Secondary English

TESS India

Whole-class reading routines

Teacher Education through School-based Support in India
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TESS-India (Teacher Education through School-based Support) aims to improve the classroom practices of elementary and secondary teachers in India through the provision of Open Educational Resources (OERs) to support teachers in developing student-centred, participatory approaches. The TESS-India OERs provide teachers with a companion to the school textbook. They offer activities for teachers to try out in their classrooms with their students, together with case studies showing how other teachers have taught the topic and linked resources to support teachers in developing their lesson plans and subject knowledge.

TESS-India OERs have been collaboratively written by Indian and international authors to address Indian curriculum and contexts and are available for online and print use (http://www.tess-india.edu.in/). The OERs are available in several versions, appropriate for each participating Indian state and users are invited to adapt and localise the OERs further to meet local needs and contexts.

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Video resources

Some of the activities in this unit are accompanied by the following icon:  *. This indicates that you will find it helpful to view the TESS-India video resources for the specified pedagogic theme.*

The TESS-India video resources illustrate key pedagogic techniques in a range of classroom contexts in India. We hope they will inspire you to experiment with similar practices. They are intended to complement and enhance your experience of working through the text-based units, but are not integral to them should you be unable to access them.

TESS-India video resources may be viewed online or downloaded from the TESS-India website, http://www.tess-india.edu.in/). Alternatively, you may have access to these videos on a CD or memory card.

What this unit is about

At secondary level, my students are expected to read long and difficult passages in English. The textbooks and supplementary readers feature lots of stories and poems, but also biographies and travelogues. How can I help them to read and understand English texts independently?

Teaching reading in English is emphasised in the National Curriculum Framework (2005). Students need to be equipped with good reading skills for their own success and in order to contribute to their community. If you can help students to develop skills for reading English independently, you will be helping them in later life. Reading is also a transferable skill, so improving students' reading skills in English will help them to be better readers in their other languages as well.

Good readers of any language use certain techniques to help them understand what they are reading. They ask themselves questions as they read a text. They use what they know about the world to make sense of what they are reading. They identify which points are more important to understand and remember. In your English lessons, you can help your students to learn some of these techniques.

In this unit you will look at techniques that you can use to help students to become independent readers, particularly when reading silently on their own. These techniques will help them to understand the varied and complex texts that they have to read for their classes and exams, and also in their lives beyond school.

What you can learn in this unit

- Techniques for reading for understanding in English.
- Classroom activities to encourage deeper student engagement with English texts.
- Groupwork activities to support reading.

1 Asking questions as you read

One way to help students deepen their understanding of what they are reading is to encourage them to ask questions of a text themselves while they read.

There are broadly two types of questions that students can ask themselves: factual and inferential. Answers to factual questions can easily be found in the text. These kinds of questions usually begin with words such as 'what', 'who', 'where', 'how many' and 'when'.

Inferential questions ask readers to draw conclusions based on what they have read. Answers to these questions are not explicitly stated in the text. To answer these kinds of questions you need to think more deeply and make connections between what is in the text and what you know about the world. These kinds of questions begin with words and phrases such as:

- 'What do you think …?'
- 'Why do you think …?'
- 'How do you know …?'

- ‘What if …?’

There are not always right or wrong answers to these questions. These kinds of questions make students become more involved in the text, and make them think more critically. (See Resource 1, ‘Using questioning to promote thinking’, for examples of these types of questions.)

Read Case Study 1 to hear how one teacher uses student-generated questions in a reading task.

Video: Using questioning to promote thinking

Case Study 1: Mr Chakraborty helps his students to ask different kinds of questions about a text

Mr Chakraborty teaches English at a secondary government school. He tried to get his students to question while they read.

When we were doing a lesson from the textbook [Central Board of Secondary Education, 2011a], I read the first line of the passage – ‘Mr Sunday Nana, his wife and four small children live in Koko Village, Nigeria’ – and asked them to think of questions that they could ask about it:

> Where is Koko Village? What is it like? Who is Mr Nana? What does his name mean?

Then I read the next line: ‘The village is like any other African village – picturesque, colourful and noisy.’

I asked the students if any of their previous questions were answered and they said that they now had a little more information about the village. Then I asked them to think of some more questions about the second sentence.

