

Mohammed Khider University of Biskra  
Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages  
Department of English Language



**Course:** Study Skills

**Level:** First year LMD

**Instructor:** Dr. Messaouda BENDAHMANE

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## Effective Reading

**Objectives of the Lesson:** by the end of this lecture, learners will be able to:

- Determine a comprehensive meaning of effective reading
- Identify the different types and techniques of the reading skill

### Introduction

Reading is an essential skill for all learners. It helps learners to process and evaluate information to build their knowledge and offers them an opportunity to see how language is used. Reading is a complex process that involves working to build up a sense from a text. Thus, it is an active process of reconstructing an author's ideas.

### 1. Definition of Reading

Reading is the process of constructing meaning from written symbols (signs) and. In other words, it is a complex cognitive process of decoding written symbols in

order to get a meaning. Baudoin et al (1994, p.1) describe reading as a: “complex activity that involves both word recognition, the processor perceiving how written symbols correspond to one’s spoken language; and comprehension, the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected paragraphs”.

To read effectively, the reader must be able to see, decode, perceive, comprehend, and react to what is written. As soon as the reader sees the text, s/he starts to perform a visual activity to recognize the language s/he is reading. Then, the brain starts to process the information given by the eyes to make sense of it, not just a sense from the written words and sentences, but also ideas, memories, and knowledge triggered by those words and sentences.

## **2. Types of Reading**

### **2.1. Intensive Reading**

According to Harmer (2001), intensive reading is concentrated and less relaxed. It concerns shorter texts and aims at attaining learning goals with close guidance from the teacher. During this type of reading, the learner gains text comprehension to make critical judgments about the text s/he is reading by offering his/her interpretation. Thus, be able to state a well-founded opinion about the content, the intention, the arguments, and the language used in the text.

Intensive reading is generally done slowly and requires a higher degree of understanding because it focuses on details and analysis. That is, it means extracting meanings of a given text with taking a great consideration to grammatical, syntactic and semantic elements .i.e. it is detailed understanding that is not limited to

understand the general ideas but to how texts are organized including the structure and metacognitive strategies used by both authors and learner (Alyousef, 2005)

## **2.2. Extensive Reading**

Extensive reading refers to the careful reading of long written materials such as novels and books in which the learner is interested in for comprehension. It is mostly performed outside the class time and its main purpose is to build reader confidence and enjoyment. Long and Richards (1971, p.216) identify extensive reading as "occurring when students read large amounts of high-interest material, usually out of class, concentrating on meaning, "reading for gist" and skipping unknown words".

## **3. Reading Techniques**

### **3.1. Skimming**

Skimming is a reading technique meant to look for main or general ideas in a text, without going into detailed and exhaustive reading. As the name suggests, skimming is done by actively separating the crucial information from the unnecessary details and extracting the essential data in a short period of time.

### **3.2. Scanning**

Scanning a text means looking through it quickly to find specific information. Scanning is commonly used in everyday life, for example when looking up a word in a dictionary or finding your friend's name in the contacts directory of your phone.

Scanning and skimming are often confused though they are quite different. While skimming is concerned with finding *general* information, namely the main ideas, scanning involves looking for *specific* information.

#### **4. The Purposes of Reading**

According to Grabe and Stoller (2019), the purposes for reading include:

**a. Reading to search for simple information:** Reading to search for simple information is a common reading ability, though some researchers see it as a relatively independent cognitive process. It is used so often in reading tasks that is probably best seen as type of reading ability.

**b. Reading to skim quickly:** Reading to skim quickly is a common part of many reading task and a useful skill in its own right. It involves, in essence, a combination of strategies for guessing where important might be in the text, and then using basic reading comprehension skills on those segments of the text until a general idea is formed.

**c. Reading to learn from text:** Reading to learn typically occurs in academic and professional contexts in which a person needs to learn a considerable amount of information from a text, it requires abilities to remember main ideas, recognize and build rhetorical frames and link the text to the reader base.

**d. Reading to integrate information:** Reading to integrate information requires additional decision about the relative importance of complementary, mutually supporting or conflicting information and likely restructuring of a rhetorical frame to accommodate information from multiple sources.

**e. Reading to write and reading to critique texts:** Reading to write and reading to critique texts may be task variants of reading to integrate information. Both require abilities to compose, select, and critique information from a text.

**f. Reading for general comprehension:** Reading for general comprehension when accomplished by a skilled fluent reader, require very rapid and automatic processing of words, strong skills in forming a general meaning representation of main idea, and efficient coordination of many processes under very limited time constraint

Purposes of reading are not only for students, but also the people in general. They must read extensively to get information and knowledge of social living. It can help a person keeps informed on the social, political, and economical problems of his country.

## **5. The Benefits of Reading**

Reading can improve one's life in several ways leading to better well-being, mental health, personal growth, and a boost in confidence. These benefits will carry over to school work, career and social life. The benefits of reading may include:

- ✓ Expanding your vocabulary through acquiring new words
- ✓ Stimulating your brain and strengthening mental capacities.
- ✓ Improving your memory
- ✓ Increasing knowledge
- ✓ Strengthening focus and concentration
- ✓ Relieving stress
- ✓ Improving concentration and promoting analytical and critical reading.
- ✓ Developing writing skills.

### **Exercise**

- Give examples about when to use skimming and scanning and explain how can this affect your reading?