

UNIT STRUCTURE

Teaching How to Extract Information from Non-textual Content

CLASS – VII

Unit Over-view	Rationale	Unit Outcomes				Methodology Support					Additional 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	<p>LO 7.03 : The learner reads aloud with appropriate pronunciation and pause</p> <p>LO 7.04 : The learner reads small texts in English with comprehension i.e. identifies main idea, details and sequence and draws conclusions in English</p>	<p>Sub Area: i. read with appropriate pace and pause</p> <p>Sub Area: ii. read with comprehension</p>	<p>Unit 3 Little by Little</p> <p>The Enormous Turnip</p> <p>Unit 4 Sea Song</p> <p>A Little Fish</p> <p>Unit 5 The Balloon Man</p> <p>The Yellow Butterfly</p>	<p>In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to:</p> <p>→ extract information from various real life texts in English</p> <p>→ skim, scan and infer information from texts that use English in real life situations.</p>	What this unit will teach you	Using newspapers to practise reading comprehension skills	Using newspaper headlines to practise reading skills	Inferring information from road signs	Practising scanning and skimming skills with a poster game	What you learnt in this unit	<p>Sample Question :</p> <p>1. Match the pictures with the places where these signs are found.</p>	<p>→ www.tess-india.edu.in</p>

Overview

This unit discusses strategies and activities that you can use in the classroom to improve your students' comprehension skills while reading information in print/online, noticeboards, signboards in public places, newspapers, hoardings and other non textual context.

There are two case studies where two Class VII teachers of English share their personal experiences of teaching children how to predict and infer information from real life reading texts. The unit also discusses two activities with English newspapers and posters that you can use in the classroom with your students.

Rationale

The 2017 Gunotsav results have shown that Learning Outcome (LO) 7.11 for Class VII has not been met in our classrooms. This LO specifies that the learner should be able to read and comprehend information both in print and online, and also non classroom texts such as noticeboards, signboards in public places, newspapers, hoardings etc. This unit will help you to address this learning gap with the help of the case studies and activities designed with real life texts. These will hopefully encourage your students to read and understand reading material in English outside the school textbook.

Introduction

In schools where English is a second language it is seen that students mostly read only the lessons in the textbook and are reluctant to read other texts. The lack of motivation towards non syllabus English content may adversely affect students later in their lives, when they have to read, interpret and respond to various texts in English, such as tables, graphs, charts, signboards, notices, emails, reports, advertisements and so on. Students need to be given practice in reading such texts inside the English class so that their reading comprehension skills develop.

In this unit, you will read two case studies about teachers who encouraged their students to participate in different reading activities based on road signs and newspapers. You will also read two activities that you can use with your students to give them practice in various sub skills of reading through posters and newspaper headlines.

Unit Objectives

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

- ★ extract information from various real life texts in English
- ★ skim, scan and infer information from texts that use English in real life situations

Case study 1 : Using newspapers to practise reading comprehension skills

Moromi Doley has been teaching English in Class VII in a vernacular medium school in Dibrugarh for the last five years. Since English is the students' second or third language she does not have much opportunity to make them read materials outside the English textbook. However, she tries in various ways to encourage her students to read newspapers, online materials etc. to look for information and practise their reading comprehension skills.

Here she shares how she used the easily available 'The Assam Tribune' newspaper to encourage students to learn non-textbook content. This is what Moromi says:

For this activity, I divided the class into groups of five and distributed copies of The Assam Tribune newspaper, and started with a scanning activity. I put up some section titles on the blackboard and asked each group to locate one section respectively (Classifieds, Horoscopes, Letters to the Editor, Weather forecast and Cartoons) in the newspaper quickly.



