



HOW TO TEACH READING COMPREHENSION TO B2-LEVEL LEARNERS

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Abstract: This article examines practical ways of teaching reading comprehension to B2-level learners of English as a foreign language. The paper emphasizes that reading comprehension at this level should not be limited to translating texts or answering isolated factual questions. B2 learners need to identify main ideas, infer meaning, recognize the writer's purpose, evaluate arguments, interpret vocabulary from context and connect information across paragraphs. The article discusses the role of pre-reading preparation, while-reading strategy instruction, post-reading tasks, vocabulary development, critical thinking, text selection and formative assessment. It also presents a lesson model that can help teachers organize reading lessons in a systematic and learner-centred way. The main conclusion is that effective reading comprehension teaching requires a balance between strategy training, meaningful texts, guided practice and reflection.

Key words: reading comprehension, B2 learners, EFL, reading strategies, inference, vocabulary, critical thinking, CEFR, classroom methodology.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida o'rganayotgan B2 darajadagi o'quvchilarga o'qib tushunish ko'nikmasini o'rgatishning amaliy yo'llari yoritiladi. Maqolada B2 bosqichida o'qish faqat matnni tarjima qilish yoki alohida faktlarga javob berish bilan cheklanmasligi ta'kidlanadi. Bu darajadagi o'quvchilar asosiy fikrni aniqlash, yashirin ma'noni anglash, muallif maqsadini tushunish, dalillarni baholash, so'z ma'nosini kontekstdan topish va paragraflararo bog'lanishni ko'ra olishlari zarur. Shuningdek, maqolada o'qishdan oldingi tayyorgarlik, o'qish jarayonidagi strategiyalar, o'qishdan keyingi topshiriqlar, lug'at boyligini rivojlantirish, tanqidiy fikrlash, matn tanlash va baholash usullari tahlil qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: o'qib tushunish, B2 daraja, ingliz tili, o'qish strategiyalari, xulosa chiqarish, lug'at, tanqidiy fikrlash, CEFR, dars metodikasi.

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is one of the central skills in foreign language learning because it gives learners access to academic information, authentic communication, professional texts and intercultural knowledge. For B2-level



becomes a complex activity in which students must understand both explicit and implicit meaning, follow the logic of a text and evaluate the writer's position.

At B2 level, learners are expected to deal with articles, reports, essays, stories, web materials and other texts that contain different viewpoints and more advanced vocabulary. They can usually understand the general meaning of a text, but they may still face difficulty with inference, idiomatic expressions, discourse markers, unfamiliar cultural references and the organization of longer texts. For this reason, the teacher's role is to guide learners from basic comprehension toward independent, strategic and critical reading.

In many classrooms, reading lessons are still organized in a traditional way: the teacher gives a text, students read it silently, unknown words are translated and then comprehension questions are checked. This approach may help learners understand one particular text, but it does not always teach them how to read better in the future. A more effective approach is to teach reading as a set of strategies that learners can apply to different texts and different communicative situations.

The relevance of this topic is also connected with the growing importance of English in academic and professional contexts. Learners who reach B2 level often prepare for university study, international examinations, professional communication or independent use of English resources. Their success depends not only on grammar and vocabulary knowledge, but also on the ability to process written information efficiently and critically.

The purpose of this article is to explain how teachers can teach reading comprehension to B2-level learners in a systematic, practical and learner-centred way. The article focuses on reading strategies, lesson stages, task design, vocabulary support, critical thinking and assessment. It argues that reading comprehension improves when students are taught to think before, during and after reading, rather than simply read and answer questions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading comprehension is generally understood as an active process of constructing meaning from written language. A reader does not only decode words; he or she connects textual information with background knowledge, predicts meaning, checks understanding and interprets the writer's intention. Therefore, comprehension involves linguistic, cognitive and strategic processes at the same time.

In methodology, reading is often divided into several subskills. These include skimming for the general idea, scanning for specific information, reading for detail, recognizing text structure, guessing meaning from context, identifying reference words, understanding cohesive devices, making inferences and evaluating



arguments. B2 learners need all of these subskills because the texts they read are usually longer, more abstract and more argumentative than texts at lower levels.

