

UNIT 3. STEPS TO BETTER READING

Discussion points

- You are going to do a Master's thesis. What are the ways of doing a research work? What is the best way to get information?
- In what way is reading important in human life / your life?
- Do people read nowadays as much as they did a decade ago? Why?
- Do you have a favorite book / poem / author? Why do you like it / him? Discuss the genres you prefer.
- Compare and discuss reading for pleasure vs reading for work, fiction vs scientific literature.
- If you want to read something for pleasure, how do you choose a book? What are the criteria? Imagine you are in the library or in a bookstore. How do you choose? What is important?

Read the text and say what is essential to become a good and fast reader.

Steps to Better Reading

Step 1. Preview

Good readers preview the text first, i.e. look over the whole passage for a moment. This helps to make them good and fast readers.

A. Read the title. The first thing to do when previewing is to read the title. Titles not only announce the subject, but also make the reader think.

B. Anticipate and predict. Anticipation and prediction are two basic reading skills that are used to guess or predict how the passage will develop. We anticipate before we read a passage, and we predict after the passage begins. Our anticipation is therefore related to our own personal background knowledge on the subject. After a passage begins we find «clues» that help us predict what is going to come next. These clues may be in the meaning or in the grammatical structure of a sentence or its vocabulary.

C. Read the opening paragraph. Some writers may announce what they hope to tell you, or why they are writing. Some writers just try to get the reader's attention — they may ask a provocative question.

D. Read the closing paragraph. Writers may have something important to say in the end. Some writers repeat the main idea once more, some draw a conclusion or summarize.

E. Glance through. Skim and scan the selection. When you're skimming, go through a passage quickly in order to get a general idea of what it is about. When you're scanning you look for specific piece of information (a figure, a date, a name) that you need.

Step 2. Read for meaning.

Individual words do not tell us much. They must be combined with other words, and readers should see words in meaningful combinations. Read in «thought groups» (or message units) — try to group the words into phrases which have natural relationship to each other.

Step 3. Grasp paragraph sense.

The paragraph is the basic unit of meaning. If you can understand the main point of each paragraph, you can comprehend the author's message.

A. Find the topic sentence. The topic sentence, the sentence containing the main idea, is often the first sentence of a paragraph. It is followed by other sentences which support, develop or explain the main idea.

Sometimes a topic sentence comes at the end of a paragraph (then the supporting details come first). Sometimes following the dominant noun through its repetitions and transformations into synonyms will eventually lead you to the main idea. Some paragraphs do not have a topic sentence. Such paragraphs usually create a mood or feeling, rather than present information.

B. Understand paragraph structure. Just as readers read for different reasons, writers write for different reasons. What purposes may an author have for writing?

1 Inform — give facts or information about a subject.

2 Define — provide definitions on a subject.

- 3 Describe — give an account of a subject in words.
- 4 Persuade — influence a person's opinion or behavior about something.
- 5 Explain — make plain or understandable, give the reason for or cause of.
- 6 Entertain — interest or please.
- 7 Illustrate, compare, contrast and so on.

Sometimes distinctions among these types are blurred, but the purpose should always relate to main idea. If the main idea is not stated somewhere within a paragraph, it must be inferred, figured out from important details of the paragraph. A good reader is able to infer the things that the author implies.

Step 4. Organize facts.

Understanding how the facts all fit together to deliver a message is, after all, the reason for reading. Good readers organize facts as they read, they discover the writer's plan by looking for a clue or signal word early in the text which might reveal the author's structure. Every writer has a plan or outline which he follows. Sometimes the author gives you obvious signals. If he says «There are four reasons...» a good reader looks for a listing of four items. As you read the selection, keep the information in mind and relate it to the title.

Vocabulary work

1. Explain the meaning of the following words and word combinations and restore the context they are used in: *preview, anticipate, predict, provocative, glance, skim, scan, grasp, paragraph, comprehend, the author's message, the topic sentence, define, persuade, infer, figure out, imply, deliver, reveal.*

2. What are the following words combined with in the text? *to preview..., provocative..., glance..., to skim for..., to scan for..., to grasp..., to comprehend..., to infer..., to deliver..., to reveal....*

3. Guess the word or word combination:

- look over the whole passage for a moment;
- two basic reading skills used to guess how the passage will develop;
- go through a passage quickly in order to get a general idea of what it is about;
- look for specific piece of information;

- message units;
- the basic unit of meaning;
- to understand;
- the sentence containing the main idea;
- give facts or information about a subject;
- influence a person's opinion or behavior about something;
- provide definitions on a subject;
- interest or please;
- to express, show or mean indirectly;
- to show, to make known.

4. Give the synonyms: *to forecast, to understand, a thought group, aim, to convince, to express indirectly, to figure out, to show.*

Key vocabulary:

imply, inform, reveal, define, comprehend, entertain, the topic sentence, persuade, thought groups, scan, anticipate and predict, skim, preview, paragraph.

Comprehension check

1. What are the steps to better reading? Comment on every step.

- ***Reading practice***

Read each passage and answer the questions that follow. Use context clues to determine the meaning of the unknown words.

A. Throughout the history of civilization there have been three great inventions in the field of communication. The first was the invention of writing. It enabled people to communicate with others and also to leave a written record for the future. The invention of printing allowed information to reach a wide audience. The invention of electronic communication devices has enabled people separated by vast distances to communicate. Today people can communicate by telephone to almost anyone in the world via satellite.

1. What is the main idea of the passage?
 - a. The importance of communication