CHAPTER THREE
Types of Reading
3.0 PRELIMINARIES

This chapter talks about the types of reading. It also discusses the two elements in all reading i.e. speed and comprehension. Reading with understanding is one of the basic linguistic skills of learning a language. To gain proficiency in a language one has to develop this skill. Reading without comprehension is a waste of time. It is a mere tiring of the tongue. Therefore, it becomes the duty of the teacher to guide and train the learners to read with comprehension. A teacher can perform this work efficiently only after knowing the various types of reading which may lead the learners to comprehension. The chapter also discusses the text and the difficulties arising from the text. It also sheds light on the characteristics of ‘good readers’ and ‘poor readers’, the reasons for retardation in reading activities of the pupils and the measures to be taken to make the pupils read.

The pupils should have practice in two types of reading i.e. intensive reading and extensive reading.

3.1 TYPES OF READING

i) Intensive reading

ii) Extensive reading
SUB TYPES

a) Skimming
b) Scanning
c) Loud reading
d) Silent reading
e) Supplementary reading
f) Library reading

V. V. Yardi observes that:

The Junior college student doing his first year may be said to have arrived at a stage where he needs two kinds of reading materials viz., intensive reading materials and extensive reading materials. These two types of reading materials are necessary to strengthen his linguistic abilities and to stimulate interest in general reading respectively. Intensive reading will provide him with a basis for learning a few more structures and consolidating those he has already learnt while extensive reading will train him for reading directly and fluently for his own enjoyment [1994:84].

3.1.1 INTENSIVE READING

For intensive reading a wide range of materials including writing of scientific, historical, political, literary and technical nature is necessary. This is because the Junior College represents the Pre-University stage from where the students will branch off to one of the specialized disciplines. Varied materials of this kind will
introduce him to the vocabulary, structures and content pertaining to these disciplines. V. V. Yardi opines that:

Intensive reading is reading in depth. It is what may be called ‘Micro reading’. Almost every sentence has to be read carefully and its meaning brought home to the student. Unfamiliar structures and words have to be taught and where necessary, drilled. This does not imply that the total meaning is to be ignored. In our concern for teaching the meaning of every sentence, we may miss the total meaning of a passage. For testing comprehension of students two types of questions may be set viz., questions on sentences and questions on paragraphs containing important ideas [1994:85].

Intensive reading or reading for accuracy involves approaching a text under the close guidance of a teacher, or through a task that forces the student to pay attention to the text. It involves a profound and detailed understanding of the text not only in terms of ‘what’ it says but also ‘how’ it says. According to Mohammad Aslam:

An intensive reading lesson is primarily concerned with developing reading strategies: judgment, reasoning, interpretation, appreciation etc. in the learners. Generally, a short text, which can be finished in a lesson or two, is considered suitable for scanning for information, paying attention to the writer’s intentions, arguments, ideas, style etc [2003:81].

Students while reading a text do not simply look for any specific piece of information, they read it thoroughly so that they
can pass their exam, which they know, will contain questions involving their understanding of the text. Intensive reading is more an exercise in accuracy. The textbooks prescribed for English courses at the Higher Secondary Level are all meant to be read intensively. Students are supposed to read Prose and Poetry in detail so that they can answer the questions given at the end of each seen passage / poem. In intensive reading, the pupils read not only for detailed comprehension of meaning but also for mastering the structures and vocabulary. T. C. Baruah observes that “a non-native speaker can hope to surpass even the native speaker in the use of the written language. This he can achieve through intensive reading” [1988:240].

Some experts regard intensive reading as the only practicable means of learning English. But the general consensus is that at the initial stages, reading should be preceded by oral practice. At these stages, reading should be primarily confined to the identification of words and sentences spoken in the oral lessons. Once the pupils have acquired sufficient speed in reading such familiar matter, they would be able to take in new words and sentences in their stride. Intensive reading concentrates upon:

i) Assimilation of language, which consists of study of words, phrases and sentence structures.
ii) Study of sentence structure including grammar, word order, and syntax.

iii) Grasping of the sentence, and

iv) Getting information [Pahuja, 2004:178]

Intensive reading is also called detailed study. The prose and poetry texts are taught through intensive reading.

3.1.2 AIMS OF INTENSIVE READING

Intensive reading has for its objective the full understanding of the text with its arguments, its symbolic, emotional and social overtones, the attitudes and purposes of the author and the linguistic and literary means the author employs to achieve his purpose. It aims at the following:

1) To enable students to speak English correctly.

2) To improve and extend their knowledge and command over English.

3) To enable them to use English language without fear and to develop in them the habit of thinking in English.

4) To increase students active vocabulary.

5) To foster in them a taste for the study of English.

6) To concentrate upon language [Ibid:179].

For teaching intensive reading a certain procedure has to be followed.
3.1.3 PROCEDURE

In teaching intensive reading the following procedure may be adopted.

i) Introduction:

For introduction of a reading passage the teacher can use any one of the following methods.

a) He explains the social, cultural, political or/and scientific background of the lesson.

b) He asks some introductory questions which are based on the previous knowledge of the students.

c) He asks some revision questions. Such questions are asked only if a part of the lesson has been taught.

ii) Model Reading:

In model reading the teacher reads the passage with correct pronunciation, stress, intonation, rhythm and pause. About model reading proof, Morris observes: “For a considerable part of the course it is strongly advisable for the teacher to give a model reading of the fresh text, exploiting its dramatic possibilities” [Cited in Pahuja, 2004:179].