> How is it ‘picturesque’, and what does that word mean? Why is it noisy?

I told students to spend the next 15 minutes reading the passage and noting down questions they had as they were reading it. As they worked I walked around the room and helped any students who were having problems. It was interesting to look at the questions that the students were asking, and it also helped me to see which students had a better understanding of the text.

Activity 1: Helping your students to ask questions about a text

In Case Study 1, the teacher asked students to note different kinds of questions as they read a passage from the textbook. Follow these steps to do this with your students:

1. Before the class begins, select a lesson or a part of one. It can be any kind of passage, such as a literary text, a travelogue or a factual text. It could be the next lesson in the textbook, or a passage from the supplementary reader.
2. In class, ask your students to say words or phrases that can be used at the beginning of questions (giving examples if necessary). Write the suggestions on the blackboard in two columns, as shown in Table 1.

   Table 1 *Examples of words or phrases that can be used at the beginning of questions.*

Factual	**Inferential**
What …?	How …?
Where …?	How do you know …?
When …?	What if …?
Who …?	What do you think …?
Which …?	Why do you think …?
How many/much/often …?	Can you tell me more about …?

3. Tell the students to read the selected text (or part of a text) individually and silently. As they read, they should note down questions that occur to them about the text. Read out the first couple of lines and give some examples, as in Case Study 1.
4. Give them ten minutes to note down as many questions as they can. As they work, walk around the room and help any students where necessary.
5. After ten minutes, tell the students to stop writing and ask for some examples of questions. Write these on the blackboard.
   Read through the questions and ask students:
   - Which questions are easier to answer? Why?
   - Which questions are more difficult to answer? Why?
   - Are any questions impossible to answer?
   - Do these kinds of questions help you to understand the lesson? Why (not)?

Pause for thought

Here are some questions for you to think about after trying this activity. If possible, discuss these questions with a colleague.

- What kinds of questions did your students write? Were they mostly factual or inferential?
- Did asking questions improve your students' engagement with the text?
- What would you do differently next time?

Students might find this kind of activity difficult at first if they are not used to it. With practice, they will be able to ask many questions, and it will develop their creativity and critical thinking skills.

2 Using existing knowledge to make sense of an English text

Good readers ask questions about what they are reading. They look for clues to answer those questions and help them to make sense of the text. They use the information that they can find in the text and the knowledge that they already have about the world to come to some sort of conclusion about what the text means.

We do this every day, in both oral and written communication. Often this is so automatic that we don't even realise that the information wasn't included in the conversation or text. For example, read the following sentences:

My wife and I tried to pack light, but we made sure that we didn't forget our sleeping bags and special walking shoes. The last time I travelled, I had motion sickness so I also made sure that I packed some medicine to prevent vomiting.

The reader can gather a great deal of information from these sentences:

- The author is married.
- The author is going on a trip.
- The author and his wife are going to do some walking, perhaps trekking or hiking.
- They may be camping and will not be sleeping in proper beds.
- The author is perhaps anxious or nervous.

This information was not clearly stated in the sentences, but a reader can use what was written – along with their knowledge of the world – to understand much more than what was said. When you read a text, you automatically come to conclusions about what you are reading, even when the writer has not said it. You come to conclusions as to why things have happened, why characters have behaved in a certain way, and how they feel.

Of course, people's knowledge of the world is different, depending on where they live or their experiences. This means that people may come to different conclusions about what they read.

Activity 2: Using existing knowledge to make sense of a text

Good readers use what is in the text and their knowledge of the world to make sense of what they are reading. You can help your students to develop this skill by following these steps:

1. Before class, select a paragraph from a lesson or other text. It can be any paragraph from any kind of text. Below is an example paragraph taken from the NCERT Class IX textbook *Beehive*.

   > In 1900, at the age of 21, Albert Einstein was a university graduate and unemployed. He worked as a teaching assistant, gave private lessons and finally secured a job in 1902 as a technical expert in the patent office in Bern. While he was supposed to be assessing other people's inventions, Einstein was actually developing his own ideas in secret. He is said to have jokingly called his desk drawer at work the 'bureau of theoretical physics'.

