



How to approach reading

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Words and Learning

How many words can a reader recognise in reading a text in L1?

50,000

How do we learn these words?

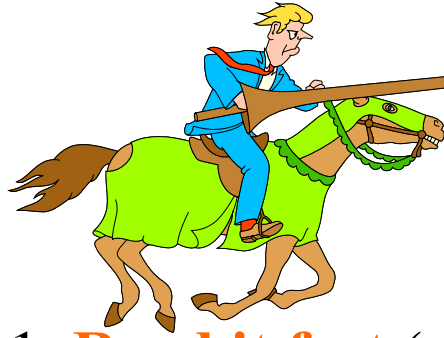
Through context.

Do we need to know all the words?

No.

How do we deal with unknown words and not lose the message?

Apply word attack strategies.



Text Attack Strategies

1. **Read it fast** (no stopping, get what you can from it)
2. **Read it again** (a little more slowly, look up only the key words in the dictionary)
3. **Stop & Ask** (what is the text saying
- what questions could the text answer?)
4. **Read a third time** (some sentences should be clearer)
5. **Problem sentences** (Ask questions again: What does it mean?
 - A. identify the verb
 - B. discover the subject or object-
Who or what does (or is) what?)

What makes a text difficult?

1. **Concepts** (e.g. solution, compound, buffer)
2. **Sentence structure** (combined with unfamiliar vocabulary)
3. **Cohesive devices** (“small words, big problems”: **as, due to**)
4. **Discourse markers** (however, therefore, hence, nevertheless)

What makes words difficult?

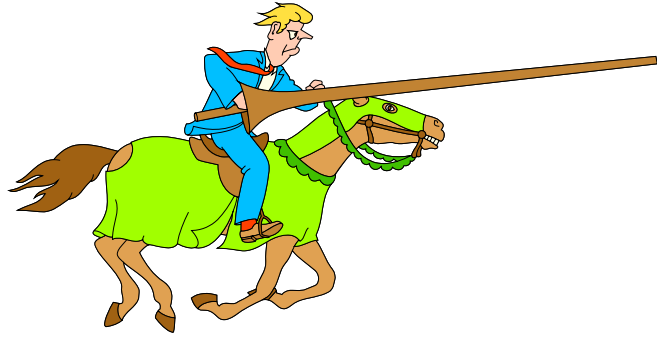
1. **Idioms** (e.g. different kettle of fish)
2. **Metaphors** (e.g. gingerbreeding)
3. **Words with several meaning** e.g. buffer
chemistry = a chemical used for maintaining the pH
computer sci. = area of memory for storing messages
4. **Semi-technical words** (e.g. comply, vary, distinct)
5. **Synonyms** (e.g. finish/stop, help/assist)
6. **Technical words with vernacular meaning**
(e.g. cake, bedding, jaw plate, ore dressing)



Wotta lotta words!

Wotta lotta words!

Wotta lotta words!



Word Attack Strategies

1. **Phonics** (identify the word in L1 with L2 -e.g. reduction, granulation)
2. **Structural clues** (“the sploony urdle kneafed”)
3. **Morphological information** (-ment, -ly, un-, -ish)
4. **Inferring from context**

She poured the water into tock.

Then, lifting the tock, she drank.

As she set it down again the tock slipped from her hand and broke.

Only the handle remained in one piece.

Active, receptive, throw-away vocabulary

- **Active** = words we know well
- **Receptive** = words we understand but cannot use
- **Throwaway** = words not worth learning

Reading Techniques

Skimming

- get the gist of the text
- know how it is organised
- get an idea (intention) of the writer



Scanning

- locate specific information
- read thoroughly

Why are technical texts difficult to read?

Problems of technical texts

1. Texts are denser:

- Information is close to summary already.
- Summarising is difficult.
- Underlining is not useful.

(From: www.rit.edu/)

Problems of technical texts

2. Diagrams, illustrations and graphs help:

- Graphic presentation is an integral part of texts
- Graphs should be read and analysed carefully
- Always read text and refer to diagrams

Problems of technical texts

3. Vocabulary is important:

- many new terms are introduced and defined
- specialised terminology has to be learned

Problems of technical texts

4. Precision is vital:

- Accuracy in vocabulary is crucial.
- Being “close” is not enough.
- Exactness is required.

Problems of technical texts

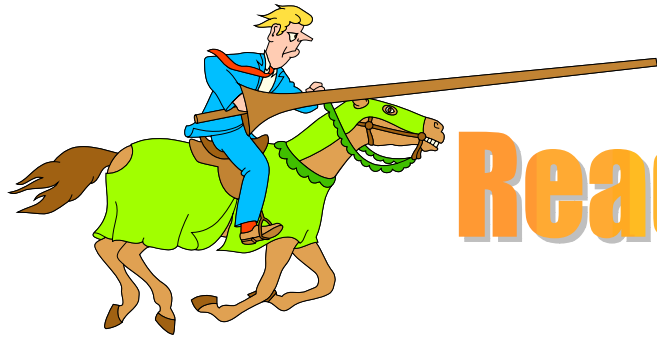
5. Abstract and factual information is included:

- Detailed information is important, but also theoretical basis.
- Both have to be learned.

Problems of technical texts

6. Concepts are applied to new situation:

- Analysing a situation is needed



Reading a technical text

- Keep paper and pen within reach.
- Think about the purpose of reading.
- Survey the reading (title, subheadings, abstract, conclusions)
- Scan the whole reading then focus on the most relevant parts and read in detail.
- Pay attention to when you can skim and when you need to understand every word.
- When it gets difficult, slow down and reread sections.
- Translate difficult material into your own words.
- Use good dictionaries (Onelook.com).
- Use specialised glossaries.
- Use Google (concept +what).