

UNIT STRUCTURE

Teaching How to Relate Ideas and Events to Personal Experiences

CLASS – VI

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 6.05 : The learner reads a variety of texts in English/Braille and identifies main ideas, characters, sequence of ideas and events and relates with his/her personal experiences.</p>	<p>Sub Area: i. read the text and identify the main idea. Sub Area: ii. understand the sequence of ideas. Sub Area: iii. relate the ideas and events with their personal experiences.</p>	<p>Unit 3 Taro's Reward The Quarrel Unit 4 An Indian -- American Woman in Space Beauty Unit 5 A Different Kind of School Where Do All the Teachers Go?</p>	<p>In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to:</p> <p>⇒ read and comprehend the main idea of the text</p> <p>⇒ identify the sequence of ideas and events</p> <p>⇒ relate them to their personal experiences.</p>	<p>What this unit will teach you</p>	<p>Comprehending the main idea in a text</p>	<p>Reading flash cards for meaning</p>	<p>Identifying the sequence of ideas in a text</p>	<p>Preparing students to read</p>	<p>What you learnt in this unit</p>	<p>Sample Questions : Q1. What is your dream? Tell about it to your friends in a group. Q2. Have you ever shown kindness to others? If yes, narrate it in your class.</p>	<p>⇒ www.tess-india.edu.in ⇒ Skimming, Scanning, Summarizing, Sequencing, Inferring, Questioning, etc</p>

Overview

By the time students come to Class VI, they have heard, read, spoken and written English for at least five years. In Class VI they are expected to be able to read longer texts, such as stories, understand the main ideas, and complete comprehension tasks on them. In reality, however, many students have been found lacking these skills. Students still struggle with recognizing words and punctuation, and are very slow readers

Rationale

The data related to the recent Gunotsav and NAS assessments show that children find difficulty in reading with comprehension. As per the data of Gunotsav 2017 and NAS 2017, it is seen that the performance of students of Class VI in reading is not very encouraging. Only 36% of the students could read the given text with comprehension and identify the main idea. To help our learners to attain the expected level we need to analyze their problem areas and accordingly plan activities to help them practise and improve their English language skills.

Introduction

“My students find it difficult to read English texts. They cannot comprehend the main idea as a result of which they fail to relate to the experiences provided in the text. They also cannot identify the sequence of ideas in the text. What can I do to help them read and enjoy their lessons?”



One of the most common problems we face in our English classes is making students confident to read their lessons. Sometimes they do not like to read because they do not understand the meaning or because they cannot relate to the different ideas and characters in the text. Do your students enjoy reading?

Reading is an important skill for our students. They will need to read different texts in English as they grow up. When they are inside the classroom, we will be there to help them. But what happens outside the classroom?

Reading is not merely an ability to recognize written or printed words, as is generally believed, but it also refers to putting meaning to what is read. It also refers to drawing ideas from what is read. By reading texts, one also should be able to relate the ideas read to their personal lives.

Reading with comprehension is an act that is highly complex and interactive. In this unit, we will discuss some ways in which we can help students become confident to read by themselves. We will try out a few reading activities, and we will also read about other teachers who have faced similar situations.

Unit Objectives

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

- read and comprehend the main idea of the text
- identify the sequence of ideas and events
- relate them to their personal experiences.

Case Study 1 : Deepak Das practises strategies of comprehending the main idea in a text.

Deepak teaches in Class VI at a government school. He likes to try out interesting ways of making his students practise their reading skills and comprehend the main idea. Here he describes a class that he taught recently:

I found in my class that whenever I asked the students to read the text, their faces would become very disappointing. They found it very tedious to read the text. I, therefore, thought of a way of making them read. Instead of reading it myself loudly, I asked them to read a small portion and told them that I am not going to explain it; they have to read and tell me the meaning. They did not take to the idea very positively; a bit of coaxing was necessary. But when they saw that I meant what I said, they had no alternative.

