UNIT 14 READING COMPREHENSION-II

Structure

14.1 Introduction
14.2 Objectives
14.3 Reading Comprehension Questions
14.4 Skimming and Scanning
14.5 Devices Used for Textual Cohesion
14.6 Functions of a Text
14.7 Organisation of the Text
14.8 Let Us Sum Up
14.9 Key Words
14.10 Answers to Check Your Progress
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14.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit attempts to give examples of various types of reading comprehension exercises. There are illustrations of different types of exercise types. The level of difficulty of the text is not important - the exercise types suggested can be adapted for different levels.

14.2 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:
- understand the various skills of reading comprehension;
- set questions and activities for different reading skills e.g. skimming and scanning;
- describe various functions of texts;
- identify various devices used for textual cohesion and describe their function;
- analyse a variety of text in terms of its organisation.

14.3 READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

A. Read the short passage in the box. Read the questions set on the passage and judge whether the questions test comprehension or not. Write 'yes' or 'no' on the dash against each question.

Why was Nitin tired? Use 'got back' in a sentence of your own What does 'this one' refer to?

Nitin shook his head tiredly as he walked down the steps of the hotel and got back into the car. "No. This one has no room either."

Check the pronunciation of hotel from a dictionary What was Nitin looking for? Where is Nitin? Is there anyone else in the car?
B. Aim: To train the students to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words. In the space provided write the word/phrases which help you deduce the meaning of the words in bold.

a) I saw her walk away. Her day had been ruined. She had made a fool of herself in public. She had impressed no one. In her own sad red eyes she was a failure.
   i) made a fool of herself
   ii) ......................................................
   iii) ......................................................

b) Monday morning found Tom Sawyer miserable. Monday mornings always found him so, because it began another week's slow suffering in school.
   i) ........................................................................

c) "Hey! Where are you going? Come back!" But the tinker was already out of earshot. He was on his way back to Mirzapur twice as fast as he left it, with his dog running behind him.
   i) ........................................................................
   ii) ........................................................................
   iii) ........................................................................
   iv) ........................................................................

Check Your Progress

Mark: 1. Write your answers in the space given below.

2. Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

3. Draw a small picture.

4. Frame 4 questions which test only Reading Comprehension.

5. Frame 5 vocabulary a sentence where the student can to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words from other words in the text.
14.4 SKIMMING AND SCANNING

You have already come across these terms. Both skimming and scanning are specific reading techniques necessary for quick and efficient reading.

Whe skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organised, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer.

When scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even read the whole passage to do so. We simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it be a name, a date, or a less specific piece of information.

The activities suggested below to practise scanning also try to put the students in an authentic situation where they would naturally scan the text rather than read it. The students are therefore asked to solve a specific problem as quickly as possible - which is only possible by means of scanning.

Activity 1

Imagine that your uncle who has retired wishes to settle down in Delhi. He, along with his family, is expected to shift to Delhi in a month’s time.

He’s asked to scan the newspapers for a number of advertisements.

First of all he wishes to rent a comfortable house preferably with three bedrooms. Your aunt is a great lover of plants, so there should be enough space for her plants.

Your uncle worked in the accountant general’s office. He is still very energetic so he’d like to take up some suitable job for some time.

Your aunt doesn’t want a fulltime job, however, she wishes to take up some tuitions, during free morning hours.

His son Sanjay has a computer degree and is looking for a suitable job.

His daughter is a journalist, a free lancer. She is also looking for a suitable job.

Scan the following advertisements and locate the appropriate ones.

Indicate the advertisement against the person stated below :

1. Flat for your uncle’s family .................................................................
2. Job for his son ............................................................................
3. Job for his daughter .................................................................
4. Part time job for your aunt ...........................................................
5. Job for your uncle ........................................................................

WANTED AN EXPERIENCED LADY COMPUTER OPERATOR-CUM-GENERAL OFFICE ASSISTANT, PERSON MUST BE FLUENT IN ENGLISH AND ABLE TO INITIATE WORK TO COMPUTERISE THE COMPANIES ACCOUNTING SYSTEM. GOOD WORKING ENVIRONMENT. APPLY IN CONFIDENCE.

