

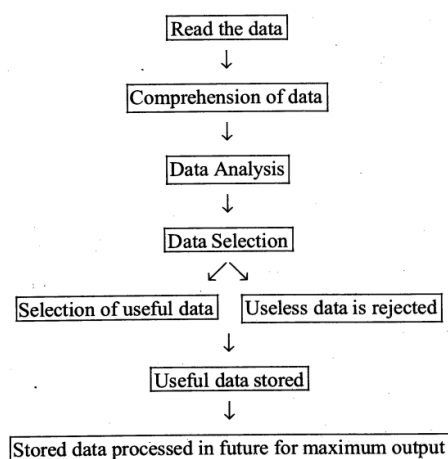
## Comprehension (Prose And Poetry)

### WHAT IS READING COMPREHENSION?

Reading Comprehension is an activity your brain is constantly engaged in. Whatever you do is reading Comprehension for brain, e.g. reading newspaper, watching billboards on roadside, watching TV, talking with a person, listening to music etc. Reading a newspaper is obviously reading comprehension you would have understood. We read the news printed on the paper, we understand what it means, we analyze the news for ourselves, and sometimes we agree or disagree with the opinion expressed in the newspaper article. If it is a report we select the useful portion of news and store it in our memory to be used later. We like or dislike the subject chosen by the writer, sometimes we are made to think or question our beliefs or mindset by some articles, this is data analysis, then we remember what seems important or useful to us in the newspaper and forget much of the news in the paper every day.

The same procedure happens even when you are watching hoarding on the roadside. The advertisements are the data for your brain. It is raw information that your brain understands and processes. Remember how many times you say after watching an Ad, "Oh, this is not real", "Oh! Does it happen this way, I didn't know that", "This is a good Ad". All of the above reactions when studied closely are a judgment, fact-collection, opinion formation.

You don't remember everything about every Ad, only the part, appealing to you finds a place in your memory. This is Data Selection. Same for watching TV and listening to music, your mind reads information, comprehends it, processes it, selects the useful section and stores it for future, rejects the useless part. So, to make Reading Comprehension easy we can draw a flow chart of the entire process.



The entire process of Reading Comprehension could be divided into 7 simple steps. But here is a need for a reckoner. Though reading comprehension is what our brain practices all the time yet we do not always perform very well when attempting a reading comprehension question, why?

Because what the brain does is at an ordinary simplistic level and we are unaware of even that. But what is required of an aspiring students is a conscious, skilful, determined effort to master the art of reading comprehension.

Let's illustrate all the seven steps involved in Reading Comprehension describing what we ordinarily do and what are the special concepts a students should keep in mind while attempting the Reading Comprehension section with some useful tips.

## **STEP – I**

Reading is the obvious important pre-requisite of the RC section. How well you read, in what manner you read a given passage, would determine the level of your comprehension and consequently the analysis of information. Reading in the right way is very important.

### **WHAT IS THE RIGHT WAY OF READING?**

As was mentioned before that all of us are constantly engaged in the process of reading information from our surroundings. Only we do not do it skillfully in the right direction. This is what a student has to practice doing to read everything rightly. HOW? Even an apparently simple process of reading involves many factors that affect the output of reading. How intelligently can you mould these factors will, in turn, improve the quality of reading. These factors are:

- Subject of data
- Interest areas of the reader
- Concentration span of the reader
- Reading speed
- Retaining capacity
- Reading Aptitude

#### **I. SUBJECT OF DATA**

It is proven by research that our brains do not respond to different kinds of data in a similar manner or to a similar extent. Just like we all have our area of expertise, one might know a lot about space science while other's knowledge of Automobile may be vast. On the other hand, someone's idea of latest cars, engines and their power may be meagre and another may find himself fumbling if questioned about planetary movements, composition of stars etc. This is a reflection of reading habits. Ordinarily, we do selective reading, e.g; while reading a newspaper many students are used to skipping the Business news and jumping straight to sports page while many others simply refuse to look at the editorial page and drool all over the page 3 or entertainment section. Whereas reading has many advantages. It is neither feasible nor advisable for a student to read everything available on all topics under the sun. But it is important, nevertheless, for you to have some basic knowledge about most subjects. This will

**(1) improve your general awareness,**

**(2) boost your confidence,**

**(3) sharpen your analytical skills** because you would be able to use information from different sections and even do a comparative study, if needed, it will also.