2. Ask students to read the paragraph, either in their heads or aloud.
3. Draw the following table on the blackboard and ask the students to copy it:

   Table 2 *Existing knowledge template.*

What I understand about Einstein from the paragraph (but is not directly stated)	**How I understand this**

4. Tell students that the paragraph about Einstein gives them lots of information – for example, his age in 1900 and so on. Tell them that readers of the paragraph could also assume things about Einstein that are not explicitly stated in the text. Give them an example, and complete the table:

   Table 3 *Existing knowledge template with an example.*

What I understand from the paragraph (but is not directly stated)	**How I understand this**
Perhaps he wasn't very rich	He had to work – he worked as a teaching assistant and gave private lessons

5. Ask the students to make some more suggestions to add to the table, and make notes in the table on the blackboard.
6. Now ask them to read some more paragraphs from the textbook. Ask them next to complete another table with notes about the paragraphs. This can be quite a challenging activity, so encourage the students to work in pairs or groups to share ideas and help each other.

Pause for thought

Here are some questions for you to think about after trying this activity. If possible, discuss these questions with a colleague.

- Were your students able to understand things about the text that were not directly stated? If so, were they able to give reasons?
- Did you need to intervene at any point? Would you modify the activity next time? If so, how?
- Did this activity help you to assess your students' learning?

This activity helps students to understand more about the skills they use when they read a text, and will help them to understand and remember texts more. It could be difficult for students, but they will get better with practice. Try the technique again with another text, and see if your students are able to understand more.

3 Identifying key points in a text

Texts at secondary level are often long and contain a lot of information. It can be quite difficult for students to stay focused when reading long texts like this, and it can be difficult for them to recall all the information. They therefore need to learn how to identify what is more important and what is less important when they are reading. They can do this by :

- underlining or highlighting key sentences, words or phrases.
- making notes of key information as they read.

Doing this helps students to stay focused on what they are reading, and it also helps them to understand it better.

Case Study 2: Mrs Sangita Sharma helps her students to identify what is important in a text

Mrs Sangita Sharma teaches English to Class IX. Her students have just had a test, and most of the class has not done very well. She decided to help them learn how to take notes so that they can recall information more easily for future tests.

The students wanted to know how to decide what is important. Jyoti mentioned that everything looked important when she read a chapter. I decided to do an activity to help them to identify what is important. I asked them to look at a passage about the film director Alfred Hitchcock in their textbook [Central Board of Secondary Education, 2011a]:

> Alfred Hitchcock was a man with a vivid imagination, strong creative skills and a passion for life. With his unique style and God-gifted wit he produced and directed some of the most thrilling films that had the audience almost swooning with fright and falling off their seats with laughter.
>
> Alfred Hitchcock was greatly influenced by American films and magazines. At the age of 20, he took up a job at the office of Paramount Studio, London. Using imagination, talent and dedication, he made each of his endeavours a success. He took great pleasure in working in the studio and often worked all seven days a week. He moved to the USA in 1939 and got his

> American citizenship in 1955. Here, he produced many more films and hosted a weekly television show. No matter from where his ideas came, whether a magazine article, a mystery novel or incident, his films had the typical 'Hitchcock touch' – where the agony of suspense was relieved by interludes of laughter! Hitchcock was knighted in 1980.

I asked them to read the passage silently first, in order to understand what it was about. Then I asked them to discuss it with the person next to them. After a few minutes the students started to put up their hands and said, 'We think this passage is about someone called Alfred Hitchcock. It describes the kind of person he was and that he made films.' Now I gave them some more instructions:

> Pick out the words and phrases that relate to the main ideas. You can underline them in your textbook, and you can make notes in the margins. While picking out the words, phrases and so on, remember there is no need to underline or copy articles or prepositions or conjunctions. There is also no need to give examples. Leave out all repetitions of the same idea expressed in different words. Let's begin … which words and phrases tell us about Hitchcock?

Together we underlined the following points about Hitchcock.