GHAZIABAD TOOL PVT. LTD.
FLAT NO. 110
ASHIRWAD COMPLEX
D-1 GREEN PARK
NEW DELHI-110 016 (AD 99246)

(Home Tuitions) tutors/tutoresses/available all localities/classes/public/convert school/English conversations/European languages (Also wanted more tutors/tutoresses). Ring (P.T.B) Puri Tutors Bureau 693077/4624631.

First floor drawing dining three bedrooms, second floor three bedrooms attached bath rooms big balconies. Company/Embassy lease. Contact Telephone 6434856, 6460635 Office 6874689.

Industrial shed 50, 100 & 150 square metres with 20 H.P. 400 square metres plot with 20 H.P. Contact Bhatia 5553346, 5592227.

Kalkaji Alaknanda Aravalli Apartments 3 bedroom flat duplex type large terrace. Company lease/South Indian preferred. Contact 2201488.

Posh three bedroom three bathroom apartment available at N-15, Panchshila Park, Company lease preferred. Phone 6440758.

S-52 Greater Kailash-II, spacious room covered verandah kitchen bath courtyard, suits small family. Company lease preferred. Contact site or ring telephone 6440758.

Two bedroom drawing dining modern construction, single unit, Sukhdev Vihar, Mathura Road, 2 years company lease, foreigners only Contact 2213664.

West Punjabi Bagh 4 bedrooms duplex apartment fully furnished. Company lease only. Phone 7129635/644519 Nair.

St. Paul's tutor's Bureau provide excellent tutors/tutoresses for convent children. Call. F. Bob 3715114 Tutors/tutoresses also welcome.


Required a retired experienced accountant well versed in accounts preferably Gujrati & South Indian. Write P. Box. 85496, Times of India, New Delhi-2.


Wanted full-time competent Chartered Accountant to handle accounts audit/tax matter of leading business house at New Delhi. Age around 35. Remuneration according to capability. Write P. Box. 85133. Times of India, New Delhi-2.

Wanted experienced tutors for XI & XII for Physics, Chemistry, Maths & Economics. Contact B-10/7474 Vasant Kunj, New Delhi (6 to 8 p.m.).

Activity 3

The following news item was printed in a newspaper about the longest letter in the world, which might be included in the Guiness Book of World Records. Fill in the form given below for the publishers to include this information in the book.

KOTTAYAM, Oct. 30 - A 27 year-old man from this city may figure in the Guiness Book as the author of the world's longest letter, reports UNI. The letter is 2.4 km long, contains 100 million words, weighs 100.5 kg and cost the author, Reagan Jones, a freight charge of Rs. 2,058 to reach it to its addressee - Pope John Paul II.

Advocating world peace, the letter, artistically written with tasteful colourshades on 2,985 sheets of thick J.K. card paper of width two feet four inches, was sent to the Pontiff on his birthday on May 18.

The unemployed Jones had worked on the gargantuan letter for four years at an average of ten hours a day.
In a recent communication to Jones, the Guinness Book of World Records deputy editor, Sheelagh Thomas, said the letter would be considered for inclusion in the book at Guinness’s “annual, review cycle, next spring”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>The Longest Letter in the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Name of the Writer:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Written to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Purpose of Writing:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Weight:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Length:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. No. of sheets used:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Language used:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. No. of words used:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Visuals used:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Days spent:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. No. of hours spent:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Kind of ink used:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Kind of paper used:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Substance of the letter:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Date on which sent to the addressee:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.
      b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

2. Prepare two skimming and two scanning exercises.

14.5 Devices Used for Textual Cohesion

We need to prepare the students in recognising the various devices used to create textual cohesion and the use of reference and link words.
Aim: To train the students to understand relations between parts of text through pronoun referents.

In the paragraph below, some of the pronouns have been numbered. On the lines below the paragraph, write the word or words that each numbered pronoun refers to. The first has been done for you.

The name of the largest river in the world is the Amazon. But how did this river get its name? A tale exists which tell us that the name originated when an early Spanish explorer of South America was attacked by Indians who wore grass skirts and head dresses. Since the Indians reminded him of the Amazon in the Greek legends, he named the area after them.

This river Amazon

1. its ..............................................

2. which ...........................................

3. who .............................................

4. him .............................................

5. he ..............................................

14.6 FUNCTIONS OF A TEXT

It is obvious that being aware of the function of a passage is important to comprehend it. So the students should be trained to find out whether the text aims at convincing the reader, giving information or asking for something.