So, I divided the entire class into small groups and paired the groups up. One group was asked to read a small section of the piece and the other was asked to frame four or five questions related to the particular section. Obviously, the second group enjoyed it as they were required to ask questions to the other group.

After a stipulated time, I asked the groups reading the text to stop and prepare for the questions. (I am citing here only one paired group's case.) Following were the questions put forward by the second group (with help from me):

Taro's Reward

Taro saw a beautiful little waterfall hidden behind a rock. Kneeling at a place where the water flowed gently, he cupped a little in his hands and put it to his lips. Was it water? Or was it sake? He tasted it again and again, and always it was the delicious sake instead of cold water.

(This was the piece that I asked them to read.)

Now the questions.....

- Where did Taro find the water?
- Why did Taro taste the water?
- Why was sake so important to Taro?
- What is the main idea?
- What do you think Taro did next?

The questions made the students think and read the text several times to find answers. They also needed to think of appropriate answers, which not only gave them practice in comprehension, but also made them learn summarizing points from the text to form answers. This activity was not successful in a day. I had to repeat it very often. But gradually a change was noticeable in the students towards reading. Whenever I involved them in such an activity, they began to take interest in it. They were excited that even they could ask questions to their friends. I was happy because it served my purpose.

Let's stop and think

- How did Deepak Das prepare the students to read?
- Do you think the students understood the text when they read it the first time? If not, what were they forced to do?
- Have the questions been correctly framed? Will they lead to the main idea?
- Will this technique work in your class? Will time permit it?

Activity 1 : Reading flash cards for meaning

Our students find it very monotonous to read, because they have difficulty in understanding the meanings of words to comprehend the main ideas. But we can always think of ways to make them read. Here's one such activity.

Take a few flash cards and write down the main ideas from the portions that you will ask your students to read. Divide your students into pairs and ask each pair to read the selected portions from the text. (These will be the passages from which you have prepared the main ideas. Tell them to read carefully to match the passage to the main idea. Then have them select the main idea from the flash cards that you have in your hands. If they are able to do it, acknowledge it in front of the class.

Eg: The Quarrel

I quarrelled with my brother
I don't know what about,
One thing led to another
And somehow we fell out.

The above stanza can be taken as a model stanza. The main idea to be written on the flash cards for the above stanza may be:

The poet had a quarrel with her brother. She did not know what the quarrel was about. But after that, they did not talk to each other.

Do remember to demonstrate to the students how to proceed with the activity, by doing it the first time yourself. If the extract that you choose is a bit difficult to comprehend for your students, read aloud the piece yourself first, and use signs and gestures to ensure that students get some hints about the meaning.

As students work through this activity, you can move around and check whether they are being able to read with comprehension. Encourage them to read out the text and discuss the main idea.

- encourage all the students to read their selected portions
- ask them to think of the main idea of the respective pieces
- make sure that all the students participate in the activity
- encourage them to keep reading until they comprehend the main idea
- start working in pairs first, and form smaller groups and practice some more
- select students randomly for individual practise.
- gently correct them if they make any errors

Case Study 2 : Gopal Chetry practises strategies of identifying the sequence of ideas in a text

Gopal Chetry teaches English in Class VI at a government school in a rural area. He likes to try out interesting ways of making his students practice their reading skills. He focuses on helping them comprehend the main idea as well as the sequence of ideas of a given text. Here he tells us of one such experience:

I observed in my class that the students found it difficult to read the English text because English was difficult as a language for them. More importantly, they were unable to draw ideas sequentially from the text that they were reading. They could not recognize the sequence of ideas or events taking place. This led me to think of ways to help them find out the sequence of ideas and events.

I divided the class into groups of five. Two groups had six students each. I asked the groups to read this section of the text we were supposed to cover in that class. They would have to discuss the content within their group and find out all the ideas and events that their respective portions contained. Each member in the group would have to find out at least one idea or an event and write it down on a bit of paper. As they worked, I moved around the class, explaining words or certain sentences when necessary, using the bilingual method.

