

## Reading Techniques



### Lesson outline

1. Skimming or getting the main idea of a text
2. Scanning or looking for a specific information
3. Cloze procedure or working on vocabulary, context and critical thinking
4. More tips to check reading comprehension

### Introduction

Reading skills involve more than just the mental combination of letters and words. Students need to learn how to focus their reading skills on different objectives such as finding a specific piece of information or getting a general idea of what the text is about. Reading can have many different purposes, which makes it important to know how to use reading skills in different contexts and situations. This can be achieved through different methods that we are presenting below.

# 1. Skimming

## What is skimming?

Skimming is a reading technique that allows us to understand the main concepts a text talks about without focusing on details. It is useful when we need to read something quickly to get a general idea of the content in order to summarize it, mention it in a conversation, etc.

You can introduce this technique to your students by giving them this short exercise:

A Hare was making fun of a Tortoise one day for being so slow. “Do you ever get anywhere?” he asked with a mocking laugh. “Yes,” replied the Tortoise, “and I get there sooner than you think. I’ll race you and prove it.”

The Hare was much amused at the idea of running a race with the Tortoise and for the fun of the thing, he agreed.

The Fox, who had consented to act as judge, marked the distance and started the runners off.

Ask your students to summarize the text in one single sentence. This part can be done orally or in writing, depending on the students’ preferences.

**Important note:** For students with SLD, some structure might help them summarize more easily. You can, for instance, ask them a few questions to help them focus on the main elements in the text, such as in the following template:

Name:  
Year level:

Date:  
Teacher:

# Reading Comprehension

WHO ARE THE MAIN  
CHARACTERS?

  
  

WHAT DO THEY EACH DO?

  
  

WHY DO THEY DO IT?

  
  

SUMMARIZE THE TEXT IN  
ONE SENTENCE:

.....

.....

.....

## 2. Scanning

### What is scanning?

Scanning is a technique that allows us to find the parts that we're looking for in a text. It means that we're going to go through the text until we find the keywords or images that we need. It is useful when faced with a long text from which we will only need some specific pieces of information to answer a question, use in another task, etc.

Now that your pupils get the general idea of the text, tell them to find some more specific items that were not necessary to understand what was happening in the story. You can do this by asking specific questions such as:

- What does it say about the fox? – He acts as a judge, marks the distance and starts the runners off.
- Why did the hare accept the challenge? – Because he is amused at the idea of racing against the tortoise.

**Important note:** as students with SLD will struggle more if they have a reading and writing task at the same time, you can do this orally by asking questions to random students in the class or you can give them a multiple choice question to answer some questions about a text.

## 3. 3. Cloze Procedure

### What is the cloze procedure?

The cloze procedure consists of understanding a text by filling some blanks. This method can help develop the understanding of vocabulary, context and critical thinking skills.

This method has four phases:

- Read the text to get a general idea of the context
- Read the text a second time and fill in the blanks
- Proofread to make sure your word choices make sense
- Compare your answers to the original text

Give your students the full text to start and make sure they understand all the words before starting the gap fill exercise.

### Example of text to read:

The Hare was soon far out of sight, and to make the Tortoise feel very deeply how ridiculous it was for him to try a race with a Hare, he laid down on the side of the path to take a nap until the Tortoise caught up.

The Tortoise, meanwhile, kept going slowly but steadily, and, after a time, passed the place where the Hare was sleeping.

But the Hare slept on very deeply; and when at last he did wake up, the Tortoise was near the goal. The Hare now ran his fastest, but he could not overtake the Tortoise in time.

Adapted from the original story. Fables of Aesop, 2nd edition, June 2013

You will then give them the same text with blanks to fill. You can do this exercise in three different ways:

- Only give them the text with blanks
- Give them three options for each missing word
- Give them a list of the words they need to use to fill in the blanks

### Example:

The Hare was soon far out of \_\_\_\_\_, and to make the Tortoise feel very deeply how \_\_\_\_\_ it was for him to try a race with a Hare, he laid down on the side of the path to take a \_\_\_\_\_ until the Tortoise caught up.

The Tortoise, meanwhile, kept going slowly but \_\_\_\_\_, and, after a time, passed the place where the Hare was sleeping.

But the Hare slept on very \_\_\_\_\_; and when at last he did wake up, the Tortoise was near the \_\_\_\_\_. The Hare now ran his fastest, but he could not \_\_\_\_\_ the Tortoise in time.

**Important note:** if the exercise is more focused on context than on vocabulary, and thus has no multiple choices/list of words, tell them that a synonym is also correct to fill in the gaps.

## 4. More tips to check reading comprehension

There are other methods but here are some tips that you can also use for reading comprehension:

- Ask your students to draw a picture to summarize an extract.
- Ask questions about the text. This can be very broad and goes from asking closed questions to asking an interpretation of more complex texts.
- Ask your students to put actions in the right order.

As chronology of actions that happened in the story can be challenging for students with learning disorders, therefore we propose such exercise to strengthen this comprehension skill. So, to make it easier for them you can ask student to mark all the words in the story that indicate time.

Look for: previously, already, once, then, long time ago, back when, before, until now, in the past, even now, up to now, at present, formerly, sometime, once in a while

