

UNIT STRUCTURE

Teaching Reading - How to Relate Ideas and Events to Personal Experiences

CLASS – VI

| Unit Over-view | 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>What this unit is about</p> <p>Gunotsav / NAS performance</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | <p>Teaching resources, links & ideas</p> |
| <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. reads the text and identifies the central idea.</p> <p>Sub Area: ii. understands the relations between different ideas in a text.</p> <p>Sub Area: iii. relate the ideas and events to their personal lives</p> | <p>Unit 6 Who I Am The wonderful words Unit 7 Fair Play Unit 8 Game of chance Vocation.</p> | <p>In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to :</p> <p>⇒ read and identify the central idea.</p> <p>⇒ understand the relation between different ideas in a text.</p> <p>⇒ related the ideas and evens to their personal lives.</p> | <p>What this unit will teach you</p> | <p>Identify the central idea in a text</p> | <p>Using visual clues to develop comprehension</p> | <p>Relating Ideas & Events to one's personal lives</p> | <p>Using Flash Cards to practice Relating Events</p> | <p>What you learnt in this unit</p> | <p>Have any of your parents forbidden you from doing something that you like? If so, why? Has your best friend ever done anything wrong? If yes, what have you done to make him/her correct himself?</p> | <p>⇒ www.tess-india.edu.in – Mechanics of Reading – Silent reading. – Extensive & Intensive reading. – Flip learning.</p> |

Overview

By the time students reach the sixth standard, they are expected to have heard, read, spoken and written English for at least five years. Therefore, in Class VI it is hoped that they will be able to read longer texts such as stories, understand the main ideas, and complete comprehension tasks on them. However, it has been found that many students lack such skills. Students are seen struggling with words, their meanings and punctuation. They fail to understand the main idea of the text and as a result cannot enjoy it. Most of them are also very slow readers.

Rationale

As discussed in the first set of OERs, the data related to the recent Gunotsav and NAS assessments of 2017 show that children, in general, find it difficult to read English texts with comprehension. The performance of the students of Class VI in reading in Gunotsav 2017 is not very encouraging. Only 36% of the students could read the given text with comprehension and identify the main idea. As teachers, we need to identify their learning gaps and find out strategies to meet these gaps.

It is hoped that once these gaps have been addressed, the students will take an active interest in reading. To help our learners attain the expected levels, we need to plan appropriate strategies and adopt certain means to help them practise and improve their English language skills.

Introduction

"I find in my class that my students find it difficult to read English texts and comprehend the main idea. They also cannot relate to the ideas contained in the text. As a result, they never enjoy reading in English. What can I do to help them improve their reading abilities?"



One of the few common problems that we, as teachers, face in our English classrooms is making the students confident readers. Very often, they do not like to read because they do not understand the meaning of what they read or because they cannot relate to the main idea of the text. Do you face the same situation in your class?

In the earlier set of OERs, we discussed why reading is a very important skill for our students. As they grow up, they will have to read different texts with comprehension. Reading with comprehension not only involves understanding the meanings of words and sentences; it expects the reader to interact with the information, events and other details of the text, such as characters and sequence of events. However, even in the sixth standard our students struggle with words and meanings and comprehension. Inside the class we will be there to help them. But what happens once they are outside the classroom?

In the previous OERs, we suggested a few case studies and activities that were designed to help students to improve their reading skills. Did you find them useful? In this unit we will read a few other case studies and activities that will give us more ideas on developing their reading skills.

Unit Objectives

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

- ★ read and identify the central idea in a text
- ★ understand the relation between different ideas in a text
- ★ relate the ideas and events to their personal lives

Case study 1 : Meera Borah uses role play to help students identify the main idea in a text

Meera teaches English in Class VI at a government school. She is very innovative and likes to try out new ways to make students practice their reading skills. She has seen how students struggle to identify the main idea in a text. Therefore, she has undertaken upon herself the task of improving students' reading capacities and helping them identify the central idea. Let us hear what she has to say:

I found in my English class that whenever students were asked to open their texts and read, their faces became gloomy and nervous. They started to lose all interest in the class. For them, reading the English text was a very difficult thing to do. So, I thought of a technique to make them enjoy their reading while at the same time identifying the central idea in it.

