



TI-AIE

Promoting the reading environment

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Promoting the reading environment

Contents

What this unit is about	5
What you can learn in this unit	5
1 Providing a reading environment	5

What this unit is about

In this unit the focus is on reading for pleasure. If students associate reading in English only with language drills and tests, they are not likely to learn much English beyond what is required. But if they learn to associate reading in English with enjoyment, they are more likely to become voluntary lifelong readers.

Your students will be learning to read in English and Hindi. The ideas and methods discussed are relevant to reading in any language. So as you read through this unit, think about how you could try out the activities for pleasurable reading in Hindi and local languages, as well as in English. Think too about how the strategies discussed would be effective with students of different abilities in your class.

What you can learn in this unit

- To promote reading for pleasure in English.
- To develop a class library.
- To be a reading role model to students.

1 Providing a reading environment

Start by thinking about actions you already take to promote reading for pleasure.

Activity 1: Motivating your students to read

Whatever level of reading skills your students might have, it is good practice to provide them with daily opportunities to experience reading pleurably. It is important that students are motivated by a genuine desire or need to read. Here are five key actions you can take:

- 1 Show the students that you are a reader yourself. Talk about what you like to read and share suitable examples with them.
- 2 Create a reading environment in your classroom with a book corner.
- 3 Make time to read aloud in class just for pleasure, not for teaching language skills and tests.
- 4 Talk to your students about what they do and don't like to read.
- 5 Make time for quiet independent reading in your classroom.

Review these five points.

- Which ones do you feel you already do?
- Which ones do you feel you could do more, in your classroom?
- How much change would you need to make in order to develop these points?

- Maybe you already do these activities for reading in Hindi. How could you do these activities for English reading?

Decide which activity you will try to develop with your class over the next month. Perhaps talk to another teacher and ask them to join you in making this change in your classroom. Discussing your experiences with another teacher will help you to keep motivated and to think about the impact of your change on the learning in your classroom. The readings, case studies and activities in this unit are designed to help you get started.

In Case Study 1, a teacher tries to make some changes to encourage reading in his classroom.

Case Study 1: Mr Shankar reflects on his role

Mr Shankar teaches Class V in a government school.

In the school where I teach, students come from families with no formal schooling. I am not that confident in English, so I was sticking closely to the textbook. I am actually a keen reader, but in my own language. I like to read newspapers and magazines, and sometimes a bit of poetry. But I was not getting it across to my students about the joys of reading. My students associated reading only with testing – in English and in Hindi.

Bhaskar is one of my students. He is a very good football player and an ardent fan of David Beckham, but he has very limited reading skills. During the reading period he would do everything but read.

I thought hard about this. What could I provide that he would want to read? I got some football magazines and the sport sections of newspapers. I put them on the shelf, open. When Bhaskar saw this, he was so excited that he immediately picked up the magazine and started reading. After a few days I observed him reading the newspaper with some other students and checking out the weather. When I pointed out that they could find some English words in the magazines and in the newspapers, they began to hunt for these words.

As a teacher, I did not fully understand the critical role I could play in influencing my students' attitude towards voluntary reading. Now I try to show my students that I am a reader. I often tell them what I have been reading at home. Sometimes this is something in the newspaper or in a magazine, or even something I saw on an advertisement or billboard. Now I try to start little conversations with students about reading and find out what they like to read.

