

UNIT STRUCTURE

Teaching How to Read Independently

CLASS – V

Unit Overview	Rationale	Unit Outcomes				Methodology Support					Additional Reading		
		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
<p>Overview of the language skill</p> <p>What the Gunotsav assessment shows us</p>		<p>LO 5.04 : The learner reads independently in English story books news items headlines advertisements etc. talks about it and composes short paragraphs.)</p> <p>LO 5.08 : The learner reads text with comprehension, locates details and sequence of events.</p>	<p>Sub Area: i. read fluently with appropriate pronunciation</p> <p>Sub Area: ii. read independently</p>	<p>Unit 3 My Shadow Robinson Crusoe Discovers a Footprint</p> <p>Unit 4 Crying My Elder Brother</p> <p>Unit 5 The Lazy Frog Rip Van Winkle</p>	<p>In this unit you will read ways of helping learners :</p> <p>1. ways of making students improve their reading strategies</p> <p>2. activities that you can use with your students to develop their skills of locating information in a text, reading for detail and sequencing events</p>	<p>What this unit will teach you</p>	<p>Learning vocabulary</p>	<p>Locating specific information in a text</p>	<p>Asking questions about a text</p>	<p>Learning to infer</p>	<p>What you learnt in this unit</p>	<p>Sample Questions : Q. Find the word in the passage that rhymes with the word “Corn”. Q. Why people called him Bapuji?</p>	<p>↕ www.tess-india.edu.in</p> <p>↕ Independent reading</p>

Overview

In Class V, students have had four years of learning English at school. During this time, they have learnt to identify letters and match them with sounds in words, learn basic vocabulary and sentence structure to communicate reasonably well in English. They learn to listen to, speak, read and write in English using a modest vocabulary and basic sentence structures. By this time, they also learn to use the basic grammatical categories of the language.

All this is an ideal scenario. These are things that should happen by the time students are in Class V. However, very often, students do not get enough exposure to English. It is the teacher who reads the lessons, translates each sentence into the students’ mother tongue and dictates answers for them. It is assumed that students are so poor in English that they need to be spoon-fed. In reality, we all learn a language by **using** it, not by just **listening** to it being used by other people. If we want our students to be able to read English, we will have to give them a chance to read, even if they make mistakes. This unit will discuss ways in which we can improve our students’ reading skills.

Rationale

Since data related to the recent assessment of NAS and Gunotsav several challenges continued to affect students learning outcomes in the state including poor reading skill. It is seen that the performance of students of class V is not upto the mark. To help our learners to attain the expected goal we need to analyse their problem area and plan activity to improve reading skill.

Introduction

Reading is an important skill for our students. Efficient reading is the ability to understand a piece of text in its written print or electronic visual form. The ability to read efficiently includes being able to understand

- ★ the gist, i.e. the overall idea of the text
- ★ particular pieces of information located in the text
- ★ what the author suggests but does not write through words
- ★ the meanings of new words by reading the surrounding words or sentences
- ★ predict what will happen next
- ★ whether the text is factual (i.e. dealing with facts) or fictional (dealing with imaginary things, characters or events)
- ★ whether the text can be considered good/great/not good, and so on.

All these skills can be developed and practised in the class, using the textbook lessons as well as other texts in English such as story books, magazines, children's supplements in newspapers, advertisements, labels on everyday products etc.

In this unit, we will discuss ways of involving students of Class V in various reading activities so that they can develop the skills to locate information in a text, understand the sequence of events (ie. what happens first, and next, etc.), read and understand details, and use all this information to talk or write about what they have read. We will discuss ways of encouraging them to read on their own. Independent reading plays a key role in the development of reading fluency. It also increases the stock of vocabulary improves spelling. In this unit, we will read two case studies of Class V teachers who faced problems of poor reading comprehension of Class V students, and what strategies they used to overcome the problems. We will also read about activities that you can try out with your own students. In the unit, we will also try to reflect on our classes and see what we can learn from our experience. independently.