**(4) improve your thinking skills** because as the quantity of facts will increase, you will be pushed to think about all of them. In this manner you will improve many of your skills, not just one. Also, one should not forget that as a manager one needs to know about not just one field but many. Marketing requires more than just the knowledge of specific sector. So, to begin with a student should open oneself to reading about varied subjects and not just a selected few. Then it becomes important to decide how much to read and from where to read. The best and age old golden option is Newspaper. A good student MUST develop a habit of reading a newspaper properly every day. You would say that you do already. In that case, answer the following questions and check yourself?

- What is the most influential political news of the last week?
- What important discovery or research has been made in the field of science, technology or medicine in the gone month?
- Which book was released by an Indian or American author in the past week?
- Who is the Chief Minister of Gujarat?
- When did Einstein die?
- What is article 377 of the Indian constitution?
- What was Rowlatt Act? Which year was it passed in?
- Who is rated the best Badminton player in the world?
- Who is playing Daniel Pearl's wife in the Hollywood film being made on the Journalist's life and murder by terrorists?
- Which film received the National Award this year?

Check your caliber as a reader now on the basis of the following result card.

Correct Answers	Result
0 – 3	Poor Reader
4 – 7	Average Reader
8 – 10	Good Reader

Now, you know yourself and what your weaknesses are. You would have noticed for yourself while answering the questions.

That despite reading the newspaper every day you are not updated about the on goings in every field. This is the first step towards becoming a good reader. You should choose wisely what newspaper or magazines you read. You should also read some books on History, Philosophy and literature. But even wise reading must be done selectively so as not to waste time, don't read all articles and reports in the newspaper but intelligently choose after having read all headlines.

TIP: Use this reading habit to improve your vocabulary. Each day list out the new words you come across. Classify them under subjects, eg. Science, Sports, Politics, Literature. Learn their meanings and use them frequently. This will help you understand the jargon of different fields.

Now, let us quickly recall all that we have stated and discussed in this section

Must dos for a good reader

- Read about different fields, don't restrict yourself to one.
- Do intelligent reading, don't waste time reading junk information.
- Read only from good newspapers and magazines
- Utilise maximum time, read while travelling, waiting etc.
- Try to indulge in a discussion everyday about what you read that day
- Improve your vocabulary alongside reading

## **II. INTEREST OF READER**

This factor is closely connected to the first factor. In fact, it is this factor that chiefly decides the subjects we choose to read about. Just like all fingers in a hand are not of the same size, our interest in every field cannot be of the same level. This is why we choose certain fields and eliminate others, e.g; while walking on the road, if there is a large poster of a bike newly launched in market, it is more likely that a teenage or a young boy would stop by to read the details about the bike rather than a girl who would probably stop by to read information on Jewelry or garments ranges. This is just difference of interests. This is the difference that decides the store of one's knowledge. Ordinarily, it is alright for a person to seek information about one feels drawn to the area of his/her interest. But a student should develop a habit of arousing an interest in different kind of fields equally.

## **III. READINGAPTITUDE**

Reading Aptitude is different from reading skills. Reading Aptitude is what gives an upper edge to a student in the RC section or even otherwise if developed properly.

### **WHAT IS READINGAPTITUDE?**

By reading aptitude, we mean the approach that you take while reading a passage or reading anything. The mindset with which you read it and what is your motive or expectation from the passage. Simply put. Reading aptitude is what you want from reading. If you approach a reading piece only for the purpose of reading, to collect facts to add to your existing store of knowledge or only as a practice to improve your reading speed or merely as an examination exercise you would not receive the same results as you will if you read the passage with a different attitude.

Consider every piece of written information as a prospective useful drft.

Begin with the rule of WIIFM - what's in it for me. Once you have used your wisdom to decide if the passage is worth reading. Approach the passage as a mystery novel. There are hidden clues you must look for. From the beginning stay a careful, clever reader. Remember the first reading itself should give you all you may need to have from a passage.

If there are facts in the passage, quickly decide, as you read, which of these are important enough to be memorized and memorize them.

If there is an argument in the passage, keep trail of how the argument proceeds and what are the different evidences offered.

In such a passage, as you read, involve your mind with the passage and form an opinion about the argument.

