

# Teaching Reading and Writing

Preparing to read

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## Learning outcomes

This module of teaching reading and writing focuses on setting context and structuring lessons. By the end of the module you will be able to:

- explain how conducting specific tasks before, during and after reading will support learners in reading full texts
- identify a number of appropriate pre-reading, during and post-reading activities that will prepare learners to read and comprehend full texts
- Identify a logical order in which to carry out supporting tasks before, during and after a reading activity.

When teachers focus on reading in the classroom, they conduct **intensive reading activities**. These activities study short texts and are designed to train students in the skills of reading.

**Extensive reading** involves the reading of longer texts on a regular basis to practise these skills and encourage reading for pleasure.

In this unit we are mainly concerned with intensive reading activities.

## 1 Before you watch

a. What do you understand by the context of a reading text?

b. What do you think contributes to this context?

Try to compare your answers with a partner.

## 2 Watch

### 2.1 Pre-reading tasks

**Context** is the situation that forms the setting for an event, statement, or idea and that can help us fully understand or explain why it exists or happens..

Watch and listen to the commentary at the beginning of the video **Preparing to read: Part 1** (00:00 to 01:30) Then pause the video.

- a. How similar are the trainer's answers to your answers from the previous section?  
Look back at your answers and make any additions or amendments.
- b. Note down three reasons why we do pre-reading tasks. Watch again if necessary.

i. \_\_\_\_\_

ii. \_\_\_\_\_

iii. \_\_\_\_\_

Watch the first two classroom sequences in **Preparing to read: Part 1** (01:49 to 13:48).

- c. Note down two pre-reading tasks that you see in each sequence. What is the purpose of each task?

<b>South Korea</b> (01:49 to 06:21)	<b>Taiwan</b> (06:30 to 13:48)
Pre-reading task 1 and purpose	Pre-reading task 1 and purpose
Pre-reading task 2 and purpose	Pre-reading task 2 and purpose

## 2.2 Applying pre-reading tasks

a. What knowledge and experience do we bring to the following texts?

email from a friend	a fairy tale

b. What kind of pre-reading tasks do you do to help set the context for your learners? There is one suggestion in the box get you started.

pre-teach vocabulary

## 2.3 Pre-reading stages

a. Order these pre-reading stages by writing an number next to each one.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Some learners go outside to look at a tree.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The teacher uses real objects and pictures to introduce the reading topic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The learners ask each other about trees.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The teacher asks learners questions which relate to their experience of the reading topic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The learners complete a worksheet about trees.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The learners write down key vocabulary on the topic.

Watch the third classroom sequence in **Preparing to read: Part 1** (14:40 to 25:00) to check your answers.

## 2.4 – Activities during and after reading

Watch the classroom sequences in **Preparing to read: Part 2** (00:00 to 11:45).

a. Which activities support learners during and after reading?

<b>West Bengal, India</b> (01:09 to 04:15)	<b>Taiwan</b> (04:42 to 11:45)
During reading •	During reading • •
After reading •	After reading • • •

## 2.5 Activities before, during and after reading

Look at the following reading tasks. Would you ask learners to do them before, during or after reading? Why? The first two have been done for you.

tasks	before	during	after
i. Check the meaning of unknown words in a dictionary. <b>So that it encourages them to guess the words while they are reading and does not interrupt the process.</b>			✓
ii. Guess meaning of unknown words. <b>If they need to know the word to understand the text, after if not.</b>		✓	
iii. Use the title to predict the content of the text			
iv. Give their opinion on the content of the text			
v. Answer comprehension questions on the text			
vi. Put pictures that relate to the content of the text in order			
vii. Underline connecting words and linkers, for example, however, firstly			
viii. Write a response to the text			

## 2.6 Reading stages

a. Re-order these stages of a reading lesson.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Predict the content of the text.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write quiz questions about the text to test other learners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Talk about a visual image and what is already known about the reading topic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read the text in detail. Match sentence halves about the text content.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Match vocabulary from the text with a definition.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read the text looking for key words only (to help them understand the main ideas).

b. Group each stage into pre-reading, while reading and post reading tasks.

Pre-reading	While reading	Post reading

c. Watch the classroom sequence in **Preparing to read: Part 3** (00:00 to 15:41) to check your answers.

## 3 Reflection

As part of a research project learners were asked to write down a reading goal for one week and then report back on the result of that goal. Here is what one learner wrote:

### Reading goal

My goal for this week is to stop during reading and predict what is going to happen next in the story.

### Result

The goal helps me understand a lot when I'm reading.

Source: Smolen, Newman, Wathen and Lee (1995), cited by Brown and Abeywickrama, Language Assessment, (2010), p.148

How does predicting what is going to happen, help learners understand reading texts better?

Think of two techniques which you have seen in this video. How could you use these techniques with your own learners? Make some notes and a brief plan.

1.

2.

Come back to this page in two or three weeks from now and describe how your plan went.

What did you try?

How did it go?