Match the following passages with their function. There could be more than one passage for a function. Write the function against the passage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Passage No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving instructions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving advice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertaining</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Angry mob sets two Redline buses on fire

From Our Staff Reporter

1. New Delhi, March 18. An angry mob set on fire two Redline buses after a 40-year old man was crushed to death under the wheels of one in Janakpuri late on Saturday night.

2. Don't allow children to play Holi on roofs and parapets, cautions a neurosurgeon at the Mool Chand Hospital.

3. In the past two days, the hospital has had a number of children brought with head injuries, all caused by falling from roof-tops while playing with water-balloons, Dr. Ravi Bhatia, the neurosurgeon, warns against these.

4. If a child falls from a height and is injured, make him or her lie on the side. The mouth should be cleared of food or blood so that the air passage can be maintained. Rush him/her to the nearest medical centre, with the head in a low position.

5. Adults are advised not to drive after consuming bhang or alcohol.

Curbs on Holi

By A Staff Reporter

6. New Delhi; March 14 : The city police have announced certain measures to preempt "riotous, indecent and disorderly behaviour" during Holi. They will come in force from tomorrow for a period of 10 days.

7. The police have warned that throwing of coloured water or rubber balloons and application of "gulal" on unwilling persons will invite prosecution. So will any indecent behaviour or language.

8. Pushing or obstruction of persons in any public place and "violent movements, menacing gestures or shouting" which disturb the public order are prohibited.

9. The police have also banned the sale of rubber balloons of two inches or less when not inflated.

10. Gajjar Halwa

Ingredients

1 kg red carrot
1 litre milk

200 gm sugar. Dry fruits for garnishing. Grate unitl soft. Mix in the sugar and boil the mixture till the milk dries up. Add ghee and stir for a few minutes. Finally add dry fruits.

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by

* Shri N. J. Yasaswy, Member, Board of Governors, ICFAI
* Shri G. Ramachandran, Advisor, ICFAI at the following venue and date

Venue : FICCI
Barakhamba Road,
Near Connaught Place
New Delhi-110001
Date & Time : March 19, 1997 at 6.00 p.m.
12. The Weather

Rain or thundershowers are likely to occur at one or two places in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya, Sub-Himalayan, West Bengal and Sikkim, plains of West Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, West Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Marathwada and coastal Andhra Pradesh. Weather will be mainly dry over the rest of the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Min.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abu</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmadabad</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhopal</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhubaneswar</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.
   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

4. Collect five/six different types of texts and prepare a similar exercise.

14.7 ORGANISATION OF THE TEXT

This refers to the method of presentation of information in any passage. These could be in the form of

- Main idea and supporting details
- Sequence
- Comparisons
- Logical Sequence

Let's look at some examples:

Aim: To train the students to make an outline of the given passage with main ideas and their supporting details.

Whales

When you are outlining an article, you will often want to include the details that are given about some of the sub-topics. As you read the article below, decide what its main topics, sub-topics, and details are. Then complete the outline by using the items listed at the bottom of the page.

Whales are the largest animals the world has ever known. They are found in every major ocean, and although they resemble huge fish, they are really mammals. One important way whales differ from fish is in their body temperature. They are warm blooded, so their
temperature remains constant despite the surrounding climate. Extra protection is provided by blubber, a thick layer of fat that keeps them warm even in the coldest water. Whales also differ from fish in their manner of breathing. Equipped with lungs instead of gills, they are forced to hold their breath while underwater. When a whale’s supply of fresh air runs out, it must surface to breathe otherwise it would drown. Another difference that sets whales apart from fish is the way they treat their young. Babies are born alive and are nursed on their mother’s milk until they are old enough to feed themselves.

For centuries man has hunted whales for a variety of profitable reasons. Although whale products are not as sought-after today, they are still used throughout the world. Whale oil goes into making margarine in many European countries, and it is often found in various kinds of explosives. Some laundry soaps still contain whale oil. The meat of a whale is not as widely valued as the oil, but many manufactures use it in canned dog and cat food. Whale meat is even eaten by human beings in such countries as Norway and Japan.

A. How do whales differ from fish.
   1. ........................................................................................................................................
   2. ........................................................................................................................................

