UNIT STRUCTURE
Teaching How to Comprehend Textual and Non-textual Materials
CLASS – VIII

Unit Over-view	Rati-onale	Unit Outcomes				Methodology Support							Addi-tional Reading
What this unit is about	Gunotsav / NAS performance	Learning Outcomes	Learning Gaps to be addressed	Related Lessons	Unit Objectives	Introduction	Case Study 1	Activity 1	Case Study 2	Activity 2	Summary	Suggested Questions	Teaching resources, links & ideas
Overview of the language skill	What the Gunotsav assessment shows us	**LO 8.20 :** The learner reads textual and non textual materials in English with comprehen-sion.	**Sub Area: i.** read textual and non textual materials in English with comprehen-sion. **Sub Area : ii.** locate information from a text (textual material)	Unit 3 Glimpses of the Past Macavity - The Mystery Cat **Unit 4** Bepin Choudhury's Lapse of Memory The Last Bargain . **Unit 5** The Summit Within The School Boy	In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to: ⇨ learn to / identify relevant information in a text by skim-ming and scanning for information ⇨ guess the meanings of new words in the text by referring to the surrounding lines	What this unit will teach you	Using questions to teach independent reading	What do these words mean?	Scanning product labels	Understanding the gist	What you learnt in this unit	**Sample question:**Look at the calendar given below and locate the following: -The dates on which fall the Sundays -The dates on which fall second and fourth Saturdays -On which date is Republic Day? -The Saturdays? On which day is Republic day?	⇨www.tess-india.edu.in-LL07 ⇨ Tips for the teacher on "Locating information"

Overview

As you are aware, theNCERT has identified specific learning outcomes (LOs) for students studying English in Class VIII. LO no. 8.20 specifies that at this level, students should be able to read'textual and non textual materials in English with comprehension'**.** This implies that by the time students reach Class VIII, they are expected to be familiar with different kinds of texts and can read them with comprehension.The present English textbook provides a variety of text forms, but students should also be encouraged to read a variety of textual and non textual materials in English outside the classroom.They should be taught to locate and identify main ideasin a text, read a text for details such as characters and sequence of ideas and events in fictional texts, and descriptions, arguments and comparisons in non-fictional texts.The students should also be exposed to non textual materials like photographs,sketches,tables, charts, diagrams and maps so that they are able to interpret these.

Rationale

Data related to the analysis of students' performances in the recent Gunotsav 2017 and National Assessment Survey (NAS) 2017 conducted by the government shows that children in Class VIII are unable to read a text with understanding. There is a big gap between what students are expected to achieve as per the learning outcomes, and their actual language abilities and skills. The aseessment results show that the students are unable to locate information in an English text. To help our learners to attain the expected level of performance we need to analyze their problem areas and accordingly plan activities to help them practise and improve their reading skills.

Introduction

My students like the subject English.They can read but they find it difficult to understand what they read.They cannot locate information in the text easily, nor are they able to read longer sentences with understanding. What can I do to help them read with understanding and enjoy reading English?

One of the most common problems that we face in our English classes is making our students confident to read their lessons.They do not like to read because they do not understand what they read.They also find it difficultto read and interpret non textual informationlike tables,graphs, diagrams and maps.

We all know that comprehension includes making sense of words, connecting ideas indifferent parts of a text as well as making connections between the text and the reader's prior knowledge.Active reading also includes responding to a text and discussing it, understanding word meanings, sharingexperiences related to the text. and so on. In short, effective reading means having the ability to understand not only what is clearly stated in a text, but also what is implied and suggested.

In this unit,we will discuss some ways in which we can help students become confident to read by themselves.We will read about other teachers who teach students with poor reading skills, andtry out a few reading activities ourselves.

Unit Objecives

In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to:
*   learn to /identify relevant information in a text by skimming and scanning for information
*   guess the meanings of new words in the text by referring to the surrounding lines

Case Study 1: Using questions to teach independent reading

Momi Hussain is a teacher who teaches English in Class VIII in Adarsha Vidyalaya in Guwahati.She tries a variety of activities to help her children read a text with understanding. In order to make her reading class interesting and effective, she also designs reading games.Here she describes a class that she conducted recently:

First I divided the lesson into three parts, each containing a set of manageable and meaningful paragraphs.Next, I prepared questions on the details of the first part.The questions were all Wh questions such as Who…?What..?Where…?When..?Why…?Whose…?Whom..? ..that had one clear answer. I wrote each question on a strip of paper. Next I put students into groups of three. Each student had a copy of the lesson in front of him/her. I gave each group one question, and explained that they had to read the first part and find the answer quickly. As soon as they found and wrote the answer in the strip of paper, they had to run to me with the answer When I said "Start!"they started looking forthe answer and then one partner ran to me to show the written answer.If the answer was correct,I gave them the second question.I continued the game until the groups had answered all the questions correctly.

