



09 PRE-READING ACTIVITIES THAT AN ENGLISH TEACHER CAN DO IN HIS/HER ENGLISH TEACHING-LEARNING CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

'Good reading habit which keeps a student reading regularly for both pleasure and profit are the most valuable single stimulant for growth that the school has to impart.' By Menon & Patel. Reading is the ability to extract from the written or printed page, the thoughts, facts and information required. It is a composite activity that takes place as a unit of action. It gives opportunities to study *language : vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way to construct sentence, paragraphs and texts* and hence it is very important for a teacher to cultivate the skill of reading in his/her students. To do so a teacher has to plan a good number of *Pre-Reading Activities* for his/her students. Reading is a *receptive skill* in the *written mode*. It requires a learner to have the *schema* of Knowledge of Language Systems (KOLS) : knowledge related to sounds (phonology), words (lexis) and such aspects as spelling and order of letters/words (morph syntactic knowledge) and Knowledge of the World (KOW) and in particular of the subject being read.

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1. *Silent Reading*: A reader when reads silently to concentrate his attention in understanding the subject matter.

2. *Loud Reading*: Oral Reading of a reader line by line with correct pronunciation and using expression.

3. *Extensive Reading*: It means to read silently and quickly in order to understand the subject matter. It follows four steps of Introduction, Silent Reading, Questioning and Recapitulation.

4. *Intensive Reading*: It means the detailed study of a piece of text by Selection of the topic, Introduction of the topic, Presentation of the text, Model reading, Loud reading, Explanation and Testing of comprehension level of students.

Reading has three stages: There cannot be 'the one good way' of organizing a reading lesson as there are different purposes to serve at various stages (elementary, intermediate, advanced) of learning how to read.

Stage 1: *The Pre-Reading Stage* serves to stimulate interest and, where necessary, introduces language or concepts which the pupil may not know.

Stage 2: *The While-Reading Stage* helps the teacher achieve the main aim by getting pupils to 'engage with' the text in different ways and here the teacher puts *Comprehension Questions* to check the attention of the students.

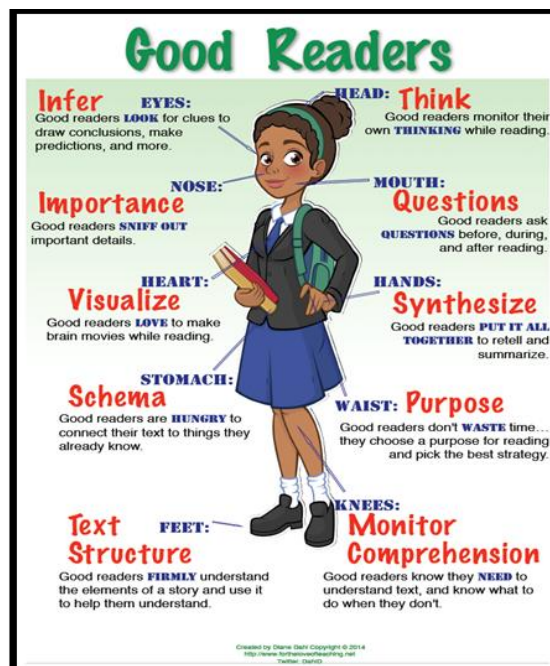


Fig.:1 Picture showing the qualities of a good Reader.

Stage 3: The Post-Reading Stage seeks to utilize the text and the meanings derived from it in order to help pupils relate to other activities that would be of interest and use to them.

There are six types of Reading followed in the periphery of school, namely, Loud and Silent Reading, Intensive and Extensive Reading, Supplementary Reading and Library Reading.

The following are the 09 Pre-Reading Activities that a English Teacher can do in his/her English Teaching-Learning Classes:

1. Reading words from Dictionary: Dictionary plays a very important role in helping students learn and understand new words in a foreign language classroom, and hence it is advisable for all the students to bring a pocket dictionary of *Webster*, *Oxford*, *Thesarus* or *Collins* in the English classes. 'Life is owe Dictionary' – *Ralph Waldo Emeroon*

- **DEMONSTRATION:** The teacher writes in the black-board three to four words may be related to text or textual words like friend, lazy... etc. The students are then directed to Extensively Read the dictionary and find out their meanings, write the antonym, synonym and frame a sentence with the assigned words. Then, the teacher picks up three to four students.
- **SCAFFOLDING:** The teacher helps the students in searching the meanings of the words from the dictionary, helps in correcting the sentences if required and prepares a *matrix* in the blackboard while the students answers.
 - **Table: 1(a)** Antonym, Synonym & Make Sentence Matrix prepared by teacher on the blackboard.

Word	Antonym	Synonym	Sentence
Friend	Foe	Companion	Finding a good <i>friend</i> is difficult.
Lazy	Industrious	Indolent	The cat is very <i>lazy</i> .
Kind	Cruel	Considerate	We should be <i>kind</i> towards the weak.