Unit Objectives

In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to:

1. improve their reading skills
2. develop their skills of locating information in a text, reading for detail and sequencing events

Case Study 1 : Ranvir Das helps students learn vocabulary to read Rip Van Winkle with fun

Ranvir Das is a young English teacher who teaches Lower Primary classes at a semi urban school in Nagaon. Ranvir loves reading English books and magazines, and feels it is very important to develop in students the love of reading. He often recalls how he managed to get a government teacher's job even though his own parents are illiterate, and he believes it is because he managed to do well in his studies. He believes he was able to do well in his studies only because he could read efficiently, which made him confident to speak and write too.

Here Ranvir discusses how he tries to make his Class V students interested in reading their lessons on their own:

I love the story about Rip Van Winkle, and I wanted my students to enjoy reading it too. I also wanted them to be able to discuss the story with each other, talking and writing about what kind of a person Rip was, what he did, what he did not do etc. This would help their reading comprehension skills and also prepare them for exams.

But I knew one thing: there were many words in the lesson that my students did not know the meanings of, so I had to make them understand the words first. For example, in the first two paragraphs there were words such as foothills, good-natured, kind, neighbour, idled, astray, weeds, and avoid that students did not know, and I had to find a way to pre-teach the vocabulary. Otherwise they would not enjoy reading the story at all. I also knew that I would have to help students learn these words through their mother tongue

I started by telling the students to look at the following picture in their book:



I asked them to tell me, in their home language, Assamese, what they thought about the man: What kind of a person he was. I encouraged the children to look at closely at the picture before they answered. I wanted them to notice his dress, his smile, the small children running behind him, and so on. Then I put up their words on the blackboard in Assamese. They gave me the Assamese words for happy, smiling, poor, untidy, funny, and so on. I prompted them with more clues, so that I could elicit from them the Assamese words for kind-hearted, lazy, job-less etc. that would help them understand the story better. Then I wrote the English translations randomly on the board and asked the students to match the Assamese and English words. They could match some words such as happy, smiling, poor, lazy, but not words like untidy, funny etc. We had a discussion on what the words meant, and I announced that they would read about the man in the picture and find out what kind of a man he was.

Then I took them to the lesson. I read out the first two paragraphs and made them read after me. I feel reading aloud is important because it helps children make an association between letters and words and their sounds. It develops children's sight-recognition of vocabulary, i.e., recognizing a word by its shape.

After reading aloud, I made the students read the paragraphs quietly, and underline the words we had already practised. Then, they had to work with their friends sitting next to them and say which words describe the man. Then they had to fill in the blanks in the sentences I put up on the board using the underlined words. I gave them the first letter of the words in the first sentence to help them:

1. Rip Van Winkle was a s....., g..... fellow.
2. He was a neighbour who was ready to help anyone.
3. But he was veryand did no work on his own farm.

In this way, I helped my students understand the difficult words in the lesson, and made them do simple exercises on the lesson. By making them read and find answers themselves, I made them familiar with the text. But I also made them use the new words in their own sentences, so that they remembered the meanings of the words.

After a few classes, they became more confident readers. And by the time we reached the next lesson, my students did not seem afraid to read on their own and answer comprehension questions. Although they still needed a lot of help with the meanings of words and long sentences, they had at least begun to read by themselves. I realized they were all becoming independent readers.

Let's stop and think

1. Why is it important to pre-teach vocabulary while preparing students to read?
2. Do your students have similar problems with English words?
3. Will Ranvir Bora's strategy work with your students? How will you prepare them to learn vocabulary before reading the text?

Activity 1 : Locating specific information in a text

One aspect of the ability to read efficiently is to read a text quickly and locate specific information in it. For example, when reading a newspaper for important news, we do not have to read every line in every column; reading the headlines will give us an idea. Similarly, while reading a hoarding (say, an advertisement of a music concert coming to your town) from a moving vehicle, we should be able to quickly read and get the main information.