I found the whole class involved in the game.I noticed the group members working together in locating the answer, and they did not even notice the bell ringing. I was also very happy that the game made them understand much of the lesson by themselves.

Let's stop and think

✶ How did Momi involve each student?
✶ How did she ensure that each student was working/reading?
✶ Apart from giving Wh-questions, what other kinds of exercise can you give students to make them read the text carefully? How would you prepare for the game?
✶ How did Momi evaluate her students?

Activity 1: What do these words mean?

As we know, our children find it difficult to read because they do not have a good range of vocabulary. They find most words in their lessons difficult or unfamiliar, and this slows down both their reading speed and comprehension. Telling them to look up new words in a dictionary is also not a helpful piece of advice. This is because when we read, we do not carry dictionaries with us. Rather, we try to guess the meaning of a new word from the context, i.e., from the surrounding words and sentences.Here is an activity to help children read a text by guessing the meaning of new words from the context.

First make a list of the difficult words from the passage and write the meanings in simple words, checking a dictionary if necessary.Then make a multiple choice question (MCQ) exercise, giving three or four meanings of those words. For example, if you are teaching the first two paragraphs of Chapter 5: **The Summit Within,** the difficult words in this text may be:

emotions, surged, summit, panorama, dominant, humility, physical, jubilant, ultimate, overwhelmed

You can make an MCQ like the one shown below, to help the students guess the meanings of new words. Remember to write the meanings in simple and clear words. When you discuss the answers, ask the students which words in the text helped them guess the meaning. Draw their attention to other words near the difficult word that give a clue to its meaning. Explain that **we use such clues from nearby words and sentences to guess the meanings of new words.** Also make them understand how we use our **background knowledge** to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in a text.

Keep making them do this guessing exercise when they read the next section of the lesson. They can use a dictionary later to check if they had guessed correctly. Do not provide the meanings before they read; let them struggle and guess the meaning by themselves first. This will help them become independent readers.

Here is an example of a multiple choice question (MCQ) you can use to help them guess the meaning of the word *surge* in the first sentence of the lesson **The Summit**

1. *Of all the emotions which **surged** through me as I stood on the summit of Everest, looking over miles of panorama below us, the dominant one I think was humility.*

    a. *filled my heart at the same time*

    b. *pained my heart after some time*

    c. *cut my body at once*

    d. *charged me like a knife*

Ask the students which one is the correct meaning of *surge.* Have a short discussion on how it would feel to be at the top of Mt Everest: would they feel happy, sad, or more than that? What happens in people when they achieve something very difficult? Tell them to notice the words *emotions, through me* and *summit of Everest*. These are the clues to the meaning of *surge.*Explain that because of these clues, we understand that the meaning of *surge* is *filled my heart.*Then paraphrase the sentence so that they can remember the meaning: "When the writer reached the top of Everest, he felt many different emotions at the same time. They surged through his heart."

In this way, you can make simple MCQs for each difficult word, and make them notice the clues to the meaning. After practising this technique of using clues and previous knowledge to guess the meanings of new words, your students will be able to do it without your help.

Let's stop and think

1. What do you do when your students ask you the meanings of new words? Do you translate every word into their mother tongue? Does that help them remember the word and use it later?

2. Should we give students the dictionary meanings of every word? Does the dictionary have only one meaning of every word?

3. Looking up a dictionary to learn the meaning of a new word is a good learning technique. When should you make students check a dictionary while reading a text: before reading or after? What are the advantages of making students refer to a dictionary after they have guessed the meaning?

Case study 2 : Scanning product labels

Mahindra Bhuyan is a teacher in a rural school and he teaches in Class VIII. He has recently joined the school and has found that his students do not enjoy reading long texts. He has also realized that this was because the students find it difficult to find essential information while reading a text.As a result, they are unable to respond to and answer questions. Recently, he tried out a new strategy to make every student read the text and try to find the important information in it by themselves. Here ishow Mahindra involved the whole class in reading:

One day, I asked my students to bring to the class used medicine bottles, empty Maggie/biscuit/ mixture packets and toothpastes. The next day, we had a large collection of different product labels, all in English. The children were very excited about what I was going to make them do. So I announced that we were all customers at a shop, and we wanted to know some important information on the products we were planning to buy. I asked them to locate the following information on their labels and note them down.

Name of the product:

Name of the manufacturer:

Date of manufacture:

Date of expiry:

Price of the product:

Before the activity, I practised with them words like *manufacturer*, *expiry date*, *ingredients* etc. that would help them find the information. These were new words for the students, and I was happy that they were learning new vocabulary items while reading for specific information. I found the whole class involved in the activity. I noticed how they were reading the labels quickly, and carefully, trying to note down information correctly.