The groups became busy with the task, and were able to find the assigned sections within a short time. After finding the sections they had to answer questions by scanning and skimming the text, and also inferring information from the text. For example, the group working with Horoscopes had questions such as 'Under which sign would you find a person born on 29 August?' the group with the cartoon had to find 'Who said what to whom?', and also the pun in the

sentences; the group that read the Classified column had to look for the best house for rent under Rs. 10,000/-, and so on. I found that all the students actively participated in the activity and found it interesting. They also learnt new vocabulary like *Classifieds*, *Zodiac*, *forecast* and so on.

After the activity, students wanted more, and did not even notice that the bell had gone. I realised that newspapers were a handy, effective and cheap real-life source of English to teach students reading comprehension strategies.

Let's stop and think

- ★ Did Moromi have to spend much time and money to try something new with the newspaper activity? Would you be able to do something similar with your students?
- ★ Do you think this activity will motivate students to read the newspaper every morning?
- ★ What kinds of activities - individual, pair or group - can you design with newspapers to teach reading skills in English?

Activity 1 : Using newspaper headlines to practise reading skills

Headlines are an important part of newspapers - they are usually precise, include words that easily catch our attention and help give an overall idea of the news item to follow. Predicting and inferring information from headlines is not only a good reading task, it also arouses students' curiosity and motivates them to read further.

Here is an activity with newspaper headlines that you can use with your students to practise their prediction skills.

Choose the headline of a short and interesting news item from an English newspaper, and make photocopies of it (you can divide the students into groups and make one copy for each group rather than making photocopies for each student. Put the headline of that news item on the blackboard and ask the students to guess what the news item is about. Make them write down their guesses in their notebook. Now distribute the copy of the news item to each group. Make them read the news item and see if their prediction was correct.

After they have completed the activity, have a class discussion to make them notice what strategies they had used to predict the news, such as any particular keywords in the headline, their previous knowledge of the news, their ideas on what the news item would contain. By reflecting on the activity, students will be able to consciously realise that we all use different strategies while reading, and these strategies can help us read faster and with more comprehension in any language. You can extend the discussion through questions such as:

1. Did you guess the news correctly?
2. How different was your prediction from the real news?
3. Did the headline have the keywords of the news item?
4. What details did the news item contain that were not hinted in the headline?

Finally, ask students to collect one news item with a headline from a local English newspaper and bring it to the class. Collect the news items, and repeat the activity. Put up the headlines on the blackboard, and ask each group to predict the story in each headline. After the groups have noted down their predictions, give them the matching news item and let them find out to what extent they were able to guess the contents of the news item.

This activity will not only teach students the important skill of prediction for effective reading comprehension, it will also help them connect what they read to their own lives. Learning to infer meaning from non-textual content will help them prepare themselves for the use of English for real life purposes.

Case Study 2 : Inferring information from road signs

Sima Bora teaches English in Class VII in a vernacular medium school at an urban area of BiswanathChariali. Her students always score good marks in English in the examination but are not confident of using the language in real life. They can answer questions from texts and poems

in the syllabus once it has been taught in the class, but are poor in inferring information from unfamiliar text in the outside world, such as signboards, advertisements, timetables etc.

Since Sima is aware that the learning outcomes for Class VII specify that students should be able to read texts beyond their prescribed textbooks, she brings photographs of different signboards, road signs etc. to the class and makes the students do a few reading activities with them.

Sima knows that signboards and other roadside texts containing English are usually read very fast, especially when people are travelling in vehicles. This makes it even more difficult for her students to read the texts and understand/infer the meaning. She realises that students need training in reading and inferring meaning from texts on signboards, hoardings and advertisements.

In one class, Sima decided to get her students to practise their reading skills through signboards. She showed them pictures of common road signs and asked them some questions on it to practise their skills of inferring information from the text and from pictures found on road signs.



Sima prepared some questions on the signboard, and made the students complete the activities in small groups.