While giving model reading for poetry the teacher should once again repeat it.
iii)  Loud Reading:

Teacher should invite students to read aloud turn-by-turn. During this, the teacher should correct the mistakes of the students. According to F.G. French, the following points be given due consideration about reading aloud:

a) Never let any pupil read too much.

b) Reading round the class should be avoided.

c) Help and do not blame a student who cannot read well.

d) Do not let all the pupils read together.

e) If a student stops completely over a word, the teacher should say the word himself so as to avoid any unnecessary delay.

iv)  Explanation:

Teacher has to explain to the students new words, phrases, sentences, patterns etc. For giving explanation, the following devices can be used by the teacher.

For explaining new words and phrases.

a) By giving synonyms.

b) By giving mother tongue equivalent.

c) By using in a sentence.

d) By giving antonyms.
e) By direct association.
f) By words with the same prefix or suffix.
g) By words grouped under a head.

For explaining sentences and patterns

a) By giving special parallel sentences.

b) By giving special parallel structures.

[Ibid:180]

These parallel sentences / structures may be either in English or in mother tongue.

Explanation of special references: Such references must be explained in English. However, in case of difficult references, teacher is free to use illustrative aids.

3.1.4 ADVANTAGES OF INTENSIVE READING

The advantages are as follows:

i) The students’ active vocabulary is enriched.

ii) The students learn the grammar incidentally.

iii) While making the students understand the meanings of the difficult words, the teacher creates real concepts into their minds.

iv) The students develop their power of expression.

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3.1.5 LIMITATIONS OF INTENSIVE READING

The limitations are as follows:

1) It fails to impart any joy or interest to the students.
2) It fails to increase the working vocabulary of the students.
3) Grammar is not taught properly through this method.
4) As there is too much emphasis on the anatomy of the language, the life of the language is lost sight of.
5) This being a long method is uninteresting to the pupils.

In spite of the limitations of intensive reading, it covers most part of the lesson plan, R.C. Mehta suggests that detailed study has its place in the teaching of a language. But it must be kept to the place, which is by the side of very wide course of extensive reading [Cited in Pahuja, 2004:182].

To aid the student in reading, the teacher needs to help the student develop sufficient vocabulary. This may be done through both oral and written means and by using appropriate visual aids. Vocabulary is best learned in context. Students should be encouraged to use new vocabulary items in complete sentences. When a new word is encountered in the reading, students should be urged to try to grasp its meaning from its use in the sentence.
3.1.6 EXTENSIVE READING

Yet another kind of reading which the Junior College student may need is extensive reading. The reading materials for extensive reading may contain a certain amount of redundancy. Consequently the rate of comprehension expected is about 70% only. Books of general interest and even books on the learner's subject written in a free style which may combine delight with instruction would constitute proper materials for extensive reading. Book for extensive reading is not strictly written in accordance with rigid principles of vocabulary selection and structural control. As long as the materials stimulate and sustain the interest of the reader they may be considered the right sort of fare.

Extensive reading or reading for fluency involves reading of longer texts for pleasure and not necessarily, for minute details. It is a fluency activity in which the students can read on their own. Extensive reading can play a vital role in the learning of a second/third language. Prof. Yardi has rightly remarked that:

In Maharashtra, for instance, three languages are taught at the Secondary Stage, viz., Standards V to X, while at the Higher Secondary [now Junior College] Stage only two languages are taught, English being the second language at the latter stage. This does not mean that in Maharashtra English is taught as L3 at the secondary stage and as L2 at the Junior College Stage. At both these stages English is taught as L3, since the range of
uses to which it is put in the life of the community, by and large, is now restricted. Similarly in Hindi-medium schools in Maharashtra the pattern of study of languages is Hindi, English and Marathi. This does not imply that in these schools English is taught as L₂ or as a second language [1994:12].

Extensive reading refers to reading a large quantity of materials in the shortest possible time, so the focus is not on depth but on large range. As such, it is either silent reading in the classroom or reading done unsupervised in the library or at home, the aim being practice or both. Nuttal [1996:127] describes it as 'the private world of reading for our own interest. In order to develop the habit of extensive reading Mohammad Aslam suggests:

We need such a program for our students so that they develop the habit of reading outside the classroom also. Class time is short and the amount of reading normally is very great in the curriculum. Extensive reading can lessen the teacher's burden if he encourages his students to read without his help. A good library would be an ideal place for students to enjoy reading.

Whenever such library facilities are available, students should be encouraged to read on their own, and where no libraries are available, the teacher should refer to a list of books that students could be asked to read in their home [2003:82].