I asked the class to go through the chapter '**Who I Am**' at home. I then said that the next day they would have to play the roles of the respective characters in the class and say what the characters say in the text. I also reminded them that they would not be allowed to look at the textbook while enacting the role. This meant that they would have to know, understand and remember their parts. Since there were only six characters in the chapter, I divided the class into groups and gave each group a particular character, and asked each one to prepare for that character and come. I further added that I would ask any member of the group to come and play the character. This way I felt that all the students would at least read and practise their respective parts, which in turn would give them an opportunity to read the text with focus.

The next day, I asked the groups if they were ready with their parts and realized that some of them did not look very confident. Still, it was a first step for me. I randomly called out one member from each group to come and play their parts. To my delight, the students tried their best to deliver, although their nervousness was evident. None of them could speak their entire part correctly, and had to be prompted often. But what made me happy was the fact that they did read and tried hard to understand what the characters said in the text. In doing so, they were able to comprehend the main idea of their respective portions.

I appreciated their efforts and asked the entire class to give them a huge round of applause. The participants were happy. After that, I called out a second group to repeat the same exercise. When the second group's performance was over, I said that the class should read the text again and the next day I would again call out members of other groups to perform their parts.

In this way I was able to make the whole class read the lesson. I knew that if they read regularly, they would gradually be able to understand the parts that they were asked to read. I repeated it very often in the class with other portions also. Slowly, a change was seen in their reading habits. I was also happy that I was successful in bringing a change in their attitudes towards reading.

Let's stop and think

- ★ How did Meera Borah prepare the students to read?
- ★ How would reading for a role play help students to understand the meaning of the text?
- ★ If you wanted to try this technique in your class, what preparations would you make?
- ★ Will such an activity help in improving students' oral reading skills along with comprehension?

Activity 1 : Using visual clues to develop comprehension

In the earlier OERs we came across a few activities showing ways of improving students' reading skills. It is a known fact that children do not like to read, especially school textbooks, when they have to struggle with long words, difficult words, long sentences or paragraphs. Here is another activity to help students develop an interest in reading texts.

Divide your class into pairs or small groups of three or four. Give each pair or group a piece of paper with a visual clue - a picture connected to their lesson. The clues should relate to their text. To motivate them, give them a hint, such as the page number of the text which relates to the picture. Ask each student in pairs, or each pair in a group, to go through the text quickly and find out the paragraph(s) that is/are related to the picture.

After a suitable time, ask them to describe the picture in terms of the information given in the related paragraph in the lesson.

For example, you can draw/use a picture like the one below that relates to paragraph 4 on page 100 in the textbook *Honeysuckle*.



As your students do the activity, you can move around the class and supervise whether they are being able to relate their picture with the text and whether all children are reading the text. When the time is over, make the groups describe what they read in the paragraph(s) to show how this relates to the picture. In this way you can check their comprehension of the text. By the time each pair/group finishes talking about their picture and the matching part of the lesson, the class would have comprehended the whole lesson, without you having to explain every line.

Let's stop and think

- ★ What are the advantages of using pictures as visual clues for reading comprehension?
- ★ Would your students enjoy the activity? Would they enjoy getting pictures related to the lessons by themselves?
- ★ Is it enough to use picture clues to understand texts? What would you need to do after this kind of an activity to test whether all students have understood?

Case Study 2 : Purnima Daimary practises strategies of relating ideas and events to one's personal lives

Purnima Daimary teaches English in Class VI at a government school in a semi-rural area. She knows that English is a dreaded subject. Students do not like to speak, read or write in it because they are afraid of making mistakes. But she is determined to try out new techniques with her students so that they improve their skills in English. Here she tells us one of her experiences in such a situation.

In my class I came across the bitter truth that students do not like the English subject. For them, it was a compulsory subject that they have to study and pass. On discussing with them I realized that they avoided reading their lessons because they found it difficult to understand. This led me to think of ways to make them read and relate to the events and characters presented in the text.