Table: 1(b) Positive, Comparative, Superlative and Make Sentence Matrix prepared by teacher on the blackboard.

Adjective	Comparative Degree	Superlative Degree	Sentence
Fine	Finer	Finest	It is fine today.
Cold	Colder	Coldest	The ice-cream is too cold.
Brave	Braver	Bravest	Usha is a brave girl.

- **SKILLS NURTURED:** Fast Dictionary reading skill, Vocabulary Enrichment.
- 2. **Reading a chunk from a Storey Book:** Story Book reading gives both Pleasure and Knowledge. It helps in increasing the stock of words as well as developing good writing skills. *'Storybook reading is the single best activity for developing language, Vocabulary, and comprehension-key skills for success in reading!'* – Susan B. Neuman

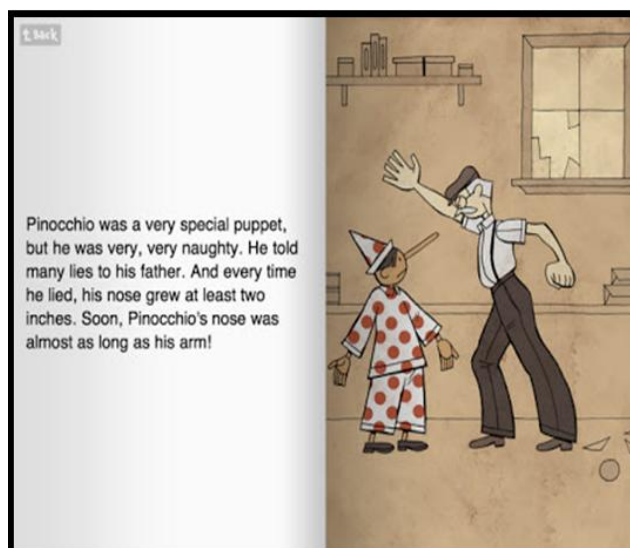


Fig.2 Picture of a chunk from a story book

- **DEMONSTRATION:** The teacher divides the class into groups of four to five students and **Fig.2** Picture of a chunk from a story book. distributes storey books like *Red Riding Hood, Snow white and seven Dwarfs...etc.* One Student representing the group stands up and Read Aloud the chunk from the storey following proper pronunciation of words with appropriate use of punctuation marks. The teacher stops the reader at any moment and asks few small questions on spellings and tells them to continue the story by their own imagination.
- **SCAFFOLDING:** The teacher helps in correct pronunciations of words and teaches the use of intonation and proper punctuation.
- **SKILLS NURTURED:** Guessing, Creativity, Loud Reading & Imagination.
- 3. **Reading a short Dialogue/Conversation of familiar relations seen around:** Children see a lot of characters surrounding them in their immediate environment. They try to imitate them as well as pick words to learn language which *NCF 2005* calls as *Input Rich Communicational Environment*. This helps the learner to connect life outside the classroom. *'A child who Reads will be an adult who Thinks'* - Anonymous
- **DEMONSTRATION:** The teacher chooses three pairs of two students randomly and gives them a conversation of father and daughter, teacher and student or bookseller and customer...etc. The

students then Reads Aloud the conversation by enacting their roles using the mood and proper punctuation marks. The teacher asks students to summarize the conversation.

- **SCAFFOLDING:** The teacher helps the students in proper speaking of dialogues and keeping in mind the time required between two dialogues, correct pronunciations of words and helps in summarizing.
- **SKILLS NURTURED:** Dialogue Reading, Summarizing.
- 4. **Reading a Newspaper Article/Report:** Newspaper is the basic source of learning second language. It helps in increasing Eye Span of the learner, but also helps in increasing word stock and spellings.
In the year 2005, there were approximately 6580 daily newspaper titles in the world selling 395 million print copies a day.
- **DEMONSTRATION:** The teacher tells students to Silently Read a news article or report from a News Daily like *Times of India, The Telegraph*...etc. and find out the main idea of the incident and Loudly Read it in the class. The teacher may also give a similar situation and tell to write a report on it following the model report that they have read and read it aloud in the class.
- **SCAFFOLDING:** The teacher helps in skimming the main idea from the report and preparing an equivalent report .

Table 2: Conversation between a Father and Daughter on doing Home-Work:

Father: It's already 7 p.m. in the watch and you still are watching cartoon?
Daughter: Oh! Father, let me show you that it's my favorite cartoon Sinchan still going on and I will not be going off from this place till it comes to an end.
Father: You are no more a child! Can't you feel you are in class:v and you need to be more careful about your studies. A good student must be regular and punctual in studies. One must do her Home Work on time.
Daughter: Please, Daddy not again! Common dad, I will do it, once the show comes an end. Now will you Please let me watch it silently?
Father: As you wish!



Fig.: 3 Picture of a famous News Daily.