The CEFR describes B2 users as independent language users who can understand the main ideas of complex texts on concrete and abstract topics. This means that a B2 learner should not depend on the teacher for every unknown word. Instead, the learner should be able to use context, text organization and general knowledge to maintain comprehension. Strategy instruction is therefore a key element of reading teaching at this stage.

Researchers in language pedagogy also emphasize that reading comprehension is closely connected with vocabulary knowledge. If learners do not know enough words, comprehension becomes slow and fragmented. However, knowing individual words is not enough. Students must also understand collocations, word families, academic expressions, discourse markers and figurative meanings. For this reason, vocabulary work should be integrated into reading lessons, not treated as a separate list of words after the text.

Another important idea in reading methodology is the balance between intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading develops careful analysis of language, structure and meaning through shorter texts. Extensive reading develops speed, confidence and reading habit through longer and more enjoyable texts. B2-level learners benefit from both types. They need detailed classroom guidance, but they also need regular independent reading outside the classroom.

The first principle is purposeful reading. Students should always know why they are reading a text. A clear purpose helps them choose an appropriate strategy. For example, if the task is to find dates or names, scanning is enough. If the task is to identify the writer's attitude, students must read more carefully and notice tone, modality and evaluative language.

The second principle is strategy awareness. Learners should not only complete reading tasks; they should understand which strategy they are using and why. When a teacher says, "Read the first and last sentences of each paragraph to identify the main idea," the teacher is making the reading process visible. This helps learners transfer the strategy to new texts.

The third principle is gradual support. B2 learners are independent users, but they still need scaffolding when texts are complex. Support may include pre-teaching key vocabulary, activating background knowledge, giving guiding questions, dividing the text into sections or modelling how to infer meaning. As students become more confident, the teacher can reduce support.

The fourth principle is interaction. Reading may look like an individual skill, but classroom reading should include pair and group work. Students can compare predictions, explain answers, justify inferences and discuss the writer's argument.



Such interaction deepens comprehension because learners must verbalize their thinking.

The fifth principle is reflection. After reading, learners should think about how they understood the text, which parts were difficult and which strategies helped them. Reflection turns a single reading activity into a learning experience. It also develops learner autonomy, which is essential at B2 level.

STAGES OF AN EFFECTIVE READING LESSON

The pre-reading stage prepares learners for successful comprehension. Its aim is not to explain the whole text before students read it, but to create a mental framework. At this stage, the teacher can introduce the topic, ask prediction questions, show a picture, present a title or discuss key words. This activates background knowledge and makes students curious about the text.

For B2 learners, pre-reading should also include attention to genre and purpose. Before reading a newspaper article, students may predict whether the text will inform, persuade or criticize. Before reading an academic passage, they may identify the likely structure: problem, cause, effect, solution or argument. Such preparation helps them follow the text more effectively.

The while-reading stage is the central part of the lesson. Students interact with the text and apply different strategies. It is useful to begin with a global task, such as choosing the best title or matching paragraph headings. After that, learners can move to more detailed tasks, such as finding supporting evidence, identifying pronoun references, completing a table or answering inference questions.

Teachers should avoid interrupting reading too often. If every unknown word is immediately translated, students lose the habit of reading for meaning. Instead, learners should be encouraged to underline confusing parts, guess meaning from context and continue reading. The teacher can then return to difficult points after the first reading.

The post-reading stage helps learners consolidate comprehension and use the information from the text. At B2 level, post-reading tasks should go beyond checking correct answers. Students can summarize the text, discuss the writer's opinion, compare the text with their own experience, write a response paragraph, prepare a short presentation or debate the issue raised in the text.

Post-reading tasks are also useful for vocabulary and grammar recycling. Learners may collect useful phrases from the text, classify them according to function, rewrite sentences in their own words or use new expressions in a short written response. This connects reading with productive language skills.

KEY READING STRATEGIES FOR B2-LEVEL LEARNERS

B2 learners should be explicitly taught a set of reading strategies. These strategies are not mechanical tricks; they are ways of controlling comprehension.



