UNIT STRUCTURE

Teaching Reading with Comprehension
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 8.13 :** Reading textual/non textual materials with comprehension	**Sub Area**: Reading between the lines	**Unit 3** Little by Little The Enor-mous Turnip **Unit 4** Sea Song A Little Fish Story **Unit 5** The Balloon Man The Yellow Butterfly	In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to: ⇨ Locate/ extract information from non print materials such as tables and charts ⇨ Interpret information that is not stated, but implied		What this unit will teach you	Reading a railway time table to extract	Using a weather chart to interpret information	Reading a product label to infer meaning	Using a product packet to develop inferring	What you learnt in this unit	**Sample Question :** 1. Let's talk about cultivation	⇨ www.tess-india.edu.in ⇨ www.reading-rocket.org ⇨ www.bbc.in, www.british-council.in

Overview

This unit discusses strategies to help students read a variety of texts to develop their reading comprehension skills. The case studies and activities will give you ideas of designing classroom activities to make students interested to read material beyond the textbook. The unit will also give you ideas to encourage students to read and understand what is stated in a text and what is implied. in other words, the activities in this unit will help you give your students practice in inferring or guessing what is not written explicitly or openly in a text. These are skills that students will require later in life for higher studies as well as for social and professional purposes.

Rationale

In our earlier set of units, we discussed using two reading strategies - scanning and skimming - to help students read and comprehend a text. We hope you were able to use them in your classroom. In this unit we will deal with ways of helping students to 'read between the lines', a skill that has been identified as a learning gap in the Gunotsav 2017 results. In this unit, we will try to address Learning Outcome 8.13 for Class VIII, which speaks of reading and comprehending textual and non textual materials in English. We will discuss the benefits of exposing students to texts other than their English lessons, and also various kinds of non-print material found in various texts, such as different types of graphs, tables, maps and charts in their Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies textbooks..

Introduction

When we talk of reading a text ,we mean reading stories, plays, articles, descriptions etc.,which involves reading and understanding words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. However efficient reading involves more than just reading words. Visual images such as photographs, cartoons and graphs are also used to express ideas. Other materials such as charts, graphs, tables and maps also provide information and ideas in a format that is easy to remember. While teaching reading comprehension strategies, therefore, teachers should help students interpret graphical presentation of information along with the printed word.

Unit Objectives

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

* ✶ Locate/extract information from non print materials such as tables and charts.
* ✶ Interpret information that is not stated, but implied

Case study 1 : Reading a railway time table to extract information

Rajlakhmi Baruah is an English teacher in a remote M.E. school in Barpeta. Her students love her classes because she always involves them in activities rather than giving long lectures and reading lessons herself. She always makes it a point that her talk time is less and that of students more, by engaging them in various reading activities. Also, when she noticed that students dislike reading long text lessons in hot summer days, she decided to try out something new and interesting to help her students read English texts with enthusiasm, even on uncomfortable hot days. Here she narrates what she did in her class one hot summer day…

I downloaded a railway timetable on my mobile phone and took prints. I started the class by asking the students if they would like to go on a train journey with me. Needless to say, the students became very excited and wanted to know more. So I told them they would have to look at a train timetable and help me decide which train to book I made students sit in groups of three and distributed a copy of the railway timetable to each group. I asked them to read and note down the following information from the timetable:

1. Name of the trains
2. Headings in each column
3. Train Name/number
4. Departure and arrival time
5. Type of train
6. Service days

Trains From GUWAHATI (GHY) To NEW TINSUKIA JN (NTSK). Following is the list of all the trains running between GUWAHATI (GHY) to NEW TINSUKIA JN (NTSK) Railway Stations

Train No.	Train Name	Start Point	Departure	Destination	Arrival	Type	Service Days
2 5910	NTSK JIV ACHH LIN	GUWAHATI (GHY)	03:20 AM	NEW TINSUKIA JN (NTSK)	2:35 PM (11:15 H)	EXP	SMTWTFS
1 5910	AVADH ASSAM EXP	GUWAHATI (GHY)	03:20 AM	NEW TINSUKIA JN (NTSK)	2:35 PM (11:15 H)	EXP	SMTWTFS
1 5929	DIBRUGARH EXP	GUWAHATI (GHY)	05:20 AM	NEW TINSUKIA JN (NTSK)	4:35 PM (11:15 H)	EXP	SMTWTFS
1 5967	RNY DBRG EXPRESS	GUWAHATI (GHY)	07:30 AM	NEW TINSUKIA JN (NTSK)	7:37 PM (12:07 H)	EXP	SMTWTFS
1 5927	RNY DBRG EXPRESS	GUWAHATI (GHY)	07:30 AM	NEW TINSUKIA JN (NTSK)	8:00 PM (12:30 H)	EXP	SMTWTFS
2 2501	NEW TINSUKIA EXP	GUWAHATI (GHY)	09:10 AM	NEW TINSUKIA JN (NTSK)	8:45 PM (11:35 H)	SF	SMTWTFS

I allotted 15 minutes to the class to explore the timetable and note down the information. I went around the groups as they worked and helped them wherever needed. I noticed that the group members had divided their task among themselves - two members looked closely at the timetable while the third member noted down the information. I found the students deeply engrossed in their work. After the groups finished, we had a whole class discussion on the kinds of information available on a railway timetable, the various abbreviations used, the meaning of 'train type', 'berth', and so on.

