninteresting - by its nature it is a slow process and takes lot of time. • No systematic grammar teaching - reading material with a lot of new vocabulary and grammar is a sluggish and tiring process. • Rarely gives joy and pleasure to the students. • Too much emphasis on language. • Learner cannot become confident and fluent reader.

School textbooks, short texts, poetry, comprehension exercises are good examples of intensive reading. They allow the learners to practice vocabulary and grammatical structures. They also support to develop various language skills and to check the reading comprehension. Thus, intensive reading tends to focus on details and to serve functions that reach far beyond the apparent purpose of reading.

EXTENSIVE READING

Extensive reading is rapid reading of large quantities of material or longer reading for general understanding (Carrell and Carson, (1997)). It is also called as free voluntary reading. It is an approach to language learning, including foreign language learning, by means of large amount of reading. The main aim of extensive reading is to build learners' reading skill by encouraging them to read more. It is 'reading for gist' by skipping unknown words. This is in fact a supplement to intensive reading.

According to Sussar and Robb (1990), the key features of extensive reading are reading of large quantities of material or long texts; for global or general understanding; with intention of obtaining pleasure from the text. Moreover, the immediate aim of this method tends to be directly related to reading with increased fluency and speed.

The most important thing about choosing materials for extensive reading is that they are at least 98% comprehensible to the students. There should be little new vocabulary and grammar. The idea behind extensive reading is that a lot of reading of interesting material that is slightly below, at, or barely above the full comprehension level of the reader will foster improved language skills. The material should be varied in subject matter and character, so that the interest for reading is sustained.

Extensive reading is the way languages are learned. Most often, students do extensive reading. It has the following features :

- Extensive reading is reading rapidly.
- Extensive reading is reading longer passages / texts.
- Extensive reading is independent reading.
- Extensive reading is reading silently.
- Extensive reading is supplemented by the library reading/reference reading.

Purposes of Extensive Reading

- The main aim of extensive reading is to build reader confidence and enjoyment. The students choose their own reading material and are not compelled to finish uninteresting materials. Reading material is normally for pleasure, information or general understanding; reading is its own reward with few or no follow-up exercises after reading; reading is individual and silent. Reading speed is usually faster when students read materials they can easily understand.
- For obtaining general information, extensive reading is carried on.

- Extensive reading is taken up as a pleasure reading. It relaxes the reader by giving lot of enjoyment.
- To emphasize on the subject matter while reading extensively.
- Extensive reading serves the purpose of keeping the learners' self study active.
- Extensive reading is such a type of reading that may be done anywhere and at anytime.
- Extensive reading ultimately leads to good reading habits.

The following types of text materials are helpful in extensive reading—

- Non detailed texts
- Stories
- Autobiographies
- Newspapers
- Humorous stories
- Novels and plays
- Jokes, and other forms of light reading materials
- Novels
- Biographies
- Narrations
- Comics
- Tales and fables
- Short articles in the newspapers and magazines

Teachers can have diverse options like penguin readers, classics, comics, history books, science books. The teacher mainly acts as a promoter, persuader, organizer and supervisor.

Objectives of Extensive Reading

The main objectives of extensive reading are -

- to read quickly,
- to read silently,
- to understand the gist,
- to increase passive vocabulary,
- to develop taste for the language, and
- to inculcate the habit of reading.

Advantages of Extensive Reading

- Extensive reading can provide massive comprehensible input to the students.
- It enhances the general language competence of the learners.
- It emphasizes and utilizes the previously learned vocabulary and knowledge.
- Extensive reading helps in assimilation of ideas.
- Reading extensively leads to improvement in writing.
- Extensive reading facilitates the development of prediction skills.
- It keeps entire class busy and active.

- Extensive reading introduces to a new world of vocabulary.
- It gives scope for high transfer of learning, which is further helpful in library reference and research.
- Extensive reading paves way for individual method of study and self education.
- It increases motivation and builds confidence among the students.
- It creates a positive attitude towards reading and language learning. Makes the learners independent readers and more effective language users.
- This method of reading provides all the benefits that lead to comprehension and fluency.
- It may lead to lifelong reading habits with fun and enjoyment.

Limitations of Extensive Reading

Using extensive reading in a classroom is, by nature, a difficult thing to do. Different students are at different reading speeds. Their knowledge level in vocabulary also varies. It needs effective planning that everyone is necessarily reading the same or some varied texts at the same time.

COMPARING INTENSIVE AND EXTENSIVE READINGS

Intensive Reading	Extensive Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For in depth comprehension • For specific information • Enhances knowledge • Language study emphasized/linguistic items learnt • It lays stress on mastery of words/ active vocabulary develops, prefers dictionary use • Teachers play active role • Generally done in class room • Leads to good speech habits • Focus is on a narrower area • e.g. Short texts/school texts/poetry/ comprehension exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer passages read • For general information • Reading for pleasure, and reading silently • Subject matter emphasized • Helps students to develop reading fluency • Active vocabulary passed to passive vocabulary; discourages the overuse of dictionary • Learners self study active • May be done anywhere, anytime • Leads to good reading habits • Focus is on a larger area • e.g. Non detailed texts/novels/stories/ biographies/autobiographies/narrations/newspaper