I took the chapter on "Fair Play" and divided into reading sections. Then I gave a section to one bench, and told them to read it (one or two short paragraphs) and discuss among themselves what they understood about it. They would then have to narrate the incidents to their friends in the next bench/group in English. Finally, one group leader would narrate their part of the lesson to the whole class. They would also have to tell me what they liked or did not like about what they had read.

The students agreed, although not wholeheartedly as they didn't feel confident to speak in English. Still I was determined and they saw no way out. Since there were eight groups I could not complete all in one class. So, I announced that in one class we would listen to one group only, but all the groups would get opportunities in the next classes.

What I found was that the students were enthusiastic to talk about what they had read. Of course, the language was a problem and it slowed things down a bit. But with prompting and help, they did manage to summarise their reading sections in English. I realized that it needed time, but my students now read the texts and try to connect with the incidents found in the lesson.

Let's stop and think

- ★ How did Purnima Daimary succeed in making her students comprehend the text?

- ★ Were the students able to comprehend the text better because they could discuss with their group mates what they read?
- ★ If not, what else could have been done to make them understand?
- ★ Should such techniques be repeated every time an activity is undertaken?

Activity 2 : Using flash cards to practise relating events

Our students always find it a challenge to read their English texts. More so, because they feel that they cannot connect with the ideas and events described in the text. Somehow these events seem a distant thing for them. To help them connect with such events, here's an activity that might help.

Divide your class into groups of five or six students. Make each group read different portions of a particular chapter. Then ask the group leader to write the main ideas of each portion on a flash card and submit it. After that, interchange the cards among the groups. Based on the idea written on the card, ask each group to discuss events from personal experience that are related to it. The groups may be given some time to think over their ideas, discuss among themselves and then present it to the class.

For example, if you are teaching the chapter 'A Game of Chance', you could ask a particular group to read the first four paragraphs and think of the main idea. The idea could be anything like ----a)

A Fair in the Neighbourhood

Or, b) Going to a Fair

Or, c) Games in the Fair

These are simple ideas and it would be easy for the students to connect with them and relate incidents from personal experiences. Further, this activity would enable them to not only read the text but also relate the ideas to their personal lives.

However, please remember that you have to demonstrate the activity the first time by doing it yourself. If any group finds it difficult to understand the portions that you have selected for them, then give clues to help them comprehend it. But do not explain it in detail.

As your students do the activity, you can

- ★ move around the class and see whether all the groups are on task
- ★ encourage all the groups to read their selected portions
- ★ ask them to think of the main ideas of their respective portions
- ★ ensure that all the members are participating and are being involved
- ★ provide corrections wherever necessary

Let's stop and think

- ★ What is the value of summarizing the main points while reading a text?
- ★ Do you make your students work in groups while reading a new lesson? What are the advantages and problems? How can you solve the problems so that they enjoy the group reading activity?

Unit summary

In this unit we have discussed some ideas about improving the reading skills of students. The two case studies and activities will guide us towards thinking of different ways and techniques to help our students to improve their reading skills. Good reading habits can go a long way in improving our career and in opening up doors of opportunities.

Reading, as we all know, is a skill that has to be practised and cultivated in the early stages

itself. To make reading a daily habit, students should also be encouraged to read different books, magazines, newspapers, etc. and become familiar with the different ways in which information is provided in them. This will also help them to understand how they can connect to the ideas presented in the texts.

Additional Reading

Why reading is an essential language learning tool

Reading is an essential tool of learning. Where there is little reading, there is little language learning. It is because we cannot provide direct experiences of language used in all situations that we have to develop reading skills. Reading different genres will lead us to develop an understanding of the different styles and uses of a language. Reading improves one's knowledge of language and also one's communicative competence. Besides, all the important study skills require quick, efficient and imaginative reading.