If a passage is about philosophy offering a philosophical perspective as you read, form a short summary of the philosophical theory in simple words.

If the essay describes a process or an event, then as you read on, form a chain of events in your mind.

Keeping these points in mind, will improve your reading and retaining efficiency greatly. What we have to target and achieve is not GOOD READING rather what we must try and attain is EFFECTIVE READING. A good reader may or may not be just as good at comprehension and analysis but an Effective Reader would definitely perform in comprehension and Analysis of data just as well. So, try and be an EFFECTIVE READER.

## SAMPLE PASSAGE

### SAMPLE PASSAGE – 1

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the following passages and answer the questions that follow:

As a medium of literary expression, the common language is inadequate. Like the man of letters, the scientist finds it necessary to "give a purer sense to the words of the tribe". But the purity of scientific language is not the same as the purity of literary language.

The aim of the scientist is to say only one thing at a time, and to say it unambiguously and with the greatest possible clarity. To achieve this, he simplifies and jargonises. In other words, he uses the vocabulary and syntax of common speech in such a way that each phrase is susceptible to only one interpretation; and when the vocabulary and syntax of common speech are too imprecise for his purpose he invites a new technical language, or jargon specially designed to express the limited meaning with which he is professionally concerned. At its most perfectly pure form, scientific language ceases the matter of words and terms into mathematics. The literary artist purifies the language of the tribe in a radically different way. The scientist's aim, as we have seen, is to say one thing, and only one thing at a time. This, most emphatically, is not the aim of the literary artist. Human life is lived simultaneously on many levels and has many meanings. Literature is a device for reporting the multifarious facts and expressing their various significances. When the literary artist undertakes to give a pure sense to the words of his tribe, he does

so with the express purpose of creating a language capable of conveying, not the single meaning of some particular science, but the multiple significance of human experience, it's most private as well as on its more public levels.\

1. The passage highlights the difference between:
- (a) the language of science and of literature (b) the language of the tribe and that of a civilized man.
  - (c) jargon and the language of the common man
  - (d) the central purpose of science and literature

**Explanation:**

This is a thematic question and regards the basic theme of the given passage. A careful reading of the passage will give you an idea as to what is the central idea in the passage. You can eliminate the wrong answers to reach the right option.

- (a) This statement is true according to the passage. There is a difference between the language of science and language of literature. This, also, is the central idea in the passage because the focus of the passage in all three paragraphs is to describe the language of science and literature emphasizing the difference between the two.
- (b) This cannot be correct because there is no mention whatsoever of the language of the civilized man and its being different from the language of the tribe.
- (c) This statement is true, the paragraph does talk about jargon and common speech and also mentions the difference between the two but it is not the central theme of the passage. Since the question asks about what is being 'highlighted', this cannot be the correct answer.
- (d) This statement is also true, the passage does bring out certain differences between science and literature. Thus, there can be an ambiguity between option (1) and (4). But the difference between science and literature as talked about in the passage are differences between the language of science and literature and the aim of a scientist and a literary artist through that. Therefore, (1) will be correct answer.

2. 'Jargon' in the context of the passage means:
- (a) difficult language
  - (b) technical language
  - (c) language with limited meaning
  - (d) mathematical language

**Explanation:**

'Jargon' in the context of the passage means this question is about language or style of the passage. The meaning of a particular word could be found out in the context of a specific sentence or even with respect to the general idea of the passage as we are asked to do in this question.

In questions like this one should find out the specific sentence or phrase where the word has been used. In this case it is a new technical language or jargon specially designed to express limited meaning"

- (a) This sentence of the passage does not at all give a sense that jargon means difficult language. It is a specially designed language to express the limited meanings a scientist is concerned with. It may not necessarily be difficult. This option can, thus, be eliminated
- (b) This may be the answer because the sentence mentions technical language. In the sense of the sentence the scientist cannot use common speech to explain scientific meanings and, therefore, uses a new technical language or Jargon. This explains that Jargon is technical language. This is the correct answer.
- (c) This option at first thought appears to be the correct answer, because in the sentence 'Jargon' is followed by limited meaning but when studied closely, the sentence says Jargon expresses the limited meaning of the scientific language and is not necessarily a language of limited meaning.
- (d) Mathematical language cannot be the answer because there is no reference to mathematics in the passage with respect to the use of word 'Jargon'