Then I gave them an individual activity, asking each student to look at the timetable individually and extract the following information:

Which train is the fastest? How much time does it take to cover the distance? Which train would you choose to travel and why?

The students loved the activity and wanted to do more in the next class. So I asked them to collect bus timetables, score charts of football and cricket matches, movie timetable, etc. from old newspapers and bring them to class to work on the next day.

Let's stop and think

★ In what ways do you think Rajlakshmi's activity will help her students improve their reading comprehension skills?

★ What strategies did Rajlakshmi use to help children who were struggling?

★ How was evaluation carried out in the class?

★ What challenges might come up if you carried out such an activity in your class?

Activity 1 : Using a weather chart to interpret information

Students enjoy reading different forms of texts.Therefore students should be provided opportunity to read a variety of texts.The students in our schools do not get enough exposure to read English texts.The textbooks provide only limited examples. As a teacher you can help them read a variety of texts which would help them in their day to day real life situations. Here is an example of an activity which you may try out in your classroom.

Make a weather chart as shown in fig.1 below. You may collect one from old newspapers also.

Fig.1 **Weather chart and weather forecast**

Monday June 12

Place	Temperature		Humidity	Weather forecast for next 24 hours
	high	low		
Guwahati	37^0C	27^0C	87^0	Partly cloudy
Barpeta	34^0C	26^0C	80^0	Cloudy with mild rain
Silchar	36^0C	25^0C	76^0	Cloudy with thunder storm
Jorhat	32^0C	24^0C	74^0	Mostly Cloudy with thunder storm
Dhubri	36^0C	26^0C	89^0	Mostly cloudy

Ask students to sit in groups of three. Distribute copies of the chart to each group, or put it up on the blackboard for students to copy in their notebooks. Also write down the following questions on the blackboard and ask students to locate the information from the given chart:

1. For which date has this weather chart and forecast been made?
2. What are the kinds of information available on a weather forecast chart?
3. Which two places recorded the highest and the lowest temperature for that day?
4. Which place was the most humid, and which place recorded the lowest percentage of humidity?
5. Which place is likely to get a thunderstorm in the next 24 hours?

   To help students move from reading factual information to inferring and personalizing, give them a situation like the following to discuss, and later share with the class:

6. You are planning to go on a field trip from Guwahati to Silchar on 13 June. Should you postpone the trip? Why or why not?

   Encourage the students to look closely at phrases like 'partly cloudy' or 'cloudy with thunderstorm' to practise their inferring skills. The discussion in their groups can include predictions of these weather forecasts using related vocabulary such as 'heavy rains', 'storm', 'landslide', fallen trees', 'umbrellas and raincoats', and so on.

Let's stop and think

★ What skills do you think your students will learn from this activity?

★ Is this activity too easy or too difficult for your students? How can it be modified ?

★ How will you organize this activity if your class is a large class?

Case Study 2 : Reading a product label to infer meaning

Pahi Baruah teaches English in Class VIII. Her students are very good in inferring. So she involves her class in activities that give them practice in inferring meaning from pictures. written texts like stories and poems and real life texts such as graphs, puzzles, diagrams and products. Here is an activity that she used in her class with a commonly available product label.

"In front of my school there is a grocery shop. Students often visit this shop during tiffin hours to buy chocolate, chips, cold drinks etc. They are familiar with most of the items in the shop. I realised that commonly found product wrappers would be a good source of English comprehension practice, since almost all product covers are printed in English. Like all children, my students are very fond of Maggie noodles. So I decided to try out an activity with Maggie noodles packets to give my students some practice in inferring.

For this activity, I bought a few packets of five-rupee Maggie noodles to class. I made the children sit in groups and distributed one packet to each group. Then I put up a few questions on the blackboard on information from the packet. I made sure that some of the questions related to information that was not given directly on the packet. Here are the questions I prepared:

★ Is 'Maggie' the name of the food item or the brand name? Which part of the wrapper helps you know this?

★ Is this a vegetarian or a non-vegetarian food item? Which part of the packet has information on this?

★ Is this a ready-to-eat food item or does it require cooking? How do you know this from the information on the packet?

★ How much time is required to cook it? How do you know?

At first the students answered each question very quickly from their experience of having eaten/cooked Maggie. But when I asked them to give me reasons for their answers, they had to spend some time reading all the information on the packet - front, back and sides. This made them read closely, and make meaning from what was implied rather than directly stated. For example, they had to guess that the word 'Veg' was the short form of 'vegetarian', and they also had to look at the list of ingredients to confirm that no meat/fish/egg items were in the noodles or the packet of masala. In other words, they were able to practise their inferring skills through this activity.