B. Breathing
   1. ........................................................................................................................................
   2. ........................................................................................................................................

C. Sub-titles
   1. ........................................................................................................................................
   2. ........................................................................................................................................

Whale products
A. Sub-titles
   1. ........................................................................................................................................
   2. ........................................................................................................................................
   3. ........................................................................................................................................

B. Sub-titles
   1. ........................................................................................................................................
   2. ........................................................................................................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Margarine</th>
<th>Breathing</th>
<th>Explosives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whale products</td>
<td>Warm-blooded</td>
<td>How whales differ from fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lungs instead of gills</td>
<td>Treatment of young</td>
<td>Whale meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected by blubber</td>
<td>Whale oil</td>
<td>Must surface to breathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food for animals</td>
<td>Food for humans</td>
<td>Laundry soaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babies born alive</td>
<td>Body temperature</td>
<td>Young drink mother’s milk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim: To train the students to write in a sequence. Here are the steps for a game called ‘Pattern Puzzle’. The steps are in jumbled order. Unscramble them and list them in proper order.

a) There is a time limit, say five minutes.

b) Give each group a card with a letter pattern.
Reading Comprehension

c) The letter pattern should be the same.
d) The group with most words is the winner.
e) No letter should be used more than once in any word.
f) The players each write down on paper all the words they can think of, containing some or all of these letters.
g) The middle letter e.g. E must appear in each word.

(T) (I)
(E) (S) (N)

Aim: To train the students to understand comparisons/contrasts used in the text.

Read this passage and complete the table that follows:

Most people think spiders are insects; they are not. Insects belong to the class Insecta and most of them have wings. Insects have six legs and a three part body – the head, thorax and abdomen – with two legs attached to each part. The antennae or feelers project from the head. Spiders belong to the class Arachnida and most of them are web-spinners. Spiders have eight legs and a two part body — the combination of head and thorax to which the eight legs are attached, and abdomen which contains the silk glands.

Unlike insects, spiders are not equipped with antennae. Their intricate webs serve not only as fingers but also as eyes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Insecta</th>
<th>Arachnida</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>body</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other parts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim: To train students to understand the logical relationship within a passage.

Read the following sentences and rearrange them so as to form a coherent paragraph.

a) We should not dismiss Malthus too quickly, however.
b) But certain directions of developments are clear and suggestive of our future problems.
c) There are few people today who agree with the Malthusian theory in its original form.
d) It is hard enough to understand those we already face.
e) A large number of the world population still lives in hunger, just above the starvation level.
f) No one can predict exactly what our main problems will be in the next generation or two.
g) The reason may be that he didn’t know about the advances in technology and transportation which have increased food production and made it possible to use in one part of the world what has been produced in another.
h) There certainly will be a difficult balance between man and natural resources on which he depends.
i) Because of these historical facts, the English economist Robert Malthus declared in 1798 that population tends to grow more quickly than food supplies.
j) Despite the enormous increase of the world population since his day, his theory is no longer feared.
k) Time after time, the population of certain areas has developed so quickly that there was not enough food available, which brought starvation.

i) In the foreseeable future, world food production will be enough for the population.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.
   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5. Why do you think it is important for the students to understand how a text is organised?

14.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed various types of reading comprehension exercises which you may use or adapt in your classroom. We once again state that the level of difficulty of the text is not important, the exercise types can be adapted for different levels. Do try some of these activities - it will make reading comprehension a more interesting and enjoyable experience for your students.

14.9 KEY WORDS

Skimming: Reading the text quickly for main idea.
Scanning: Reading to locate specific information.
Textual cohesion: The use of pronouns, conjunctions, or synonyms to establish relationship between sentences and paragraph.
Organisation of the text: The method of presentation of information in any passage.

14.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Open ended
2. Open ended
3. Open ended
4. Open ended
5. Understanding is better if the organisation of the text is clear to the learner e.g. in an article with headings and sub-points, the students can arrange and try to follow the text in those terms. In a narrative or set of instructions the sequence/order in which things happened or are to be done is important. When the learner knows that these are instruction, he/she would look for the sequence in which to proceed. Similarly, when the students are handling a text written to compare and contrast two or more things, they would start arranging the points in their own minds or in an exercise as similarities and differences.
14.11 SUGGESTED READINGS