The passage I chose was from the lesson An Indian--American Woman in Space: Kalpana Chawla (Para no 5 & 6) (Kalpana's first space mission.....somehow survived.)

Some of the sentences that students came up with were:

- a) The town of Karnal spent a sleepless night.
- b) Kalpana's first space mission was in the space shuttle "Columbia".
- c) The crew performed several experiments on board the space shuttle.
- d) There was shock and disbelief on hearing about the Columbia disaster.
- e) Other crew members were a Japanese and a Ukrainian astronaut.

Once the groups were ready with their ideas or events, I jumbled them up and wrote them on the board. This time, each group had to read from the blackboard and arrange the ideas in the way they occur in the passage. I gave the class ten minutes to order the sentences correctly and note them down.

Once they arranged the sentences in the correct order, I asked the entire class what they understood from it. We discussed the passage and I found, to my surprise, that the students could talk about the passage using English. They seemed to have remembered the words and sentences they had read, and did not hesitate to use them.

I was very happy with the class, as it showed they were learning how to read English texts with comprehension.

After repeating this several times with the students, I could see a change in their attitudes towards comprehending ideas and events in the text. In fact, in every class they wanted to try out this activity as it was fun for them to arrange jumbled sentences. Although that was not possible, I was happy that I was able to make them read and think of ideas and events!

Let's stop and think

- ★ How did Gopal Chetry prepare his students for this activity?
- ★ How does it help in developing the reading ability?
- ★ How does it help in developing the reading ability?
- ★ What role did Chetry play in the entire process? Was he a mere facilitator or a performer himself?
- ★ Why is it important to make students sequence or order sentences from a passage? How does it help them understand the text?

Activity 2 : Preparing students to read

Our students not only find it difficult to understand the main idea of a passage but also fail to identify the sequence of ideas or events presented. But we can always think of ways to make them read. Here's one such activity.

Divide your class into small groups. Give each group a particular idea on the main idea of the lesson and ask them to add on to the idea presented. Tell them that it has to develop into a story. Then see how ideas come, one after the other. Once the ideas develop, ask the students to develop them in a way that would make up a complete story. The groups have to discuss it in their individual groups first and then present it in front of the entire class.

For example, if you are planning to teach the lesson "An Indian--American Woman in Space: Kalpana Chawla", you could ask them to build on the idea "I wanted to become an astronaut when I grew up. One day,"

After that, encourage the students to think of their own reasons why and how they want to become an astronaut. This will also prepare to read the chapter... "An Indian--American Woman in Space: Kalpana Chawla". But what is significant here is that the students would get an opportunity to note the sequence in which a text is developed.

Let's stop and think

1. What are the advantages of asking students to work on the topic before the teacher teaches?
2. In what other ways can we prepare students to read?
3. What are the kinds of preparation you would have to make if you did this activity in your class?

Unit Summary :

This unit discussed some ideas on how to improve the reading skills of students. The case studies and activities are a kind of guidance towards various ways in which we can improve ours as well as our students' reading skills. Reading is a skill that has to be practiced at the early stages itself. Good reading is essential as it paves the way towards knowledge and opportunity.

To make reading a daily habit, children should be encouraged to read story books and also other types of texts to become familiar with different styles of writing. This will enable them to understand the different ways in which ideas may be expressed and connected to.

Additional Reading

Making students respond to literature is one way to help students construct their own meaning of a text, rather than depending on the teacher to give them a meaning. It is a natural part of the process of reading. When students read a piece, they can be trained to respond to it by using prior knowledge to construct meaning and also build up on ideas. This helps to develop their metacognitive skills (which means the ability to talk/write about the ways in which one is using one's brain) which are important in constructing meaning. Students' reading skills can be developed by encouraging them to think about and respond to what they read and write. The responses of students may differ, but the teachers must respect and accept a variety of answers. Encouraging students' personal responses improves their ability to construct meaning.