After the activity was over, I explained to them that they were practising an important reading skill called *scanning.*I helped them reflect on what they were doing while trying to find the information: (i) they were not reading each and every word, (ii) they were looking for specific words like manufacturer/expiry and (iii) they were also noting down the important information. I explained that these three techniques are *scanning* techniques. Later I made them use these techniques while reading their lessons. Gradually, my students learnt to read their lessons more efficiently.

Let's stop and think

- How did Mahindra engage the whole class?
- How did he ensure that each student was looking for specific information?
- Did Mahindra provide any tips for scanningto his students *before* they read? Why was it necessary to teach some new words before students started to scan?

Activity 2 : Understanding the gist

Apart from locating specific information in a text, students need to be taught to read a text and understand its overall idea or *gist.* You can do this through an activity like this:

Select the text you want students to read. For each paragraph, make a simple summary in one or two lines. Either write the summaries on the blackboard or on a sheet of paper, and give it to students – one sheet for a pair of students. Tell them to read the paragraphs you have selected, and also read the short summaries. Their task is to match the summary to the correct paragraph.

Once the task is over, make students read the summaries once again. Make them notice how to select only the important information to make a summary of a text. Explain that reading a text quickly to know just the mainpoints is an important reading skill called *skimming.* We use skimming while reading a newspaper, or any longer piece of text, before we read in detail. This gives us an idea of what to find in the text, and helps us read with better understanding.

Here are sample summaries of the first two paragraphs of the lesson **The Summit:**

Paragraph	Summary

Of all the emotions which surged through me as I stood on the summit of Everest, looking over miles of panorama below us, the dominant one I think was humility. The physical in me seemed to say, 'Thank God, it's all over!' However, instead of being jubilant, there was a tinge of sadness. Was it because I had already done the 'ultimate' in climbing and there would be nothing higher to climb and all roads hereafter would lead down?By climbing the summit of Everest you are overwhelmed

by a deep sense of joy and thankfulness. It is a joy which lasts a lifetime. The experience changes you completely. The man who has been to the mountains is never the same again.

When the writer reached the top of Everest, different feelings went through him. Instead of feeling happy, he felt a little sad because now there was nothing higher to climb.By climbing the top of Everest, you feel both happy and thankful. This joy remains for ever and the experience changes a man completely.

Let's stop and think

1. Why is it necessary to help students to read a text for its gist? How does having an overall idea of a text help students understand it better?

2. Teaching students to read for gist may involve more effort on the teacher's part, such as making a summary-matching exercise. Do you think this extra effort will help you teach your students better?

3. Another way of practising reading for gist is making students read a paragraph and say its main idea in one sentence. Will your students be able to do it? What will you need to do to help them?

Unit Summary

In this unit, you read about various reading strategies to make your students independent readers. The two activities and the two case studies in this unit are examples of reading techniques that can be carried out in the classroom with just a little preparation.The unit helped you to understand the importance of teaching skimming and scanning, and also guessing meanings of new words from the text itself. Such activities help in reading a text quickly to locate required informationand help developstudents' reading skills.

Additional Reading

Resources : Tess India- *LL07*

Tips for the teacher on "Locating information"

You may use skimming to help learners locate information and identify the main ideas in a text.Skimming is a reading technique that can help learners to read more quickly.When you use skimming technique you don't read the whole text word for word.You should use as many clues as possible to give some background information.There might be pictures or images related to the topic or an eye catching title.Look out for key words while thinking about any clues you have about the text.

Scanning is the othertechnique that you can use to develop reading skills of your students**.** You can use scanning techniques to help students look up a phone number, read through small advertisement in a newspaper, timetables, lists, catalogue for information. All these are essential strategies for efficient reading. In addition, they help students learn how to compose answers and improve their vocabulary.

Suggested Questions

LO 20

1. An extract from a telephone directory is given and students are asked to find :
   a. The telephone number of the person whose name is given
   b. The pincode of the area
   c. The address of the person

2. A job advertisement in a newspaper is given and students are asked read the advertisement and answer the following:
   a) Name of the post
   b) Educational qualification required for the post
   c) Name of the department
   d) Age limit
   e) Salary
   f) Last date of form submission
   g) Address where the form is to be sent

3. Read the following lines from the poem 'Macavity the mystery cat' and answer the questions that follow :

   Macavity's is a mystery cat: he's called the hidden paw-
   For he's the master criminal who can defy law.

   a) Which words in the above lines begin with the letter 'm'
   b) Name three animals having paws
   c) Which word in the above lines mean 'disobey'

4. Rearrange the following words to make a meaningful sentence
   Of crime the scene they reach when for

5. Look at the calendar given below and locate the following
   The dates on which fall the Sundays
   The dates on which fall second and fourth Saturdays
   On which date is Republic Day?
   The Saturdays?
   On which day is Republic Day?

JANUARY 2018						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

www.free-printable-calendar.com

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