

UNIT 14 READING COMPREHENSION-II

Structure

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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

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

1. Read a short passage

a) Frame 4-5 questions which test only Reading Comprehension.

b) Frame 4-5 vocabulary exercises where the student has to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words from other words in the text.

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

When **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)

Wanted by a reputed Pvt. Company, an expert Computer Operator. Salary according to merit and perks. Apply with full particulars to A & A Periodical Subscription Agency Pvt. Ltd. 191, Deepali, Pitampura, Delhi-34, Phone 7278098.

(Home Tutorials) tutors/tutoreses/available all localities/classes/public/convent school/English conversations/European languages (Also wanted more tutors/tutoreses). 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/tutoreses for convent children. Call. F. Bob 3715114 Tutors/tutoreses also welcome.

1. Feature editor/writer. 2. Editorial Production Assists. 3. Illustration Artists (full/part time) 3. Editorial Trainees for leading Magazines Group. Apply Post Box 515, New Delhi.

Accountants wanted. A Public Limited Co. requires Accountants capable of making vouchers/trial balance/reconciling bank/stock/other accounts. B.Com. Graduates drawing minimum salary Rs. 1000 need not apply. Apply to Mr. A. Goenka Kalinda Woollen Mills Ltd. C-542, New Friends Colony, New Delhi - 6.

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

A leading city magazine requires journalists/trainees possessing excellent command over English. Apply immediately New India Publications, 13-16, Krishna Market, Off. Panchkuian Road, New Delhi-55.

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 Guinness 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 Guinness 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".

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

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.

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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 its¹ name? A tale exists which² tell us that the name originated when an early Spanish explorer of South America was attacked by Indians who³ wore grass skirts and head dresses. Since the Indians reminded him⁴ of the Amazon in the Greek legends, he⁵ named the area after them.

This river Amazon

1. its
2. which
3. who
4. him
5. he

1. 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.

2. This river Amazon

3. its

4. which

5. who

6. him

7. he

8. named

9. the

10. area

11. after

12. them

13. the

14. name

15. originated

16. when

17. an

18. early

19. Spanish

20. explorer

21. of

22. South

23. America

24. was

25. attacked

26. by

27. Indians

28. who

29. wore

30. grass

31. skirts

32. and

33. head

34. dresses.

35. Since

36. the

37. Indians

38. reminded

39. him

40. of

41. the

42. Amazon

43. in

44. the

45. Greek

46. legends,

47. he

48. named

49. the

50. area

51. after

52. them.

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.

Function	Passage No.
Warning	_____
Giving information	_____
Giving instructions	_____
Invitation	_____
Giving advice	_____
Entertaining	_____

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 here 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 until 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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Venue : FICCI
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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 Maharashtra, Marathawada and coastal Andhra Pradesh. Weather will be mainly dry over the rest of the country.

Temperature

City	Max.	Min.
Abu	25	10
Ahmadabad	34	18
Bangalore	33	19
Bhopal	32	18
Bhubaneswar	35	22
Bombay	30	22

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.

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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.

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

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.

- 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 ?

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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

Alderson, C. & Urquhart, A.H. (ed.), (1984) : *Reading in a Foreign Language*, Longman, London.

Chall, J.S. (1983) : *Stages of Reading Development*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York.