> Alfred Hitchcock was a man with a vivid imagination, strong creative skills and a passion for life. With his unique style and God-gifted wit he produced and directed some of the most thrilling films that had the audience almost swooning with fright and falling off their seats with laughter.
>
> Alfred Hitchcock was greatly influenced by American films and magazines. At the age of 20, he took up a job at the office of Paramount Studio, London. Using imagination, talent and dedication, he made each of his endeavours a success. He took great pleasure in working in the studio and often worked all seven days a week. He moved to the USA in 1939 and got his American citizenship in 1955. Here, he produced many more films and hosted a weekly television show. No matter from where his ideas came, whether a magazine article, a mystery novel or incident, his films had the typical 'Hitchcock touch' – where the agony of suspense was relieved by interludes of laughter! Hitchcock was knighted in 1980.

The students then wrote their key points in the notebooks:

- Vivid imagination, strong creative skills, passion for life
- Unique style, God-gifted wit
- Produced/directed thrilling films
- Greatly influenced by American films and magazines
- Age 20 job Paramount Studio, London
- Great pleasure working – worked all seven days a week
- Moved to USA 1939; American citizenship 1955
- Produced more films, hosted weekly TV shows
- Ideas from – magazine articles, mystery novel, incident
- Films – typical 'Hitchcock touch' – agony of suspense, interludes of laughter
- Knighted 1980

In the next class, I asked students to look back at the notes they had made about Hitchcock and asked if they could recall the main ideas of the passage. If they could, then they knew that they had made good notes. I told them that now they had learned the route for their studies.

Activity 3: Try in the classroom – Identifying what is important

In Case Study 2, the teacher showed her class how to pick out the main ideas in a text and leave out the non-essential details. Now follow the steps below and try a similar activity in your classroom:

1. Before class, select a biography or other factual text from your textbook or supplementary reader.
2. In class, give your students some time to read the text silently.
3. Organise your students into pairs. Each pair must pick out the main ideas from the text by underlining the key points, and then writing them on paper. Give them a time limit to do this; for example, five to ten minutes, depending on the length and complexity of the text.
4. Ask a few pairs to read out their main points. The rest of the class should comment on whether all the main points have been identified or any essential information has been left out or if non-essential information has been included.

You can begin by working with just one or two paragraphs. As the students gain confidence, you can get them to work with longer pieces.

Pause for thought

Here are some questions for you to think about after trying this activity. If possible, discuss these questions with a colleague.

- Did all your students engage with this activity?
- How did you intervene and support the learning for those students who found it difficult?
- How would you assess your students' learning with this activity?

Good note-taking skills will be useful for your students in the future. If they go on to higher education, they will need to take notes in lectures or from academic articles or books. In the workplace or in training they may need to note down instructions.

Notes made while reading can be very useful, too – for example, as revision aids before an exam, when writing a report and so on. For notes to be useful, they need to be clearly written and easy to find. Apart from helping your students to identify what is more or most important, you can show them ways of taking, keeping and using notes effectively.

Activity 4: Reconstructing a text from notes

This activity is for pairs, but may also be adapted for groups of four. It will help your students to develop the skills of choosing and noting what is important.

1. Before class, select two short passages from the textbook or a brief report from a newspaper or other English text. If possible, you could also ask students to bring in a text from home (for example from a newspaper).
2. Next organise your students into pairs. Give one member of the pair one text (Text 1), and the other member of the pair the second text (Text 2). It doesn't matter if students all have different

texts. You could give more challenging texts to students who are more confident with reading and simpler texts to those who are less confident. (See Resource 2 for further guidance on pair work.)

3. Tell students to read their given texts and to make notes about the most important points on a piece of paper or in their notebooks. Give students a sufficient amount of time to complete the task, and walk around the pairs as they work. Help students if they are having problems.
4. When the time is up, tell students to exchange their notes. Each person in the pair should now have their partner's notes.
5. Each student should now try to write the passage using just the notes. Again, give a time limit and ask students to write as much as they possibly can. Some students may not have finished – this is OK.
6. Tell students to read each other's written passages and compare them to the original passages. Ask them to discuss whether important information has been included, or whether any information is missing.

Video: Using pair work

Pause for thought

Here are some questions for you to think about after trying this activity. If possible, discuss these questions with a colleague.

- How easy did students find it to reconstruct the passage? What did they need help with? Did you modify the activity at all? If so, how? Would you organise the pairs or groups of students differently next time?
- How can you help students to use these techniques as part of the normal course of teaching and learning?