# Transcripts and answers

# Transcripts of trainer's talk

## 2.1 Pre-reading tasks

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Reading texts exist within a context. This context is both general and individual to the reader. For example a newspaper article is set within the context of a particular country or region, and current news stories or issues relevant to that context; a children's story is set within the culture that it belongs to and includes details that are often familiar within that culture.

Each student will bring their own knowledge and experience of this context to the text in question. This knowledge and experience will vary and may depend on their interest.

We need to do pre-reading tasks with our students so that they have the opportunity to share their knowledge of the context, but also to get them interested in the topic and give them a reason for reading.

Setting the context in this way can really help ease the process of reading.

Now let's have a look at some examples of pre-reading tasks that aim to achieve these objectives. Watch the films and make notes to answer the questions in the viewing tasks. The answers will appear at the end of each sequence.

## 2.4 Activities during and after reading

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We've seen how pre-reading tasks can support students in understanding a text before they start reading. But in structuring a reading lesson, we should plan tasks that support students not only before, but during and after their reading too. This is called a pre-while-post model for reading.

Now let's look at some examples of activities that support students during and after reading. Watch the films and make notes to answer the questions in the viewing tasks. The answers will appear at the end of each sequence.

## 2.6 Reading stages

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In this lesson, you'll see how the pre-while-post model is applied in its entirety. Watch the film and make notes to answer the questions in the viewing task. The answers will appear at the end of the sequence.

# Answers

## 2.1 Pre-reading tasks

b. Note down three reasons why we do pre-reading tasks.

- i. To give learners the opportunity to share their knowledge of the context.
- ii. To get learners interested in the topic.
- iii. To give learners a reason for reading.

c.

South Korea	Taiwan
Pre-reading task 1 and purpose Talking about the book cover and pictures from the story – to introduce the story and generate interest.	Pre-reading task 1 and purpose Pre-teaching and practising story vocabulary – to prepare learners for the story.
Pre-reading task 2 and purpose Learners predict the order of the story events – to give them a reason for reading.	Pre-reading task 2 and purpose Practising the vocabulary with a Bingo game – to consolidate the vocabulary and give learners speaking, listening, reading and writing practice.

## 2.2 Applying pre-reading tasks

We bring the following knowledge and experience to each texts:

email from a friend	a fairy tale
When we read an email from a friend, we bring our knowledge of 'e-mail' language to the context as well as our experience of the relationship we have with this friend.	When we read a fairy tale we bring our knowledge and experience of the language and content of these kinds of stories. For example there is usually good and evil and evil is usually overcome in the happy ending. The stories are usually set in the past and they use conventional phrases such as 'once upon a time' and 'happily ever after'.

## 2.3 Pre-reading stages

Task order:

- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Some students go outside to look at a tree.
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ The teacher uses real objects and pictures to introduce the reading topic.
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ The students ask each other about trees.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ The teacher asks students questions which relate to their experience of the reading topic.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ The students complete a worksheet about trees.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ The students write down key vocabulary on the topic.

## 2.4 Activities during and after reading

West Bengal, India	Taiwan
During reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learners answer comprehension questions (orally) as they read.</li> </ul>	During reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learners read the text with the teacher</li> <li>learners answer comprehension questions as they read</li> </ul>
After reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learners answer worksheet questions about the text in groups.</li> </ul>	After reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learners read the story dialogue to practise for the role play.</li> <li>learners watch a model role play.</li> <li>learners practise the role play in groups.</li> </ul>

## 2.5 Activities before, during and after reading

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- i. Check the meaning of unknown words in a dictionary.  
*After - so that it encourages them to guess the words while they are reading and does not interrupt the process.*
- ii. Guess meaning of unknown words.  
*During - if they need to know the word to understand the text, after if not.*
- iii. Use the title to predict the content of the text  
*Before - to give them a reason to read and help set the context.*
- iv. Give their opinion on the content of the text  
*After – as they can only do this when they have understood the text.*
- v. Answer comprehension questions on the text  
*During – to support their understanding.*
- vi. Put pictures that relate to the content of the text in order  
*Before - to help set the context or during - to support understanding.*
- vii. Underline connecting words and linkers e.g. however, firstly  
*After – so as not interrupt process of reading and as a specific language focus.*
- viii. Write a response to the text  
*After – as they can only do this when they have understood the text.*

## 2.6 Reading stages

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### Pre-reading

1. Talk about a visual image and what is already known about the reading topic
2. Match vocabulary from the text with a definition.
3. Predict the content of the text.

### While reading

4. Read the text looking for key words only
5. Read the text in detail. Match sentence halves about the text content.

### Post-reading

6. Write quiz questions about the text to test other students.

## 3. Reflection

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Predicting what is going to happen when reading a story contributes to students' context for reading. It gives them a reason to read (to find out if their predictions were right) and also may activate language or vocabulary. When we read in our own language we unconsciously predict words and content, but in a second language, sometimes our brains are too busy decoding to spend time predicting. We therefore may need to stop and consciously give time to this useful skill.

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