

# Literacy Skills



## Five Tips to Improve Reading Comprehension

### 1) Pre Reading Task:

Before reading the text, ask yourself what you already know about its topic. Try to recall as much information as you can. Think of related ideas you've learned in the past. Make brief notes about your thoughts or discuss what you remember with others.

### 2) Research

Background information may appear on book covers and inner flaps of book jackets. Many books include an introductory section and a mini-biography about the author. Book publisher's websites may also include background information. Think about the information you read.

**Ask:** What kind of text is this?

What new information did I learn, and what do I expect to learn?

Is this text informative or entertaining, fact or fiction?

What interests me about this book?

### 3) Learn new vocabulary words

As you read, make a list of unfamiliar vocabulary words. Look up the meanings of the words in the dictionary, and jot definitions down by hand. Writing definitions by hand will help you remember the definition much more than by typing or by reading alone.

### 4) Reflection:

As you read, what questions come to mind? Read on to find the answers. You can think about the questions and answers or jot them down on paper.

### 5) Test yourself on what you have learned.

After your reading session, quiz yourself on the main points. What was the main idea? Who are the characters in the story? What information did you learn? Jot down your thoughts in your own words to help you remember them and give you deeper insight into the topic.

## **Tips for Responding to Reading Comprehension Questions**

- Provide evidence from the reading selection – go back to the reading to find specific examples.
- Include your own ideas. Use your ideas to provide examples from the selection.
- Summarize the reading by identifying the main idea and supporting details
  - o MAIN Idea: What is the author trying to prove?
  - o SUPPORTING DETAILS: How does the author prove his/her point? What are the examples/reason?

### **Reading TIPS:**

- Read the questions before you read the reading selection.
- Underline key points while you read.
- Always refer back to the reading when formulating your answers.

Reading is an interactive process - it is a two-way process. As a reader you are not passive but active. This means you have to work at constructing the meaning from the marks on the paper, which you use as necessary. You construct the meaning using your knowledge of the language, your subject and the world, continually predicting and assessing.

### **Try this with any text you need to read:**

#### **Before reading**

##### **1. Think about your reasons for reading the text:**

- you are interested because it is about your subject, or it is related to your subject
- you want background information, or detailed information
- you want to know what the writer's views are
- you are going to have a discussion
- you are going to write an essay on this subject later

Each reason will influence the way you read e.g. quickly or slowly, looking for fact or opinion.

**2. Look at the title, headline, any sub-headings, photos or illustrations. Use these to predict what the text will be about - the topic.**

**3. Think about what you already know on this topic.**

**4. Write down what you would like to find out from the text. You could write actual questions you would like answers to.**

**5. Make a note of words or phrases connected with the topic that you may find in the text.**