Here is an activity that will help you develop students' ability to scan a text, i.e., read a text quickly to locate particular information.

Take a short section of the text you want them to read, such as the first two paragraphs of the lesson on Rip Van Winkle, given below:

Many years ago, at the foothills of the Kaatskill (Kat-skill) mountains, was a little village. In the village lived a simple, good-natured fellow names Rip Van Winkle. He was a kind neighbour, ready to help anyone. Everyone in the village liked him. The children of the village shouted with joy whenever they saw him because he played with them. He taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories.

The only problem with Rip was that he was very lazy. He did no work on his own farm and just idled away his time. His fences were falling to pieces. His cow was going astray. Weeds grew on his farm. Rip's constant companion was his dog, named Wolf. To avoid work, he would walk away into the forest with his dog.

Tell the students that they will participate in a competition today. Children usually like the idea of a competition or a race, so you can tell them they will play a relay race with English. To prepare for the game, you will have to make four chits of paper with one True/False statement each, based on the two paragraphs. You will need as many sets of four statements as there are groups. For example, if there are five groups, you will need to make five sets of the four statements. Place four cardboard box or A4 sheets of paper on the floor in four corners/points of the classroom. Each box/sheet should have five sets of the same statement, with one statement on each chit, folded up. Remember to colour-code the sets, so that each group has statements of a different colour chit/ink than the other.

The rules of the relay race can be like this:

- ★ The students will be in groups of four (if there are not enough students, make one or two groups of three students each)
- ★ When you give the signal (you can blow a whistle or say 'Start!') one member from each group should run to the first corner and pick up the first statement, read it, find the answer from the paragraphs, write down the answer (T or F) on the chit and give it to the second member.
- ★ The second member will then drop the answer in the first box/sheet, run to the second corner, pick up his/her T/F question and follow the same procedure as the first member.
- ★ When the second member has noted the answer, the third member will take put it in the second box, and follow the same procedure.
- ★ Whichever group becomes the first to answer all the questions can shout 'Done!' The group that finishes second can then shout 'Done!' This will continue until all the groups have finished the race.
- ★ The teacher will then pick up the first group's answers (say, of red colour), and say whether the answers are correct or not. The first group that manages to get all the answers correct becomes the winner!

Here are some statements for the T/F exercise you can use. Remember to keep the questions simple, so that the answer can be easily found. This is a speed reading and scanning exercise, so it is important to make students feel that the task is not too difficult.

1. Rip Van Winkle was a simple, good-looking fellow.
2. Rip loved to play with the children.
3. Rip taught the children to fly marbles and shoot kites.
4. Rip was a lazy man who loved to work in his farm.

End the activity by discussing the correct answers with the students. Encourage them to read out the sentence from the lesson related to each T/F statement. This will help them remember the lesson, and the important points in it.

Let's stop and think

1. Do you play language games with your students? Why or why not?
2. Do you think the activity described above is a good way to make children enjoy reading? Why should they be taught scanning?
3. When you do a similar activity with your students, how will you prepare it? How much time do you think you will need for the activity?

Case Study 2 : Asking questions about a text

Miss Sharmila Mahanta teaches English to Class V. She knows the value of asking reflective questions while reading, and tries to use this technique of asking questions with her Class V students. Here she describes a typical reading class:

I believe good readers ask questions about what they are reading. I often make my students read more actively by using the questioning technique. At the beginning of the academic year, I discussed different types of questions with the students. To help them understand the purpose of different questions, I made them practise with personal questions using Wh-words. I gave them a set of questions on the board and asked them to ask each other one or two questions and note the answers:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| What is your name? | Who is sitting next to you? |
| Where are you from? | How many students are in your class? |
| When did you reach school? | What are you wearing? |
| How did you feel when you reached school? | Why are you wearing it? |