Typically this kind of activity is easier with factual texts, as it is easier to pick out the main points and facts. Literary texts can be harder, because readers will have different ideas about what the main points are. It can be interesting to try the activities with different kinds of text, and discuss what your students think.

You can do these kinds of activities with the lessons from the textbook or supplementary reader. This way, students are working with texts that they need to study. Using them regularly means that your students will get better and quicker at doing them.

4 Summary

Good readers use a variety of techniques when they read in any language. They:

- ask different kinds of questions about a text as they read it
- use their knowledge of the language that they are reading and their knowledge of the world to make sense of what they are reading
- identify what is important in a text so that they are able to remember and reconstruct a text if necessary.

You can use creative classroom activities to help your students to develop these skills when they read any kind of text in English. These kinds of skills will help students to understand lessons and texts better, and they will also help them to read texts outside the classroom and in their future lives. They will also be useful techniques to use when reading any text in any language.

If you are interested in developing your own reading skills, you can find some tips and links in Resource 3. You can find links to articles about teaching reading in the additional resources section.

Other Secondary English teacher development units on this topic are:

- *Supporting reading for understanding*: You can learn more about reading in this unit. It discusses how you can encourage your students to develop ways of reading English texts independently.
- *Promoting reading for pleasure*: You can learn more about teaching literary texts in this unit. It builds on the approaches of *Supporting reading for understanding*.

Resources

Resource 1: Using questioning to promote thinking

Teachers question their students all the time; questions mean that teachers can help their students to learn, and learn more. On average, a teacher spends one-third of their time questioning students in one study (Hastings, 2003). Of the questions posed, 60 per cent recalled facts and 20 per cent were procedural (Hattie, 2012), with most answers being either right or wrong. But does simply asking questions that are either right or wrong promote learning?

There are many different types of questions that students can be asked. The responses and outcomes that the teacher wants dictates the type of question that the teacher should utilise. Teachers generally ask students questions in order to:

- guide students toward understanding when a new topic or material is introduced
- push students to do a greater share of their thinking
- remediate an error
- stretch students
- check for understanding.

Questioning is generally used to find out what students know, so it is important in assessing their progress. Questions can also be used to inspire, extend students' thinking skills and develop enquiring minds. They can be divided into two broad categories:

- **Lower-order questions**, which involve the recall of facts and knowledge previously taught, often involving closed questions (a yes or no answer).

- **Higher-order questions**, which require more thinking. They may ask the students to put together information previously learnt to form an answer or to support an argument in a logical manner. Higher-order questions are often more open-ended.

Open-ended questions encourage students to think beyond textbook-based, literal answers, thus eliciting a range of responses. They also help the teacher to assess the students' understanding of content.

Encouraging students to respond

Many teachers allow less than one second before requiring a response to a question and therefore often answer the question themselves or rephrase the question (Hastings, 2003). The students only have time to react – they do not have time to think! If you wait for a few seconds before expecting answers, the students will have time to think. This has a positive effect on students' achievement. By waiting after posing a question, there is an increase in:

- the length of students' responses
- the number of students offering responses
- the frequency of students' questions
- the number of responses from less capable students
- positive interactions between students.

Your response matters

The more positively you receive all answers that are given, the more students will continue to think and try. There are many ways to ensure that wrong answers and misconceptions are corrected, and if one student has the wrong idea, you can be sure that many more have as well. You could try the following:

- Pick out the parts of the answers that are correct and ask the student in a supportive way to think a bit more about their answer. This encourages more active participation and helps your students to learn from their mistakes. The following comment shows how you might respond to an incorrect answer in a supportive way: 'You were right about evaporation forming clouds, but I think we need to explore a bit more about what you said about rain. Can anyone else offer some ideas?'
- Write on the blackboard all the answers that the students give, and then ask the students to think about them all. What answers do they think are right? What might have led to another answer being given? This gives you an opportunity to understand the way that your students are thinking and also gives your students an unthreatening way to correct any misconceptions that they may have.