When students know how to use them, they become less dependent on the teacher and more confident with unfamiliar texts.

Table 1. Reading strategies and classroom use

| Strategy | Purpose | Example classroom task |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Skimming | To understand the general idea quickly | Read the text in two minutes and choose the best title. |
| Scanning | To find specific information | Find three dates, two names and one reason mentioned in the text. |
| Guessing from context | To understand unfamiliar words without a dictionary | Underline clues before and after the unknown word. |
| Inference | To understand implied meaning | Explain what the writer suggests but does not state directly. |
| Recognizing structure | To follow the organization of ideas | Match each paragraph with its function: problem, cause, example or solution. |
| Evaluating argument | To read critically | Decide whether the writer’s argument is convincing and support your opinion. |

Skimming and scanning are often introduced at lower levels, but at B2 level they should be applied to more complex texts. For example, students can skim an article to identify the writer’s main position, not only the topic. They can scan a report to find evidence that supports or contradicts a claim.

Inference is especially important for B2 learners. Many texts do not state everything directly. Writers may imply criticism, doubt, irony or disagreement through word choice and tone. Teachers can help students by asking questions such as “What does the writer probably think?”, “Which sentence gives you this idea?” and “What evidence supports your answer?”

Recognizing text structure also improves comprehension. When learners see how a text is organized, they can predict what kind of information will come next. For instance, if a paragraph begins with “However,” students should expect contrast. If it begins with “As a result,” they should expect a consequence. Teaching discourse markers helps learners follow the logic of longer texts.

VOCABULARY SUPPORT IN READING LESSONS

Vocabulary is one of the strongest factors influencing reading comprehension. At B2 level, learners often know high-frequency words, but they may struggle with academic vocabulary, idioms, collocations and words with several meanings. A word such as “issue” may mean a problem, a topic or a publication, depending on context. Therefore, vocabulary teaching should be contextual and strategic.



Before reading, the teacher may select a small number of essential words that are necessary for comprehension. These words should be taught with examples, collocations and pronunciation. However, not every difficult word should be pre-taught. If the teacher explains too many words before reading, students may become passive and the reading task loses its challenge.

During reading, learners should be trained to guess meaning from context. They can look at the sentence around the word, the paragraph topic, examples, contrast markers or word parts such as prefixes and suffixes. After reading, students can record useful words in a vocabulary notebook, including meaning, example sentence, collocation and word family.

A practical activity is the “word evidence” task. Students choose five unfamiliar words from the text and write the clue that helped them guess the meaning. This task teaches learners not only new vocabulary, but also the process of using context intelligently.

The quality of a reading lesson depends greatly on the text. A good text for B2 learners should be challenging but not discouraging. If a text is too easy, students do not develop new strategies. If it is too difficult, they lose motivation and rely on translation. The teacher should consider topic, length, vocabulary load, structure, cultural content and task purpose.

Authentic texts are valuable because they expose learners to real language use. Articles, interviews, opinion columns, short stories, blogs, reports and educational web texts can all be used at B2 level. However, authentic texts should be selected carefully. The teacher may shorten a text, gloss a few key words or design tasks that focus on achievable comprehension goals.

Texts should also be varied. If students always read the same type of passage, their comprehension becomes narrow. A balanced reading programme should include narrative, descriptive, explanatory, argumentative and informational texts. This variety prepares learners for exams, academic study and real-life reading.

Cultural relevance is another important factor. A text should connect with learners’ lives or broaden their understanding of the world. For example, topics such as technology in education, environmental problems, tourism, social media, youth culture and future professions are usually suitable for B2 learners because they encourage both comprehension and discussion.

The following model shows how a teacher can organize a 45-minute reading comprehension lesson for B2-level learners. The topic may be “The impact of social media on young people’s learning habits.” The text can be an opinion article of about 600-700 words with clear arguments and examples.