Then I explain that some questions relate to factual information, i.e., information that we know is true because we have seen or read about it. Other questions relate to information or feelings that we do not see or hear or read about clearly, but we are able to guess about them. These are called inferential questions, because we infer, i.e. guess what they mean. Although I know there are other classes of questions such as evaluative questions, I did not teach the children these, as they are too young. I put up two columns on the board – Factual and Inferential, and asked them to tell me which question would go into which column. I helped them learn that factual questions begins with words such as what, who, where, when and how many, and answers to factual questions can be easily found. Inferential questions, on the other hand, begin with words such as how, how do you know, what if, why do you think so, and so on. Answers to such questions are not explicitly stated, and to answer these kinds of questions we need to think more deeply.

Then I told them we would practise asking questions about the text when we read our lessons. This would help them understand the lesson and remember the information in it better. We started using Questioning for every lesson, and the children began to read with more attention and focus. I did not explain or translate each line of the lesson to them, because I knew this made them poor readers. Instead, they had to make questions themselves, and also find answers. They had to read more actively, just as they would do in real life, without me to help them.

For example, when we were reading the lesson 'Robinson Crusoe (Unit – 4, page-48), I read the first lines of the passage – "One day when I was going towards my boat. I was surprised to see the foot print of a man on the sand" and asked them to think of questions that they could ask about it. With a little help, they were able to ask questions like

Who is the 'I'?

What did he see on the sand?

Then I read the next lines:"I stood amazed. I listened; I looked around me : I could neither hear nor see anything.

I asked them to think of some more questions about the second set of sentences. They came up with questions like

What does the word 'amazed' mean?

What did he hear or see?

I told my students to spend the next fifteen minutes reading the passage and noting down questions.

As they worked I walked around the room and helped any students who were having problems.

The students asked many questions and it helped me to guess which students had a better understanding of the text. We then discussed the answers to the questions, and I found that they were beginning to think more deeply about what they were reading. They were trying to find their own meaning rather than waiting for me to explain everything to them. I realised they were becoming independent readers.

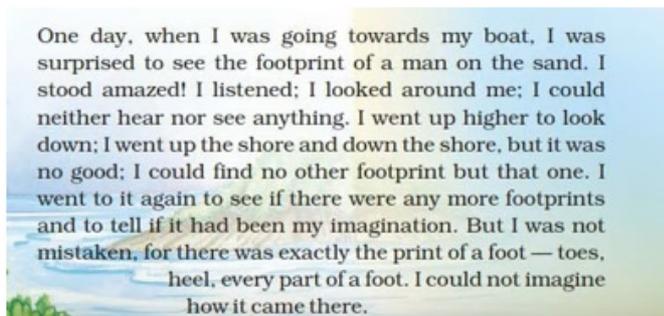
Let's stop and think

1. Do you think asking questions improves students' involvement with the text?
2. Will this technique work better if students are in groups rather than working alone?
3. Were there any students that found it difficult to read the paragraphs and ask questions?
How did Sharmila help them?

Activity 2 : Learning to infer

As you read in the Case Study above, it is important to teach your students to ask questions about the text they are reading. The questions they ask can be factual, i.e. dealing with things clearly stated in the lesson, or inferential, i.e., questions to which answers can be guessed from the text, but which are not stated. Asking questions serves two purposes: children learn to read and understand the text better, and it helps them prepare for their exams. Here is an activity on asking inferential questions that you can try out in your class.

- ★ Ask your student to read a paragraph from the lesson (for example, Robinson Crusoe discovers a footprint(Page 49, Unit 3)



- ★ Ask them to do this activity with the friend sitting next to them.
- ★ In their notebooks, they should take a blank page and put the word WHY? in a circle in the middle of the blank page. They should then draw straight lines or arrows from different points of the question circle, so that they have something like a spider's web.
- ★ They should then read the first two sentences of the paragraph, and see if there's anything for which they want to ask 'Why?' For example, they can ask Why did he go

towards his boat?,Why was he surprised to see the footprint?,Why was he amazed?etc.