Gradually, students can be made aware of various reading skills, such as skimming, scanning, guessing meaning from the context and inferring. Skimming is reading a text quickly to get the general idea. It is one of the strategies for quick reading. It also allows the reader to look for details in addition to the

main ideas. To skim a text, one reads the first or main sentence in a paragraph and then skims through the rest looking for relevant and important information.

Scanning is another strategy of quick reading. Scanning is reading a text quickly to find specific information. People who know how to skim and scan are flexible readers. They read according to their purposes and get the information quickly. Guessing meaning from the context is an important reading skill, because it is not practical to carry or refer to a dictionary whenever we read. Efficient readers try to guess the meanings of new words by taking hints from the surrounding words. Later, by looking at a dictionary, asking someone, hearing the word spoken by someone, or reading it again in a different passage, one learns the meaning. Students should be taught to guess the meanings of new words when they read a passage, because this also helps them read with both speed and understanding.

Summarizing, sequencing, inferring (understanding what is hinted, but not clearly stated, in a passage), drawing conclusions, etc. are a set of skills that need to be cultivated in the young readers as they will be needing these when they grow up and read a variety of texts. Questioning itself is a good technique of understanding the ideas involved in a text. It helps to relate information and events to one's personal life.

Suggested Questions

Sub Area 1 : read and comprehend the main idea of the text:

- ★ What is the main idea of 'Taro's Reward'?
- ★ Why was Taro unhappy?
- ★ Why did the waterfall give Taro sak? and the others water?
- ★ What started the quarrel between the poet and her brother?
- ★ Why did the poet say that she was "in the wrong"?
- ★ Why did the town of Karnal spent a sleepless night?
- ★ How can Beauty be heard?
- ★ How was Miss Beam's school different?
- ★ How were the children made to understand misfortunes?
- ★ Where do the teachers go at four o'clock?

Sub Area 2 : identify the sequence of ideas and events:

- ★ Rearrange the following sentences in the correct order:
 - One thing led to another
 - I was in the wrong
 - I quarreled with my brother
 - We hated one another
- ★ Arrange in a sequence Kalpana Chawla's journey into space.
- ★ How does the 'blind' girl justify that being blind is very frightening?
- ★ Who are the people that the blind girl meets when they walked towards the house?
- ★ Put these sentences from the story in the right order-
 - I shall be so glad when today is over.
 - Having a leg tied up is almost fun, I guess.
 - I don't think I'll mind being deaf for a day.
 - But being blind is so frightening.
 - Let's go for a walk
- ★ Make a short list of things that you find difficult to do. Can you explain why you find these things difficult?
- ★ How does the poet trace different aspects of beauty from sunlight to work and rest?
- ★ Narrate the events that led Taro to discover sak?.
- ★ What do you think would have happened if the villagers were able to get hold of Taro?
- ★ Discuss with your friend the things that teachers do as observed by the poet.

Sub Area 3 : relate the ideas and events to personal experiences:

- ★ Describe a recent quarrel that you had with your brother, sister or friend. How did it start? How did it end?
- ★ What does Kalpana Chawla say about pursuing a dream? Do you agree with her that success is possible?
- ★ What is your dream? Tell about it to your friends in a group.
- ★ Discuss with your friend the things that you find beautiful.
- ★ Why was Taro so concerned about his parent's happiness and wellbeing?
- ★ Why do you think Miss Beam emphasized that students should 'share in misfortune'?
- ★ Taro's father wanted sak? to keep himself warm. How do you keep yourself warm?
- ★ Is it possible to find beauty in good deeds? How? Discuss it in your class.
- ★ Have you ever shown kindness to others? If yes, narrate it in your class.
- ★ Does Miss Beam remind you of anyone? If yes, who?

