

CHAPTER IV

PLANNING OF THE PRESENT TEST

CONTENTS

- 4.0.0 Introduction
- 4.1.0 Determination of Weightage
- 4.2.0 Selection of Reading Material
- 4.3.0 Preparation of Test Items
- 4.4.0 Determining Test Length
- 4.5.0 Arrangement of Test Items and Sub-Tests
- 4.6.0 Description of Sub-Tests

CHAPTER IV  
PLANNING OF THE PRESENT TEST

4.0.0 Introduction

Planning plays an important role in a test construction project. It would be impossible without it to get the satisfactory measuring instrument. Preparation of a good test is not the result of few moments, its a time consuming process, which requires patience and industriousness on the part of the investigator, as it encompasses varied operations that go into the production of a test. The planning of a test involves the preparation of out-lines of specifications of the mental trait or the ability to be measured, the content through which the trait or ability could be measured, types of questions to be used, arrangement of the sub-tests, length of the test and so forth. Therefore, the first and foremost task before the investigator was to specify the term reading comprehension.

It is obvious from the previous chapters that there is no one good definition of reading comprehension. The review of the different available tests revealed that comprehension is an understanding which is composed of different components. In order to be very specific, the components of reading comprehension so far described in books and revealed by tests are given below :

- i Knowledge of word meaning.  
This is a fundamental factor in reading comprehension, without it the individual would fail to understand what he read.
- ii Ability to note significant details.
- iii Ability to follow sequence of events.
- iv Ability to read maps, tables etc.
- v Ability to select appropriate meaning of the words in context, and the nearest meaning to the key word.
- vi Ability to find out relationship between ideas.
- vii Ability to draw inferences.
- viii Ability to give caption to the things read.
- ix Ability to select the main idea of the passage.
- x Ability to draw generalization.

The knowledge of word meaning is measured directly or indirectly in any test. Now comes the question to decide the priorities or the weightage of the skills, to be given to the above mentioned skills.

#### 4.1.0 Determination of Weightage

The appropriate weightage to each of the skill mentioned above was decided by asking experienced teachers of English and method masters in English. They were given a sheet containing the above skills. A parenthesis was

provided in front of each skill, to write the estimated weightage so that their estimated weightage for each component when added up, should be 100. The approximate average weightage for each of the component was then computed and is given below :

Table 4.1

WEIGHTAGE GIVEN TO THE DIFFERENT  
COMPONENTS OF READING COMPREHENSION

No.	Skills or Components	Weightage
1	To note the significant details	12
2	To find out the main idea of the paragraph	4
3	To give the meaning of the words in context and nearest to the key word	23
4	To give sequence of events	26
5	To find the relationship between ideas	14
6	To draw inferences	5
7	To give caption to the things read	2
8	To draw generalization	1
9	To read and interpret tables and maps	15
Total		100

This helped the investigator in deciding the emphasis to be given to each component and number of test items to be prepared for the test.

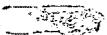
#### 4.2.0 Selection of Reading Material

In order to construct and standardize the reading comprehension test it was obvious that the investigator had to select reading material through which the skills mentioned earlier could be measured to its entire coverage. The selection of the reading material needs care and caution because the success of reading process more or less depends upon it. Therefore, the investigator first studied the language material from the prescribed text books, of the S.S.C. pupils. Keeping the language material in mind the investigator selected about six passages, out of which two were stories. The selected material was looked into by Principal Dr. B.V. Patel and the guide, Dr. I.A. Vora, thus the final touch was given by them in this field.

While finalising the reading material, some of the passages, which were long, were cut short, keeping the time factor in mind. While selecting the reading material, the following criteria was kept in mind :

- i Pupils' interest
- ii Variety of Reading Material
- iii Reasonable Length
- iv Provisions of Test-situation

Besides these passages a vocabulary test, a table and a map of India was prepared. The table was prepared

describing districts, crops in tons and average rainfall in centimeters. A map and a table was prepared showing the name of places, average rainfall in centimeters, average temperature in centigrade and number of cloudy days and clear days, which could provide situations to measure the ability to read maps and tables. The figures used in the tables are not true but hypothetical for measuring the meaning of the words in context, words having different meanings in different context and words nearest to the key word, yet within the range of the pupils' vocabulary as per their standard were selected. After finalizing the passages, words, tables and map, the two way grid was prepared showing the skills to be measured, number of questions and sub-tests. The grid is shown  in the table.

contd.