**3.** The purpose of literature according to the passage is to:

- (a) express views privately as well as publicly
- (b) report multifarious facts of life
- (c) view life from various planes
- (d) none of the above

**Explanation:**

This is a supportive idea question. The question is not about the central theme of the passage but the supportive idea in the passage. In attempting this, a student should first single out the relevant paragraph and then answer the question

- (a) This is incorrect because no such idea is even mentioned in the passage
- (b) This is the right answer. In the relevant paragraph of the passage, it is mentioned "Literature is a device for reporting the multifarious facts.
- (c) This is not necessarily true. Yes, the passage mentions that "Life is tired at various planes" but there is no mention of Literature and its purpose in relation to this. This option can, therefore, be eliminated.

**4.** The language of science is:

- (a) precise                      (b) verbose
- (c) ambiguous                (d) none of these

**Explanation:**

This is an inference question. There is no direct mention of what kind of a language is language of science but the answer can be inferred from the aim of the scientist.

- (a) This is a right answer because 'precise' means exact and unambiguous. If a scientist must say only one thing at a time and say it with greatest clarity and unambiguously, then the language should be exact or precise. So, this is the right answer.
- (b) This cannot be the right answer 'verbose' means to use more words than are needed. According to the passage, the opposite will be true. This is incorrect.
- (c) This, also, is wrong. The passage clearly mentions that a scientist must speak unambiguously'. The language of science in that case can never be ambiguous.
- (d) This is not the answer

**5.** According to the passage:

- (a) language of science is pure
- (b) language of literature is pure
- (c) the language of science and that of literature, each in its own way, makes for pure expression
- (d) none of the above

**Explanation:**

This question can be attempted through elimination, checking each option for factual and thematic accuracy.

- (a) The passage does not make such an absolute statement about purity of language but does not say anything like language of science is pure.
- (b) Same as the above option, this cannot be taken as a completely true statement in context of the given passage
- (c) This is the right answer. The second line of the passage talks about the aim of man of letters and scientist, both give a pure sense to the word of the tribe'. Through this sentence we can infer that language of science and literatures both make for purer expression though in ways different from each other as mentioned in the next line.
- (d) This is not the answer

**6.** The word 'unambiguously' can best be replaced by:

- (a) Vaguely
- (b) Dubiously
- (c) explicitly
- (d) amiably

**Explanation:**

This is the synonym-antonym type question, find the word that is nearest to the word given in question.

- (a) Vaguely - This is opposite of unambiguously. Hence, not the answer
- (b) Dubiously - This also means not clear or exact, hence wrong answer.
- (c) Explicitly - This word means clearly and, thus, can be used in place of unambiguously so, this is the answer
- (d) Amiably - This word has no relation with the words unambiguously and, thus, cannot be used in its place.



## COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES FOR POETRY

Understanding modern poetry requires an understanding of the following:

- **Free Verse:** Most modern poems are written in free verse—liberating to the poet, annoying to the reader. Free verse has no fixed meter and no fixed line length or stanzas. The poet, instead, decides where the line should break based on how the poem should look on the page? Or where a natural break occurs?
- **Literal and Symbolic Meanings:** The literal meaning of modern poetry often reflects everyday life. These everyday scenes, however, are full of symbolic meaning.
- **Diction:** Modernism is a deliberate break from forms that characterized traditional poetry. Whereas traditional verse relied on formal language, modern poetry uses informal, everyday speech.
- **Best Tips for Success**

1. Realize complete understanding, as with any poem, will not come after one reading.
2. Use clues from the poem's title to identify the topic. Often the topic will not be stated explicitly in the poem.
3. Read through the poem once to get a general idea of what the poem's about. Don't try to figure it out the first time through.
4. Pay attention to punctuation and the physical structure of the poem.
5. Consider, first, the literal meaning of the poem; that is, what is the concrete object or idea being discussed. Once that is identified, concern yourself with analysis and symbolic meaning.
6. Analyze imagery and figurative language. What is the author's purpose?
7. Identify parts of the poem that confuse you. Can you use the poem's context to interpret confusing parts?
8. Consider multiple ways of interpreting the poem. There may be more than one correct interpretation.
9. Read the poem aloud. Sound devices are often clues to the poem's meaning.