



### 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

- b. Three great inventions in communication
- c. How people communicate
- d. The invention of the telegraph

**B.** The largest animal alive is the blue whale. Fully grown, these great creatures reach a length of over 30 meters. The heart of a blue whale is more than a meter in diameter. The blue whale is not a fish, even though it spends its entire life in the sea. While fish are cold-blooded, whales are warm-blooded, and they have lungs and breathe air. For all its size, a blue whale feeds mainly on tiny shrimps.

1. What is the main topic of the passage?
  - a. Shrimp and whales
  - b. Types of whales
  - c. The largest living animal
  - d. The difference between fish and mammals

**C.** Throughout history, gold has been precious metal, eagerly sought and cherished. It was probably the first metal to be mined because beautiful objects could be made from it — even with primitive tools. The value of gold has always been known, even before gold was used in coinage. It remains the only universally recognized standard of value in international monetary exchange. Most of the world's refined gold is absorbed by governments and central banks to provide backing for paper currency. In addition to its use for jewelry, its special properties have led to many applications in modern science and technology. The largest gold mine is located in South Africa. The largest producing gold mine in United States is the Homestake mine in South Dakota, which yields about 570,000 ounces of gold each year. Often mines throughout the world produce even larger amount of this highly prized metal.

1. With what topic is the passage mainly concerned?
  - a. The value of gold
  - b. Primitive tools
  - c. Arts and industry
  - d. Beautiful minerals

2. The author implies that
  - a. the United States is the largest producer of gold in the world
  - b. governments control the production of gold
  - c. the production of gold increased rapidly
  - d. ancient people mined gold in large quantities
3. We can conclude that
  - a. gold supplies are coming to the end
  - b. most of world's gold is used for circulating coinage
  - c. gold has always been considered valuable
  - d. more gold is used for expensive jewelry

**D.** Alfred Nobel, the famous Swedish chemist, was born in a family where research and experimentation were almost second nature. His father tested the theories of explosives in a laboratory setup in their house. He was out of work, down and out, and he failed to apply his inventive spirit to establishing a prosperous endeavor.

Alfred Nobel acquired his father's knowledge of and enthusiasm for chemistry. Aside from developing dynamite commercially, Alfred claimed 355 patents including nitrocellulose and substitutes for leather and rubber, developed new methods for the production of synthetic silk. Alfred Nobel was a dedicated scientist who became very rich applying his knowledge of chemistry. He founded the Nobel Prize, just two weeks before his death, because he preferred not to be remembered as an inventor of a potentially deadly material – dynamite. So he left some of his money to reward individuals who made substantial and valuable contribution to certain areas of science, and to the good of humanity. The Nobel prizes are awarded annually in six different fields: physics, chemistry, physiology, medicine, literature, economics (which was added later), and the cause of world peace. Nobel had set up a fund of over nine million dollars and from its interest every year on December 10, the anniversary of Nobel death, prizes of about \$40,000 are awarded for important inventions and discoveries.

1. What is the best title for the passage?
  - a. Alfred Nobel's heritage.

- b. The history of great inventions.
- c. Awards presented to the winners.
- d. Important contributions to chemistry.

2. It can be inferred from the passage that Alfred Nobel later viewed his invention of dynamite

- a. as the most valuable achievement
- b. with much concern for its negative effects on humanity
- c. as his father's contribution to chemistry
- d. as a natural result of studying explosives

3. According to the passage, why was Nobel prize established?

- a. to save money
- b. to recognize worthwhile contributions to science
- c. to unite scientists
- d. to lay emphasis on individual research

4. It can be inferred from the passage that originally the prizes were awarded in how many fields?

- a. 6
- b. 7
- c. 5
- d. 8

- **Imagine you are a professor at a university. You teach young scientists the basics of doing a research work. Prepare a lecture on “Essentials of scientific reading”.**
- **Imagine you are a book reviewer. Write an appraisal of a book. Use the sample review.**

*'The Collector' is a novel written by John Fowles. It was first published in 1963, and it is a sort of horror story. It is one of the most sinister books I have ever read. It holds your attention from the start and becomes more shocking as it progresses. 'The Collector' is a good title. The 'hero', Ferdinand Clegg, collects butterflies, but he adds to his collection the girl of his dreams, Miranda, who is an art student. We learn enough*