

Classified Readings for Different Tastes

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Preface

As perceiving a written text in order to understand its content, reading plays a central role in learning and mastering a second language. Especially, extensive reading of varied and interesting texts would accelerate the rate of learning as well as learning the skills and components of any target language. From a psycholinguistic perspective, reading is a problem solving activity involving the reader in the process of deriving and assigning meaning. Comprehension of a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Finally, reading involves the reader, the text, and interaction between the reader and the text. Therefore, the ultimate gain depends on the variety of texts a reader gets involved while reading.

Reading is probably the most commonly used skill in learning English particularly in and EFL context, not only to obtain information but also as an enjoyable activity. Of course, reading should lead to comprehension; otherwise it will not result in obtaining information and in turn learning. To read with comprehension, the reader should gather information through certain processes. In other words, comprehension calls for deriving meaning from the printed materials. To derive meaning from the passage, the reader should first extract the meaning of words, expressions, phrases, and sentences. That is, reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.

In many parts of the world a reading knowledge of a foreign language is often important for academic studies and personal development. The overwhelming majority of societies and countries around the world are multilingual, and educated citizens are expected to function well in more than one language. In modern life, learning depends largely on one's ability to interpret the printed page precisely and fully. In day-to-day life people encounter material for reading either in their first language or a foreign language. In such a scenario, knowledge of the language in which the material is written is imperative.

When people read, they read for a purpose. How we read and the strategies we use while reading are also determined by the purpose of reading. Reading purposes can be classified as:

Reading for survival: Reading is necessary to perform daily tasks. For example, reading instructions in order to learn how an appliance works, or how to fill out a form; how to read signs on a road while driving.