Value all responses by listening carefully and asking the student to explain further. If you ask for further explanation for all answers, right or wrong, students will often correct any mistakes for themselves, you will develop a thinking classroom and you will really know what learning your students have done and how to proceed. If wrong answers result in humiliation or punishment, then your students will stop trying for fear of further embarrassment or ridicule.

Improving the quality of responses

It is important that you try to adopt a sequence of questioning that doesn't end with the right answer. Right answers should be rewarded with follow-up questions that extend the knowledge and provide students with an opportunity to engage with the teacher. You can do this by asking for:

- a *how* or a *why*
- another way to answer
- a better word

- evidence to substantiate an answer
- integration of a related skill
- application of the same skill or logic in a new setting.

Helping students to think more deeply about (and therefore improve the quality of) their answer is a crucial part of your role. The following skills will help students achieve more:

- **Prompting** requires appropriate hints to be given – ones that help students develop and improve their answers. You might first choose to say what is right in the answer and then offer information, further questions and other clues. (‘So what would happen if you added a weight to the end of your paper aeroplane?’)
- **Probing** is about trying to find out more, helping students to clarify what they are trying to say to improve a disorganised answer or one that is partly right. (‘So what more can you tell me about how this fits together?’)
- **Refocusing** is about building on correct answers to link students’ knowledge to the knowledge that they have previously learnt. This broadens their understanding. (‘What you have said is correct, but how does it link with what we were looking at last week in our local environment topic?’)
- **Sequencing** questions means asking questions in an order designed to extend thinking. Questions should lead students to summarise, compare, explain or analyse. Prepare questions that stretch students, but do not challenge them so far that they lose the meaning of the questions. (‘Explain how you overcame your earlier problem. What difference did that make? What do you think you need to tackle next?’)
- **Listening** enables you to not just look for the answer you are expecting, but to alert you to unusual or innovative answers that you may not have expected. It also shows that you value the students’ thinking and therefore they are more likely to give thoughtful responses. Such answers could highlight misconceptions that need correcting, or they may show a new approach that you had not considered. (‘I hadn’t thought of that. Tell me more about why you think that way.’)

As a teacher, you need to ask questions that inspire and challenge if you are to generate interesting and inventive answers from your students. You need to give them time to think and you will be amazed how much your students know and how well you can help them progress their learning.

Remember, questioning is not about what the teacher knows, but about what the students know. It is important to remember that you should never answer your own questions! After all, if the students know you will give them the answers after a few seconds of silence, what is their incentive to answer?

Resource 2: Using pair work

In everyday situations people work alongside, speak and listen to others, and see what they do and how they do it. This is how people learn. As we talk to others, we discover new ideas and information. In classrooms, if everything is centred on the teacher, then most students do not get enough time to try out or demonstrate their learning or to ask questions. Some students may only give short answers and some may say nothing at all. In large classes, the situation is even worse, with only a small proportion of students saying anything at all.

Why use pair work?

Pair work is a natural way for students to talk and learn more. It gives them the chance to think and try out ideas and new language. It can provide a comfortable way for students to work through new skills and concepts, and works well in large classes.

Pair work is suitable for all ages and subjects. It is especially useful in multilingual, multi-grade classes, because pairs can be arranged to help each other. It works best when you plan specific tasks and establish routines to manage pairs to make sure that all of your students are included, learning and progressing. Once these routines are established, you will find that students quickly get used to working in pairs and enjoy learning this way.

Tasks for pair work

You can use a variety of pair work tasks depending on the intended outcome of the learning. The pair work task must be clear and appropriate so that working together helps learning more than working alone. By talking about their ideas, your students will automatically be thinking about and developing them further.

Pair work tasks could include:

- **'Think–pair–share':** Students think about a problem or issue themselves and then work in pairs to work out possible answers before sharing their answers with other students. This could be used for spelling, working through calculations, putting things in categories or in order, giving different viewpoints, pretending to be characters from a story, and so on.
- **Sharing information:** Half the class are given information on one aspect of a topic; the other half are given information on a different aspect of the topic. They then work in pairs to share their information in order to solve a problem or come to a decision.
- **Practising skills such as listening:** One student could read a story and the other ask questions; one student could read a passage in English, while the other tries to write it down; one student could describe a picture or diagram while the other student tries to draw it based on the description.
- **Following instructions:** One student could read instructions for the other student to complete a task.
- **Storytelling or role play:** Students could work in pairs to create a story or a piece of dialogue in a language that they are learning.