They can write these questions on their word web like this:

- ★ When one pair has finished writing their questions, they should give it to the pair of students sitting in front or behind them, until all pairs have others' questions.
- ★ They can then read the text again and try to guess the answers to the questions.

Remember that they may not find the answers immediately, or without your help. The purpose of this activity is to make them read the text more carefully and think about what they have read. This will not only motivate them to read the next parts, it will also build their confidence to read English texts on their own.

Do not worry if there are grammatical mistakes – just help them correct the mistakes. The focus should not be on grammar, but on reading techniques.

Let's stop and think

- (i) Will your students enjoy this kind of an activity? Will it help your students to become independent readers?
- (ii) Were all your students involved in the activity? How did you ensure this?
- (iii) What other kinds of activities can you think of to help your students to read on their own?

Unit Summary

In this unit you read about some techniques for independent reading that you can use with your students to improve their reading skills. As you have seen, good readers use a variety of techniques when they read in any language. Some of these are guessing the meanings of words before and while reading, scanning a text quickly for specific information, and asking questions on the text. These techniques help a reader to identify key points in a text. They train students to read texts on their own, and slowly reduce their dependency on the teacher. An important part of reading for comprehension, especially at the lower primary level, is to read the text aloud first. This makes children familiar with the sounds of the language, the various intonation (tones) and the connections between the shapes or words and their pronunciation. We hope you will find it useful to make your students practise the activities suggested in the unit, along with those suggested in the case studies.

Additional reading

Independent reading:

Independent reading is reading of texts such as books, newspapers, magazines, headlines, advertisements et. by children on their own. It includes reading done in or out of school, including voluntary reading for enjoyment or assigned reading for homework.

Independent reading activities can be used to develop reading comprehension in students. Teaching students to ask questions is an important aspect helping children read. Teachers can show their students a text with pictures or a story to get them started. The process of questioning will encourage students to think beyond the text. Some of the benefits of independent reading include:

- ★ reading more willingly and more often
- ★ become more receptive to enrichment activities related to the text students are reading, such as making a poster, doing a role play, taking a trip or having a debate
- ★ learning that literature enriches lives
- ★ expansion of vocabulary

Suggested Questions

Read the paragraph and answer the question by choosing correct options.

Q. 1. “ Mahatma Gandhi was born at Porbander in Rajkot in 1869. His full name is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He was a great national leader. Because of his noble saintly qualities he is known to the world as Mahatma Gandhi. He is also called the “father of the nation”. People called him Bapuji out of love and respect.”

Q. 2. (a) When was Mahatma Gandhi born-
(i)1896 (ii)1876 (iii) 1869 (iv)1879

(b) Mahatma Gandhi is called-
(i)The son of the nation
(ii)The creator of the nation
(iii) The father of the nation
(iv) The discoverer of the nation

Q. 3. Find the word in the passage that rhymes with the word “ Corn”.

Q. 4. Find the word in the passage that is opposite in meaning to the word “Mother”

Q. 5. What is the full name of Mahatma Gandhi?

Q. 6. Why did people call him Bapuji?

Q. 7. Choose the right joining word to complete the following sentences.

I like tea..... coffee.

(a) or (b)and

He wrote the letter..... forgot to post it.

(a)so (b) but

Fill in the blanks using one of the words given in bracket.

(a)I have seen a (ship/sheep)on the sea.

(b) Rima could not (slip/sleep) at night because of her fever.

Q. 8. Circle the words where you get a zzzzz sound. One is done for you.

(honeybees)

rice prize face maze

racy lazy busy lacy

race raise ace rays

these this chase frosty

Q. 9. Pair Work

Read the following traditional rhyme with your partner and ask each other the sounds of different animals.

“Bow-wow, says the dog,

Mew- mew, says the cat,

Grunt- grunt, goes the pig And squeak goes the rat,

Tu-whu says the owl.

Caw-caw, says the crow;

Quack- quack says the duck; And moo says the cow.”