

ENGLISH

AN APPROACH TO COMPREHENSION

- 📖 Comprehension is the decoding and understanding of spoken, written and visual texts.
- 📖 It is the power of the mind to take information in and to understand it fully.
- 📖 The skills one acquires is not only for use in the English classroom or the examination.
- 📖 They are skills that are needed for every subject across the curriculum.
- 📖 They are skills that one acquires for life.

Basic strategies for reading an unknown text

Previewing:

Skim the passage to get an overview of the passage:

- Read the title – it gives us a hint of what the passage is about as well as the intention of the writer.
- The name of the author gives an idea of the era, style and the subject matter.
- Look at whatever other clues the writer gives – subheadings, footnotes, where the text comes from, etc.
- Read through the passage - ask questions about the purpose and meaning of the text.

Questions one should ask

- Who is the narrator and who is the audience?
- Where does the text come from? This will influence the subject matter and style of the text.
- What is the passage about?
- What is the author's intention in writing this passage? This will influence the style of writing.
- Where and when does it take place?
- How does the author communicate the message – what language techniques (style, tone and register) are used?

Finding the main ideas in the passage

Texts usually have an introduction, development and conclusion.

You need to find the main ideas of the text by reading each paragraph carefully and deciding what the main ideas are.

Each paragraph usually has one main idea. This will enable you to develop an understanding of the passage.

Read through the questions

- Read through the questions, as these will give clues about where to find the answers in the passage.
- It is important to understand the questions on the text as much as you have to understand the comprehension text itself.
- If you don't understand what the question requires from you, then you won't be able to answer the questions.
- Each question contains an instruction word. Identify these words and underline them. These words will tell you exactly what has to be done in order to answer the question.
- Also underline key words or ideas in the question. These key words focus on the content of the text and will give you an idea of where to find the answers in the passage.

SUMMARY WRITING SKILLS

What is a summary?

It is a shorter version of a longer text. When doing a summary you sum up the main points of the text, keeping what is important and discarding all the unnecessary detail.

Why is summarising so important?

really useful when you are:

It is

- ⊗ Studying
- ⊗ Writing key cards for your oral
- ⊗ Communicating (e.g. retelling a story)

✿ Organising your thoughts about something specific.

When doing the summary:

1. Make sure you know whether your summary should be in **POINT FORM** or in **PARAGRAPH** form.
2. Check the instruction on how long the summary should be.
3. Read the passage at least three times. Make sure you understand the content really well. (You cannot summarise a text that you do not understand.)
4. Underline the main idea or sentence in each paragraph.
5. Write a rough draft, using your key ideas. Compare your draft to the original text to ensure that all the main points are included.
6. Count the number of words of your summary. Try not just to cut out words. Rephrase your sentences to keep the ideas. If you have too few words, check that you have not left out important points from the original passage.
7. Read your summary again and edit it, correcting grammar and spelling mistakes.
8. Write your neat version.
9. Write the EXACT number of words in brackets under the summary on the right-hand side.

Here are some steps to help you practice summary writing:

1. FINDING THE MAIN IDEA

You first need a general view of what the passage is about. Start by ignoring the details. Look for the topic sentence. Then include the main supporting ideas.

ACTIVITY

Now do the same with the following paragraphs, i.e. find the topic sentence, and list the points that are connected with it.



The real risk of too much cell chatter

I love talking on my cellphone, even when driving – with a hands-free kit of course. Some studies have suggested that those kits could increase the risk of radiation by concentrating rays directly into the ear, into the brain along the acoustic nerve.

(Adapted from THE STAR, 29 August 2001, by Marika Sboros.)