

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING SKILLS IN EFFECTIVE ENGLISH LEARNING

Panjiyeva Zarnigor

Student of Termiz State University

Abstract: *Developing reading skills play crucial role in learning English . This article analyzes the significance of reading skills in effective English language acquisition. It explores how reading enhances the vocabulary growth, deeper comprehension, and broader knowledge. Key strategies such as predicting, scanning, chunking, contextual understanding, and summarizing are examined as essential techniques that improve reading proficiency and support the development of critical thinking.*

Keywords: *Reading skills; reading comprehension; vocabulary development ; reading strategies ; predicting ; skimming and scanning; chunking; contextual understanding; summarizing; text comprehension ; academic reading.*

Today, English is one of the most widely learned languages globally. Learners use various methods to develop language proficiency. There are four crucial skills in learning English: listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

Reading is one of these four essential skills. It not only expands students' vocabulary and word bank but also broadens their horizon by allowing them to read about different cultures, history, and science.

Reading as an intellectual activity provides individuals with extensive knowledge and enhances their comprehension across a wide range of topics. This understanding and knowledge are available through various information sources, such as magazines, newspapers, and even the limitless information source that is the internet. There are several ways to develop reading skills using these and other resources, which we will explore below.

Strategies for Improving Reading

1. Predicting

One of the key strategies for improving reading comprehension is predicting, which helps the reader set a clear purpose during reading. Research shows that good readers use their existing knowledge to make predictions and form ideas as they read. This strategy also helps develop students' interest and comprehension of the text. Using titles, tables of contents, images, and main keywords are all part of predicting strategies (Teele, 2004).

2. Scanning and Skimming

The next strategy is scanning, which involves searching for specific information by reading quickly. Students might not have noticed it, but they are actually already good at scanning. For example, they have used scanning when looking through a TV program

guide or a phone book. With skimming, they can read up to 1000 words per minute. This is incredibly useful for quickly grasping the general gist of a text.

3. Chunking

The next method is to read the text in small sections, known as chunking. If learners are reading a longer or more complex text, consider breaking it down into smaller parts. For example, they could read two paragraphs at a time, then pause and quickly summarize what they have just read in their mind. Chunking relieves them from excessive pressure and increases their ability to fully comprehend the information in the text.

4. Understanding from Context

Another strategy is understanding from context, which is an excellent way to comprehend what language learners are reading even if there are words they don't know. To understand from context, students should pay attention to the words and sentences surrounding the unknown words. For this, they focus on the main phrase or idea in the sentence and try to understand the general meaning of the paragraph based on that. They can also analyze the meaning of a word by looking for synonyms or antonyms located near the unknown word.

5. Summarizing

The final strategy is to summarize what learners have read. One of the most efficient strategies for achieving a deeper understanding of reading material is composing a summary. Writing a summary requires them to identify the important aspects of the text and express them in your own words. This process helps determine whether they have truly understood what they have read and makes it easier to remember the information for the long term.

Developing text comprehension is one of the most crucial aspects of the reading process. The strategies discussed in this article – such as summarizing, predicting, understanding from context, and chunking – help learners deeply comprehend the content of a text, solidify knowledge, and enhance critical thinking. Through these approaches, learners can significantly improve their ability to effectively read and understand even long and complex texts. Therefore, conscious and regular use of reading strategies is an important step for every learner.

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