Table 4.2

A TWO-WAY GRID SHOWING SKILLS OF COMPREHENSION, SUB-TESTS AND WEIGHTAGE GIVEN TO EACH SKILLS

No	Skills or components	Sub-test No.							Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	To note the significant details	5	2	1	-	-	3	-	11
2	To find out the main idea of the paragraph	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	4
3	To give the meaning of the words in contexts and nearest to the key word	2	1	1	-	-	1	17	22
4	To give sequence of events	1 (5)	1 (6)	1 (7)	-	-	1 (7)	-	25
5	To find the relationship between ideas	2	3	3	-	-	5	-	13
6	To draw inferences	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	3
7	To give caption to the things read	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
8	To draw generalization	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
9	To read and interpret tables and maps	-	-	-	8	6	-	-	14
Total		16	15	15	8	6	18	17	95

The above two way grid shows that each paragraph or a story would be a sub-test itself having questions below it. There would be eight sub-tests in the battery.

#### 4.3.0 Preparation of Test Items

In the planning of a test, one must be very clear regarding the types of items to be included in the test. Among the various forms of objective tests, the more widely used form of objective test is the 'multiple-choice'. This form is more encouraged because it can be scored in both ways, by hand-scoring technique or machine scoring. Therefore, the investigator decided to use the multiple-choice form of the objective question, except in case of testing the ability to follow the sequence of events. The investigator herself constructed the items using the content of the reading material of each passage. The number of items prepared were more than the required number. The items were prepared keeping in mind the two-key grid mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs. The items prepared were screened and discussed with the guide and the method-masters in English. In the light of the suggestions made by the guide and other experts, certain items were modified or reworded. All the items were similarly discussed, reviewed and revised 161 items were included in the first draft of the test.

#### 4.4.0 Determining Test Length

The number of items to be included in the final form of the test is generally determined by the purpose of the test and important decisions to be taken about the individual.

For this, the test must be reliable and hence must contain more items. The construction of the present test was undertaken with a view to providing schools with a valid and reliable tool for measuring comprehension. Therefore, it was desirable to give due importance to the length of the test so that it could be administered to the pupils within the usual length of two class periods, so as to avoid fatigue. Apart from this, the practical situation had to be paid due attention, or the test would remain unused. Therefore, the number of items constructed for tryout was considerably more than the number of the items needed in the final form.

#### 4.5.0 Arrangement of Test Items and Sub-Tests

After the construction of items, the selection of items from those that survived the review process remained. The problem, then was to tryout those which were to constitute the test, and of arranging the selected items into some order for each sub-test. While compiling the test-items the following points were borne in mind.

- i. Overlapping of items be avoided.
- ii. Selected items be arranged in order of estimated difficulty level.
- iii. One type of items be grouped together.

In every sub-test the multiple choice type of items were put together and were arranged according to the content of the passage. The items testing the pupils ability to follow sequence of events were kept at the end of the sub-test because they differ in type and nature. Moreover, they needed different instructions, to solve them.

The sub-tests of paragraph reading comprehension were grouped together, and the sub-test for measuring the ability to read table and map were grouped together, and between these two was the vocabulary test.

#### 4.6.0 Description of Sub-Tests

The description of each sub-test given, would help to give a general idea of the reading material, that is the passages and the content of the test.

Test - 1 : It is a passage describing the life of city workers and the farmers. It is composed of 251 words. The test provides enough situations for measuring the skill of comprehension.

Test - 2 : It is a passage describing the sun, and giving information regarding it. It is composed of 252 words. It provides enough situations for constructing test items.

Test - 3 : It is a passage describing an incident in the life of Andrew Jackson. It is composed of 205 words. It provides enough situations for constructing test items.

Test - 4 : It is a passage describing Laxman, who was fond of drawing, and shows a funny outcome of his drawing. It is composed of 366 words. The incident described provides good testing situation for different components of reading comprehension.

Test - 5 : This is a story of Daniel and the Lions. The length of the story is about 435 words. It provides sufficient number of situations to construct the test items.

Test - 6 : This is again a story, which deals with the life of Savitri and Satyavan and describes Satyavan's coming back to life after death. It also provides enough situations to construct the test items and is made of 289 words.

Test - 7 : In this sub-test, twenty four words, that come within the range of pupils standard of understanding were chosen, and they are asked to choose the word, that is nearest in meaning to the key word. This will help in measuring their knowledge of vocabulary.

Test - 8 : In this sub-test, a table describing the name of districts, crop in tons, and average rainfall in centimeters is devised. This provides the situation to measure the ability to read the table only. The figures used are hypothetical.

Test - 9 : This is a sub-test wherein the map of India, showing the territory of different states with some important

cities and the table describing July-weather report are given a view to meeting the situations of testing the ability to read map and table. The figures used here are also hypothetical.

Thus this chapter encompasses varied operations that go into the production of a test. The planning of the test involved the preparation of outlines of specifications of the mental trait or the ability to be measured, types of questions to be used, arrangement of the sub-tests, length of the test and so forth, which leads us to the experimental tryout of the test, which is discussed in the following chapter.