Let's stop and think

* In what way is Pahi's activity different from traditional comprehension checking exercises?
* In what way did this activity help to develop students' inferring skills?
* What other kinds of real life texts can be used to teach inferring skills?

Activity 2 : Using a product packet to develop inferring

Inferring is a reading strategy in which the reader uses background knowledge and clues to come up with an idea that is not clearly stated, but hinted. Inferring is called a higher order thinking skills because it involves not only the ability to read and understand words and sentence structures, but also the skill of 'reading between the lines'. As your students grow older, they will come across many texts in their own language as well as in English, that will require them to understand and respond to things that are not just stated, but also things that are implied. Practising inferring skills is a good way of preparing students to meet the challenges of real life reading for higher education, jobs as well as for gathering knowledge of the world.

We can teach our students to infer information from the lessons in their textbooks as well as from other material like- visuals, signs and advertisements, product labels, and so on which they come across in their daily lives. Here is an activity you might like to try out in your classroom.

For the activity, collect used tetra packets of Amul Taaza Milk (or any other biodegradable packs easily available in your locality). Before the actual reading task, have a brief class discussion on whether they drink milk daily, what kind of milk they drink, and why. Then divide the class into groups, distribute an empty packet to each group, and tell students they will have to compare the information on the packet and also a passage on cow's milk that you can write on the blackboard or dictate to the students:

Cow's milk has many important health benefits, such as helping weight loss, providing calcium for healthy bones and teeth, supporting the immune system, reducing fat and protecting the heart. Cow's milk contains useful ingredients for human growth such as water, lactose, fat, protein and minerals. Because of its high nutritional value, cow's milk is popular across the world.

The task for each group is to read and compare the information on the passage and the tetra pack, and answer the following questions. Remind them that they will have to give answers using the 'evidence' they find in the texts:

★ Which is more healthy - cow's milk or Amul Taaza? Why?

★ Is the nutritional (health) value of both types of milk the same? What ingredients (things needed to make something) do they have in common, and what health benefits?

★ Which kind of milk would you prefer to drink? Why?

Why is the packet in which Amul Taaza milk is sold called a tetra pack? How are tetra packs more environment-friendly than polythene bags?

Unit summary

In this unit we have discussed examples of activities that can be carried out in the classroom to help students read and understand non textual materials. The case studies and the activities tried to show how students can be involved in different tasks to develop their reading comprehension skills such as locating and interpreting information from graphical material in texts such as tables and charts. We hope the unit has given you ideas about designing and organizing reading activities around a variety of non-print texts to help students meet their learning needs beyond the classroom.

Suggested Questions

1. Let's talk about cultivation

The following table gives us information about geographical conditions necessary for the cultivation of rice, tea and jute. Prepare a set of questions relating to the information in the table, and also a few questions that will make students relate the information to their real life experiences. Put students in pairs and groups to work out the answers and have discussions based on the information.

| Crops	Temperature	Rainfall	Soil
Rice	16^0C to 27^0C	100 cm to 200 cm	Alluvial soil
Jute	25^0C to 27^0C	150 cm to 200cm	Alluvial or loamy soil
Tea	21^0C to 29^0C	150 cm to 250 cm	Fertile soil with iron and lime rich in humus

2. The following chart shows the attendance of class VIII students for one week(Monday to Saturday). Put students in small groups and ask each group to prepare five questions on the table. The groups can then exchange questions and work out the answers.

Example : On which day of the week was Amar absent?

Name	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Amar	P	P	A	p	p	P
Ananya	P	P	P	p	p	P
Bipul	A	A	P	p	P	A
Biplab	A	P	P	p	A	P
Sabnum	P	P	A	p	P	A
Diganta	A	A	A	p	P	P
Purno	P	p	p	p	A	P

3. Get students to collect bus/train timetables and make them to locate information on bus timings and number of buses/trains, name of buses/trains, their destinations etc. Then make them prepare a similar timetable for a summer camping trip for the class.

4. Collect score charts of football, cricket matches etc. from daily newspapers and ask students to interpret the information. Follow this up by making them read a news item on a match to see how the scores are presented there. Finally, make them prepare their own news item based on a score chart.

5. In Madhavpur High School there are 30 students in Class VIII. The students use different means of transport to come to school. The following diagram shows the number of students who come to school in different ways. Design question to help students to interpret the diagram. This activity will help them connect with their Mathematics lesson and use their previous knowledge to interpret diagrammatic presentation of information. It will also help them practise related vocabulary such as pie chart, percentage, proportion, half, quarter, one-fourth, and so on.
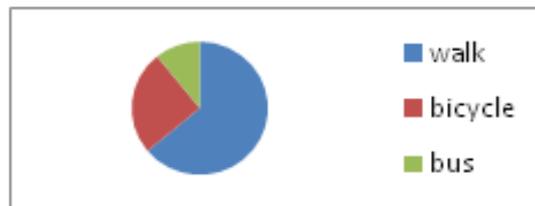
Other resources: www.readingrocket.org, www.bbc.in, www.britishcouncil.in, TESS India OER

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