Table 2. A 45-minute reading comprehension lesson model



| Stage | Time | Teacher activity | Learner activity |
|-----------------------------|--------|---|---|
| Warm-up and prediction | 5 min | Shows the title and asks prediction questions. | Predict the content and discuss ideas in pairs. |
| Pre-teaching key vocabulary | 7 min | Explains 5-6 essential words through context. | Match words with meanings and examples. |
| First reading | 7 min | Gives a global task: choose the best summary. | Skim the text and identify the main idea. |
| Second reading | 12 min | Gives detailed and inference questions. | Read carefully, underline evidence and compare answers. |
| Critical response | 8 min | Asks students to evaluate the writer's opinion. | Agree or disagree using evidence from the text. |
| Reflection | 6 min | Asks learners to complete a strategy checklist. | Write which strategy helped most and why. |

This lesson model is effective because it moves from general understanding to deeper interpretation. The first reading reduces pressure because students do not need to understand every word. The second reading develops careful comprehension and evidence-based answers. The critical response stage helps students connect reading with thinking and communication.

The reflection stage is small but important. Students may complete statements such as “Today I used skimming when...”, “One word I guessed from context was...”, “The most difficult part was...” and “Next time I will...” Such reflection helps learners become aware of their own reading behaviour.

Assessment should show not only whether students found the correct answer, but also how they reached it. Traditional multiple-choice questions can be useful, especially for exam preparation, but they should be combined with other assessment forms. B2 learners should be asked to justify answers with textual evidence, summarize paragraphs, identify the writer's opinion and explain inference.

Formative assessment is especially useful in reading lessons. The teacher can observe how students use strategies, check their annotations, listen to pair discussions and review short written responses. This gives immediate information about learners' difficulties and helps the teacher adjust future lessons.

A reading rubric for B2 learners may include several criteria: understanding main ideas, identifying details, inferring meaning, using context for vocabulary,



recognizing structure, evaluating arguments and explaining answers with evidence. Such a rubric makes expectations clear and encourages students to read more actively.

Self-assessment can also support learner autonomy. After a reading lesson, students may rate themselves on statements such as “I could identify the main idea,” “I used context to understand new words,” “I found evidence for my answer” and “I understood the writer’s purpose.” These simple tools help learners monitor progress over time.

One common problem is that learners try to translate every sentence. This slows down reading and prevents global comprehension. To solve this, teachers should give timed skimming tasks and remind students that the first reading is for general meaning, not perfect understanding.

Another problem is weak vocabulary. Learners may stop whenever they see an unknown word. The solution is to teach guessing strategies and to limit dictionary use during the first reading. Dictionaries can be used later to confirm important meanings, but they should not replace strategic reading.

A third problem is difficulty with inference. Students may answer only literal questions and miss implied meaning. Teachers can support inference by asking learners to underline textual evidence and explain the logic of their answer. Sentence starters such as “The writer implies this because...” can help students formulate responses.

A fourth problem is low motivation. Some learners see reading as boring because texts are too long, too abstract or disconnected from their interests. Teachers should choose relevant topics, use prediction tasks, include pair work and connect reading with speaking or writing outcomes. When students see a purpose, they read more actively.

A fifth problem is poor retention. Students may understand a text during the lesson but quickly forget new vocabulary or ideas. Recycling activities can solve this. For example, at the next lesson students can use five words from the previous text in a short paragraph or summarize the previous text in three sentences.

CONCLUSION

Teaching reading comprehension to B2-level learners requires more than giving texts and checking answers. At this stage, learners need to become strategic readers who can understand main ideas, identify details, infer meaning, recognize text organization, evaluate arguments and use vocabulary clues effectively.

The most effective reading lessons are organized in three connected stages: pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading. Pre-reading activates knowledge and creates purpose. While-reading develops comprehension through guided strategy



use. Post-reading consolidates understanding and connects the text with speaking, writing and critical thinking.

The teacher's role is to make the reading process visible. When learners understand how good readers think, predict, question, infer and evaluate, they become more independent. Therefore, reading comprehension should be taught as an active process, not as passive text translation.

In conclusion, B2-level learners can develop strong reading comprehension when lessons combine meaningful texts, explicit strategy instruction, vocabulary support, interaction, formative assessment and reflection. Such an approach prepares students not only for classroom tasks and examinations, but also for real academic, professional and personal reading in English.

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