

## Ways to Help the Students Comprehend Better

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**Abstract:** The ability to read is vital. It paves the way to success in school, which can build self-confidence. It is power, key to personal growth. Through reading, we generate learning power that helps us know ourselves better and others as well. It also helps us understand past, present and future more clearly. So it is necessary for the teachers to find ways to improve students' reading ability. In this paper the author will give some advice about the ways to help the students to comprehend better.

**Key words:** reading ability; comprehend; ways

### 1. Introduction

Reading ability is very important in our daily life and studies. As most people know, reading ability refers to the reading skills that a reader brings to the text. It is a basic skill for college students. Reading ability generates learning power that helps you know yourself better and others as well. It also helps you understand past, present and future more clearly. The ability to read is vital. It paves the way to success in school, which can build self-confidence. It is power, key to personal growth. Through reading, we get knowledge; and according to Bacon "Knowledge itself is power." Voltaire said, "Books rule the world." (Crazy English 2003(5)). However, a lot of people overlook the important power of all-reading power. In this paper the author will give some advice about the ways to help students to comprehend better.

### 2. Ways to Promote the Students' Reading Ability

#### 2.1 Make Use of all Kinds of Resources Available

Texts, especially books contain a variety of resources that can help readers to understand and find their way about in the linear text itself. We looked at many of the important ones, in connection with choosing the right text for our purpose. Once the text is chosen, sub-titles, summaries, tables of contents, are aids to efficient reading. They enable you to read selectively (omitting irrelevant sections) and offer some clue to meaning by signaling what you can expect to find in which part of the text. There are linear and non-linear texts. When we use the word text, we normally have in mind the expression of ideas in sequence of sentences and paragraphs, which is often called linear text. Other parts of a text are non-linear, in the sense that they don't enter into the organization of sentences, paragraphs and so on; yet they contribute to our understanding of linear text. Non-linear elements include:

(1) Reference apparatus: all the parts of a text that help the reader to locate information or predict what the text contains (index, titles, blurb and so on).

(2) Figures: we include under this heading all information such as diagrams, tables, maps, graphs and illustrations (including any words they contain).

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(3) Graphic conventions: layout, punctuation, typeface, use of symbols and so on.

The first two categories are valuable for people to try to choose the suitable material. A skilled reader takes much of this non-linear information for granted, but even L1 readers benefit from learning how to use it. Exploiting non-linear information can make reading easier and more efficient, and is fairly straight forward, so it is worth spending time on.

Titles and headings are not always the indicators of content, but they are a reasonable starting point in choosing relevant texts; and titles of chapters or sections can be a great help in finding the relevant parts of a text. You can always guess the contents from reading them first.

There is usually a blurb on the back cover of a book, or on the inside fold of the dust jacket, which may include press comment (selective, of course), but normally consist mainly of the writer's own estimation of the book's purpose, principal features and strong points. By reading it, people can get deeper understanding of the book.

The summary, running titles, table of contents and list of figures are aids to estimating the suitability of a text and locating content within it. The usefulness of the preliminary material: forward, preface, and introduction depend on what use the writer makes of them; they often include statements of purposes useful for evaluating the book.

An introduction is typically longer and often used to relate the book to other work, or to estimate its contribution to the field; sometimes it is so substantial that it has to be considered part of the main text.

The bibliography in a text is a good indicator of its scope, especially for readers familiar with the field. It also gives some idea of how up-to-date the contents are.

Layout in general is used to indicate which parts of the text go together, to signal the start of a new topic, show which parts are subordinate to others, making it a valuable aid for comprehension, because it indicates the way the text is organized.

Punctuation reflects meaning; students who know that commas and semi-colons function differently, and that quotation marks have uses other than indicating speech, have more clues to help them make sense.

Symbols refer to notes such as asterisk, dagger, and superscript number and so on. Symbols relating to text continuity such as the arrow or similar pointing symbol in a magazine that tells you to turn to another page to continue the article; the row of asterisks indicating a switch of topic; the blocking symbol (or similar) indicating the end of the article.

Figures are often under-used, yet can be enormous help to the reader. Included in the term are illustrations (pictures, photographs), diagrams, maps and plans, graphs, pie charts, Venn diagrams, tables, flow charts, and similar methods of representing information. In many kinds of texts, such as instructions for operating machines or descriptions of biological structure, the figures are so fully integrated with the linear text that it cannot be understood without them. Even when the relationship is less integral, figures are often a great help in interpreting the text. Used together, they support each other: a diagram may clarify an obscure section of text, or the significance of a graph may become clear from the text.

Other reference apparatus students need to be able to use if they want to get the most out of their reading includes: appendixes, notes (footnotes, notes at the end of the chapter or book), bibliographical references in the text, and lists of symbols, abbreviations, special terms and glossaries. They are also very useful in comprehending the texts; the proper use of them may be of great help in your reading.

## **2.2 Find out the Main Ideas**

In some cases, it is enough if we simply comprehend the writer's main ideas, without devoting much attention to the minor details. Much of the reading we do for general information or for pleasure is of this kind—the reading of magazine and newspaper articles, and so on. On the other hand, some selections will be of such significance to you that you will want to read and consider the minor idea carefully. Then you will find that location where the main idea in each paragraph is of major importance because the central thought provides you with a core, around which you can organize the details. So you must learn certain ways of locating the one basic thought - the main idea.

The main idea is a general statement that the author makes about the topic. The topic sentence (or the main idea sentence) can be found in different locations. It occurs in the first sentence of a paragraph. This is the most common location of the main idea sentence. However, the topic sentence may appear in the last sentence, it sums up the details in a paragraph. When the main idea occurs in the middle of paragraph, it serves as a bridge between the details in the paragraph.

Sometimes, some paragraphs have no topic sentences, or a main idea is not stated exactly, it doesn't mean it lacks a main idea. Instead the writer suggests the idea to you though the information given in the paragraph, the idea is implied. You must figure out the implied main idea by deciding upon the point of all the details. In other words, supporting details are the information that backs up and explain the main idea. But how can we state the main idea in our own words?

First, try to figure out what all the details are trying to show.

Second, do not look at just a few sentences in the paragraph in order to find out the main idea. You should give a specific idea after you have read all the sentences.

Third, do not offer a statement that is too general as the main idea. The idea you give must be supported by all the details in the text.

### 3. Conclusion

Most of the reading skills such as how to find the main ideas, how to comprehend better by various kinds of resources are trained by studying shortish texts in detail. But others require the use of longer texts, including complete books. Of course there are not just two contrasting ways of reading but an infinite variety of interrelated and overlapping strategies. Anyway, practice makes perfect. As long as the students have done enough practices, they can improve their reading ability gradually.

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