While developing reading, it is necessary that the teacher focusses on the mechanics of good reading. These include the development of a large sight vocabulary, good eye movement habits, proper habits of posture, phrasing, expression, pitch, enunciation and also the development of speed and fluency of silent reading. Silent reading is very important as in later stages it is this type of reading that every individual needs in life. Silent reading is not to develop our pronunciation but to be able to comprehend quickly what we read. The practice of silent reading also prepares the students for independent reading.

Extensive and intensive reading habits should also be inculcated in the students. Extensive reading helps a student to read texts for pleasure, and to read without help from the teacher. It provides reinforcement of the language learnt in the classroom. Students also learn to infer meanings of unfamiliar words and structures from the context. This helps in intensive reading, which means a close reading of a text, usually to answer questions. Intensive reading is done to understand important ideas of the text and the specific information given in the text, to draw inferences and to interpret and evaluate them. As intensive reading is evaluation oriented, achievement of the learner can be tested. Intensive and extensive reading skills are thus both important for students, as they also help in logical development of ideas and enhance writing abilities.

Besides, flip learning can also be practiced to help learners to get acquainted with the text before it is actually taught in the class. Flip learning is a pedagogic approach where the conventional classroom based learning is inverted. It allows learners to become familiar with the learning material before class. Then in the class, the focus can be put more on developing their comprehension through problem solving activities and discussions with peers and teachers.

Suggested Questions based on the lessons for this academic period:

Make students read the text and find out answers to the following questions to understand the central idea:

'Who I Am'

- ★ What was Radha's favourite activity?
- ★ What did her mother not allow her to do?
- ★ What makes Serbjit angry?
- ★ Why did Peter love the second Sunday of the month?
- ★ What type of activities do the adventurous people like to take up?
- ★ Which type of people are good communicators?

'Fair Play'

- ★ Why did the friendship between Jumman and Algu break down?

'A Game of Chance'

- ★ What lesson did the child learn from 'A Game of Chance'?

'Vocation'

- ★ What does the hawker do every morning?
- ★ Are all vocations equally important?

ii) The following question will help the students understand the relation between different ideas in a text:

'Who I Am'

- ★ Discuss the steps involved in growing a cotton plant.
- ★ Discuss in a group how the Prime Minister of a country is chosen.
- ★ After reading 'Multiple Intelligence', try to find out which type of intelligence best describes you.
- ★ What made Serbjit look down at his shoes?

'The Wonderful Words'

- ★ Rearrange the following sentences in the correct order—
 - Some fresh and beautiful thing
 - Words are the food and dress of thought
 - They give it its body and swing
 - And everyone's longing today to hear

'Fair Play'

- ★ Narrate the events that led to the restoration of friendship between Jumman and Algu.
- ★ Why did Algu say that God lives in the voice of the Panch?

'A Game of Chance'

- ★ How does the child in 'A Game of Chance' make a fool of himself?
- ★ Put the following events from the text in the proper order—
 - An old man selected six discs.
 - There was a fair in the village.
 - The old man was given a clock.
 - Uncle took me and Bhaiya to the fair.
 - I wanted to try my luck too.
 - We came to the Lucky shop.

'Vocation'

- ★ Narrate in a sequence the people that the child meets on his way to school.

iii) These questions will help them relate the ideas and events to their personal lives

'Who I Am'

- ★ Discuss with your friend what you are interested in doing and whether you have been able to pursue it.
- ★ Have any of your parents forbidden you from doing something that you like? If so, why?
- ★ Name the different types of intelligence involved in the following—
 - Looking at maps and examining pictures
 - Working with numbers and solving mathematical problems
 - Listening to people and solving their problems

'The Wonderful Words'

- ★ After reading 'The Wonderful Words', can you describe the significance of your mother tongue?
- ★ Do you think that words are the food and dress of your thought? If yes, how?

'Fair Play'

- ★ Has your best friend ever done anything wrong thing? If yes, what have you done to make him/her correct himself?

'A Game of Chance'

- ★ What kinds of festivals are celebrated in your neighbourhood?
- ★ Has any fair been organised in your locality? With whom do you go to fairs?
- ★ What are the different games and sports that you find in the fair? Describe them to the class.

'Vocation'

- ★ Who are the people that you see and meet when you go to school?

