

READING SKILLS

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Abstract.

Reading skills are fundamental for language acquisition, academic success, and lifelong learning. They enable learners to comprehend, analyze, and interpret written texts, facilitating knowledge acquisition across disciplines. This article explores the components, strategies, and instructional methods for developing reading skills in English, highlighting their significance in improving comprehension, critical thinking, and overall language proficiency.

Keywords: Reading skills, comprehension, language acquisition, vocabulary development, critical thinking, reading strategies, academic literacy, English language learning.

Reading is a critical language skill that involves decoding written symbols, understanding meaning, and integrating information with prior knowledge. In English language learning, reading skills are essential not only for understanding texts but also for enhancing vocabulary, grammar, and critical thinking abilities. Effective reading enables learners to extract relevant information, interpret ideas, and develop informed opinions. Reading skills can be categorized into several types, including skimming (reading quickly for general ideas), scanning (searching for specific information), intensive reading (detailed comprehension of a text), and extensive reading (reading for pleasure and overall understanding). Each type serves different purposes and helps learners achieve a balance between fluency and accuracy. Developing reading skills requires a combination of instructional strategies, learner engagement, and exposure to a variety of texts. Strategies such as predicting content, making inferences, summarizing, and questioning foster deeper comprehension and critical analysis. In addition, integrating reading with other language

skills—listening, speaking, and writing—enhances overall language competence and academic performance.

Developing reading skills is crucial for English language learners, as it enhances comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking abilities. Reading is not just about decoding words but involves understanding meaning, analyzing information, and integrating it with prior knowledge. Effective reading instruction combines different types of reading, practical strategies, and engaging classroom activities.

One of the main types of reading is skimming, where students read quickly to identify the main idea or general theme of a text. This technique is particularly useful for previewing materials, understanding overall structure, or grasping the topic before deeper reading. Complementary to this is scanning, which focuses on locating specific information such as names, dates, numbers, or keywords. Both skimming and scanning help learners navigate texts efficiently and purposefully. Intensive reading requires learners to engage in detailed comprehension. Students focus on sentence structure, vocabulary, and grammar to fully understand the meaning of a text. This type of reading develops analytical skills and accuracy, making it suitable for academic or technical materials. In contrast, extensive reading emphasizes fluency and enjoyment. By reading longer texts such as stories, articles, or novels, learners improve comprehension, contextual vocabulary, and reading stamina.

Effective reading also relies on strategic approaches. Techniques such as predicting content based on titles or headings activate prior knowledge and help learners anticipate the text. Making inferences allows readers to interpret implied information and connect ideas. Questioning encourages critical thinking, while summarizing helps learners extract key points. Clarifying unfamiliar words or confusing sentences ensures accurate understanding and retention.

Classroom applications reinforce these strategies. Pair and group work promotes discussion, interpretation, and peer learning. Reading journals or logs enable reflection,

summarization, and analysis. Teachers can also use question-and-answer exercises to assess comprehension and encourage critical engagement. Exposure to authentic materials, such as newspapers, articles, or technical manuals, provides real-world context, while integrating reading with speaking and writing exercises strengthens overall language skills. Developing reading skills equips learners with the ability to comprehend, analyze, and apply information effectively. Through the combination of different reading types, strategic approaches, and practical classroom activities, students improve their language proficiency, critical thinking, and independent learning capabilities, preparing them for academic, professional, and everyday communication challenges.

Conclusion

Reading skills are fundamental for effective English language learning, as they enable learners to comprehend, analyze, and interpret written texts. By practicing different types of reading—such as skimming, scanning, intensive, and extensive reading—students can improve both fluency and accuracy. The use of reading strategies, including predicting, making inferences, questioning, summarizing, and clarifying, enhances comprehension and critical thinking. Classroom applications, such as pair and group work, reading journals, authentic materials, and integrated language tasks, further support active engagement and practical understanding.

In conclusion, developing reading skills not only strengthens vocabulary, grammar, and language proficiency but also fosters analytical thinking, independent learning, and lifelong literacy. Mastery of these skills prepares learners to succeed academically, professionally, and in everyday communication.

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