The first activity was a matching exercise. Sima numbered the six pictures and asked the groups to match each picture with the places where these signs are found:

- a. Outside an electricity sub station
- b. Beside a newly constructed floor outside a shopping mall
- c. At a road crossing near a primary school
- d. At the beginning of a street
- e. At a road crossing
- f. Near the gate of a forest reserve

Through this activity, Sima was able to make them notice the words as well as interpret the pictures in the signboards. To activate their real world knowledge and experience while inferring information from the signs, she asked questions like:

- ★ Which of these signs warn us of some danger, and which give us instructions on what to do?
- ★ What might be the possible danger predicted in the signboards?
- ★ Why should we follow these signs?
- ★ How do the pictures on the signs help us understand the words better?

The students were very motivated by this activity, and Sima used the opportunity to make them practise how to infer information from signs. Later, Sima made them work with longer texts such as advertisements and hoardings, and gradually her students became very efficient readers. They also started bringing interesting signs and advertisements from newspapers and magazines themselves to practise their reading comprehension skills.

Let's stop and think

- ★ How successful was Sima successful in teaching inferring skills through this activity? Why?

- ★ Have you tried using similar real life English texts in your class to improve your students' inferential skills? What activities can you prepare to motivate them to read and infer information from real life English texts?

Activity 2 : Practising scanning and skimming skills with a poster game

In this activity, we discuss how you can provide exposure to your students to posters and banners, which are other commonly found real life English texts besides signboards. Using these texts, you can give your students practice in reading and interpreting information from non-classroom texts.

For this activity, collect a few posters of events recently concluded, from local cinema halls, clubs, shop walls, hospital walls, college walls, beauty parlours, meditation centres, etc. You will also find many posters on the internet, or on social media sites such as Facebook, such as the following:



Divide the class into groups, and give one poster to each group. Put up an information chart on the posters on the blackboard, and tell them they would be playing a game called Fastest Finger First. Each group will have to follow the information chart and note the information in their notebooks as soon as they can. Once a group has finished, they will have to take another poster and repeat the task. All the groups should complete the information chart for all the posters. Tell them that all groups will get a fixed time to note down the information; even if a group does not finish by the allotted time, they will have to give the chart to the next group. When the time is up, discuss the answers and award points to the group that got the highest number of correct answers. They will enjoy the game element, learn to look for information quickly and also learn to read a poster quickly to get its gist or overall idea.

Here is a sample information chart you can use:

- Name of the event:
- Date(s) of the event:
- Venue (place) of the event:
- Highlights of the event:
- Any other important details:

Unit summary

In this unit you have seen how a variety of real world texts can be used to develop reading comprehension skills in Class VII students, such as scanning, skimming, inferring and predicting. Through a little extra effort, like collecting sample materials that are commonly found, you can make your English classes very exciting and useful. By engaging them in reading activities relating to real life uses of English, you will be able to motivate your students to read on their own and become confident and independent readers. This will then help them read and comprehend their lessons better, and prepare them for life outside school. In other words, by using a variety of non class-text materials, you will be able to help your students meet the learning outcomes specified for Class VII.

Suggested Questions

1. Match the pictures with the places where these signs (to be provided by the teacher) are found.
2. Look at the road signs below and answer the following:



PEDESTRIAN
CROSSING



SCHOOL
AHEAD



MAN AT
WORK

- a. Where do you find them?
 - b. What do these pictures mean?
 - c. What precautions will you take after seeing them?
3. Go through the front page of a newspaper. Take two highlighter pens of different colours. Now, highlight all the regional news in one colour and the national news with the other pen. Talk with your teacher about the news items and observe how the important current news find place in the front page. Sit in groups of five and share some of the news with the class.
 4. Match the following Days with their respective dates
 - a. Earth Day. 15th October
 - b. Hand Washing Day. 22nd April
 - c. English Language Day 31st May
 - d. No Tobacco Day. 22nd December
 - e. National Mathematics Day 23rd April
 5. Write a few lines on one or two news items of each indoor game and outdoor game from the sports section of the newspapers provided to you.