Managing pairs to include all

Pair work is about involving all. Since students are different, pairs must be managed so that everyone knows what they have to do, what they are learning and what your expectations are. To establish pair work routines in your classroom, you should do the following:

- Manage the pairs that the students work in. Sometimes students will work in friendship pairs; sometimes they will not. Make sure they understand that you will decide the pairs to help them maximise their learning.
- To create more of a challenge, sometimes you could pair students of mixed ability and different languages together so that they can help each other; at other times you could pair students working at the same level.
- Keep records so that you know your students' abilities and can pair them together accordingly.
- At the start, explain the benefits of pair work to the students, using examples from family and community contexts where people collaborate.
- Keep initial tasks brief and clear.
- Monitor the student pairs to make sure that they are working as you want.
- Give students roles or responsibilities in their pair, such as two characters from a story, or simple labels such as '1' and '2', or 'As' and 'Bs'). Do this before they move to face each other so that they listen.
- Make sure that students can turn or move easily to sit to face each other.

During pair work, tell students how much time they have for each task and give regular time checks. Praise pairs who help each other and stay on task. Give pairs time to settle and find their own solutions – it can be tempting to get involved too quickly before students have had time to think and show what they can do. Most students enjoy the atmosphere of everyone talking and working. As you move around the class observing and listening, make notes of who is comfortable together, be alert to anyone who is not included, and note any common errors, good ideas or summary points.

At the end of the task you have a role in making connections between what the students have developed. You may select some pairs to show their work, or you may summarise this for them. Students like to feel a sense of achievement when working together. You don't need to get every pair to report back – that would take too much time – but select students who you know from your observations will be able to make a positive contribution that will help others to learn. This might be an opportunity for students who are usually timid about contributing to build their confidence.

If you have given students a problem to solve, you could give a model answer and then ask them to discuss in pairs how to improve their answer. This will help them to think about their own learning and to learn from their mistakes.

If you are new to pair work, it is important to make notes on any changes you want to make to the task, timing or combinations of pairs. This is important because this is how you will learn and how you will improve your teaching. Organising successful pair work is linked to clear instructions and good time management, as well as succinct summarising – this all takes practice.

Resource 3: Develop your own English

Here are some tips and links for developing your own reading skills:

- The best way to develop your skills in reading English is to read as much as you can, including English newspapers and magazines, etc. Exchange English texts with colleagues and friends. Use a library if this is possible.
- Read regularly. Find a time to read each week, and if possible, find a quiet comfortable place where you will not be disturbed.
- Use the techniques that you have read about in this unit. Ask questions about what are reading; use your knowledge of English and the world to guess what the text means; practise taking notes and using them to remember or reconstruct a text.
- Don't try to understand every word. Try to understand the overall message or idea. Don't look up every word in a dictionary – try to guess meanings of words if you can, and just look up key words. Remember that you can read texts as many times as you like.
- Finally, read the things you enjoy. Read stories if you enjoy them; or read cricket news if that's how you like to spend your time.

Here are some additional resources for developing your English:

- Stories and poems for learners of English (with activities): http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/stories-poems
- Articles about many different topics for learners of English (with audio and activities): http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/magazine
- BBC news for Asia: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/asia/
- *The Times of India*: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/

Additional resources

- 'How useful are comprehension questions?' by Mario Rinvolucri: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/how-useful-are-comprehension-questions
- A series of articles by Dave Willis about reading: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/reading-information-motivating-learners-read-efficiently
- 'Theories of reading' by Shahin Vaezi: part 1, http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/theories-reading; part 2, http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/theories-reading-2
- 'Reading matters: what is reading?' by Adrian Tennant: http://www.onestopenglish.com/skills/reading/reading-matters/reading-matters-what-is-reading/154842.article
- 'Interacting with texts – directed activities related to texts (DARTs)' by Cheron Verster: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/interacting-texts-directed-activities-related-texts-darts
- 'Success in reading': http://orelt.col.org/module/3-success-reading

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