- **SKILLS NURTURED:** Skimming, Scanning, Planning an outline & Writing Reports.
- 5. **Reading a passage from a Supplementary Book/Magazine/Journal:** It is said:
*'The more you Read, The more Things you Know
The more you Learn,*

The more places you will Go!'- Dr. Seuss

- **DEMONSTRATION:** The teacher divides the class into groups comprising of four to five students each and distributes supplementary books, magazines, journals like *India Today*, *International Journal of Language and Literature*...etc. to each group and thereby directs them to Intensively Read the passage. The teacher asks to prepare a outline or summarize the passage and one student from the group Loudly Reads the writing prepared by the group.
 - **SCAFFOLDING:** The teacher helps in understanding the article or storey, relate with the text and helps in skimming.
 - **SKILLS NURTURED:** Reading Aloud, Skimming, Scanning, Summarizing.
6. **Reading a small part from Newspaper/Magazine Interview of a famous personality:** Interview Reading helps a learner to know about sequence of questioning, helps them to learn reported speech..etc.
- **DEMONSTRATION:** The teacher pairs up two students and assigns them the role of a reporter and one as a famous personality from any field like *Amartya Sen*, *Sachin Tendulkar*...etc. and tells them to read the interview Aloud in the class while the other students listens to the interview with attention. The teacher asks the students to arrange the sequence of interview or to paraphrase it or to prepare a note and read it in the class Aloud.
 - **SCAFFOLDING:** The teacher helps the students to learn Note Making and helps in Paraphrasing of text.
 - **SKILLS NURTURED:** Listening, Writing, Note Making & Paraphrasing.
7. **Reading Quotations:** Before starting any English lesson it is advisable to read a quotation both by teacher and student, as reading quotation not only makes emotionally strong but helps in developing effective writing skill.

DEMONSTRATION: A teacher can collect and write different quotes on the lesson to be taught in the class in small plank card like and distribute among students. One by one students first reads it Silently and keeps on exchanging with one another like a chain.

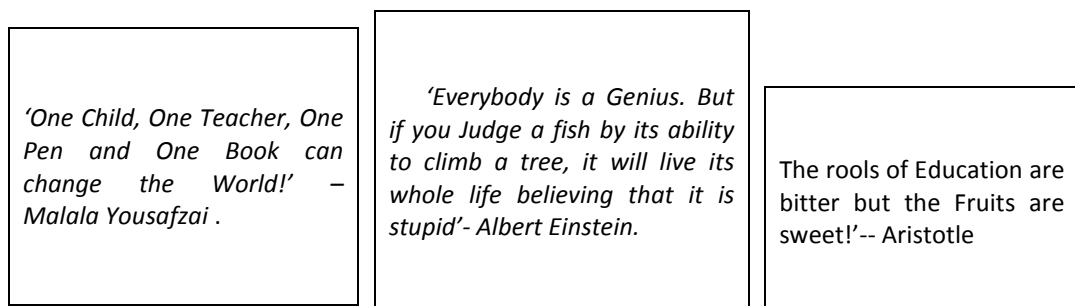


Fig.: 4(a),(b)&(c) Plank Card showing written Quotations by teacher.

- **SCAFFOLDING:** The teacher can pick up randomly a student and can explain the quotation to the student.
 - **SKILLS NURTURED:** Vocabulary Enrichment, Qualitative Writing of Composition.
8. **Reading a few cartoon characters' from a Comic Book:** Reading Comics can not only entertain the class from monotony of routine but also create an excitement among the students to read and pay attention in the class.
- **DEMONSTRATION:** The teacher divides the class into groups of four to five students and distributes each group a piece of comic like *101 Dalmations*, *Ninja Hatori*...etc. whereby the students can play the

characters of comic assigned and read the dialogue before the class Loudly. The teacher can randomly choose students and tell them chronologically to arrange the dialogue or say to continue the storey of the comic or to frame a dialogue on their favourite cartoon characters.



Fig.5: Picture from a famous Comic Book.

- **SCAFFOLDING:** The teacher helps the students in expanding of the story, frame grammatically correct sentences.
 - **SKILLS NURTURED:** Reading, Dialogue Writing, Rearranging Sentences.
9. **Reading a portion from an Inspirational Autobiography/ Biography:** Reading an Autobiography or Biographical writing not only inspires students but also motivates for facing the toils and troubles of life.
- 'An Autobiography is an obituary in serial form with the last installment missing'*- Quentin Crisp.
- **DEMONSTRATION:** The teacher gives a autobiographical writing like of *Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's 'An Autobiography'* or of *Nelson Mandela's 'Long walk to freedom'* ...etc. and tell the students to read Extensively or Aloud and ask short Comprehension Questions to check their attention like What, Where, How, Why?etc.
 - **SCAFFOLDING:** The teacher not only guides by explaining the portion but also facilitate in inculcating a habit of reading such kind of writings.
 - **SKILLS NURTURED:** Interest, Skimming, Scanning and Predicting & Guessing the upcoming incidences. Therefore, rightly said by *Bacon, 'Reading maketh a full man'*.

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