Extensive reading aims at the cultivation of taste for extra reading and a habit of rapid reading. It means:
i) to read silently

ii) to read quickly and understand the read material as soon as possible

iii) to read without the help of teachers

iv) to read to pass words into passive vocabulary

It is important, then, that intensive reading course is not confined to anthologies of prose and poetry. It should include texts that interest and motivate students to read without a teacher's help, both familiar and unfamiliar texts.

Extensive reading can prove very helpful in teaching and learning of English as second / third language. It can provide a better exposure to English through a wide variety of materials. Generally, students find their prescribed textbooks uninteresting and demotivating. They can be asked to read additional materials so that the learning becomes easier.

Furthermore, Mohammad Aslam emphasizes the importance of extensive reading thus:

It is imperative so that extensive materials are easy, appealing, varied and, above all, authentic. By authentic texts we do not mean the texts which have been written by great writers like Shakespeare, Milton or any other scholar. They refer to the texts which students come across in daily life and which they will want to read after they exit their educational institutions. In this behalf, a newspaper or a magazine will be more relevant to students than
3.1.8 PROCEDURE FOR EXTENSIVE READING

There are very many ways of introducing extensive reading. Its procedure is quite flexible. According to Thompson and Wyatt, "the exact procedure advisable to adopt will depend upon the nature of the subject matter to be read and the skill in reading already acquired by the class" [Ibid:183].

Following are the main steps in extensive reading:

i) Introduction:

For the purpose of introduction, the teacher should, [a] give main hints of the passage, [b] briefly explain the difficult portions, and deal with special difficulties of the language.

ii) Silent Reading:

In this, the students should read silently but quickly. The teacher divides the lesson into suitable units and assigns a definite time for reading a unit and also checks them if they are murmuring.

iii) Questions:

To judge the students, the teacher asks a few questions based on the main points.

iv) Recapitulation:

This step is followed when the students finish all the units. Various types of questions are asked to test the students' comprehension.
In following the procedure of extensive reading it is desirable to have the following two points in mind as advised by Thompson and Wyatt:

i) The matter read must be understood by readers in order to increase interest, and

ii) The matter should be read speedily, otherwise interest will flag [Ibid:183].

3.1.9 ADVANTAGES

i) It helps in assimilation of ideas.

ii) It keeps the whole class busy and active.

iii) It increases vocabulary.

iv) It has high ‘Transfer of learning’ value, since it prepares students for library reading.

v) It paves the path for individual method of study and self-education [Ibid:184].

The Indian Education Commission [1966] has emphasized the importance of extensive reading in our school curriculum saying that the pupils should gain a rich background through extensive reading and then proceed with intensive study.
3.2 SKIMMING

Efficient readers unreflectively skim most of what they read to some extent. Skimming is a text-oriented form of surveying and refers to the method of glancing through text to extract gist or main points. Generally speaking, about 75% of the text is disregarded.

Skimming involves knowing which part of a text contains the most important information and reading only those. More than most kind of reading, therefore, it requires knowledge of text structure. In particular, students should be able to learn something of the text topic from the title and any sub-heading, they should know that the first and the last paragraphs often contain valuable background, summarizing or concluding information, from lexical and grammatical indicators. Purposes for using this strategy might include:

- To establish a general sense of the text.
- To quickly establish a macro prepositional structure as an outline summary.
- To decide the relevance of texts to establish needs.

According to Nuttall it might involve one or more of the following operations:
i) Identifying the source.

ii) Reading the titles and sub-titles.

iii) Reading the abstract carefully.

iv) Reading the introductory and concluding paragraphs carefully.

v) Reading the first and last sentence, of each paragraph carefully.

vi) Identifying discourse markers.

vii) Noting repeated key words.

viii) Identifying markers of importance.

ix) Skipping clusters of detail.

x) Glancing at any non-verbal information [1982:170].

3.3 SCANNING

Scanning is a rapid search for specific information rather than general impression. Scanning demands that the reader ignores all but the key item being searched for. It is a useful skill for data gathering, review, using reference books, or judging whether a text contains material deserving further study.

Although an easier strategy to master skimming, many students do not scan efficiently, randomly searching and allowing their attention to be caught by the incidental material. The reader must fix the reading purpose clearly, perhaps formulating specific
questions before systematically dealing with the text. Having a clearly defined purpose means that the reader can anticipate where to find the information and what form it will take allowing rapid eye movements down the page searching for particular sections such as digits, common names, discourse markers and various signal words and phrases that assist pattern recognition and anticipation.

3.4 LOUD READING

This type of reading is also known as oral reading. It is introduced after two months of reading i.e. when pupils learn what they have to read in a book. Loud reading has many limitations. Scholars like P. Gurey do not recommend loud reading. However for its many advantages it is not possible to dispense with loud reading. In order to enhance loud reading it is necessary to study its objectives. According to N. P. Pahuja, the objectives of loud reading are as follows:

3.4.1 OBJECTIVES

(i) To enable students to read with correct pronunciation, articulation, intonation, stress and rhythm.

(ii) To enable students to read with expression.

(iii) To test students knowledge of speaking words, phrases and sentences.
(iv) To give practice.
(v) To understand the meaning.
(vi) To prepare pupils for effective silent reading [2004:175].

To develop the extensive reading, a certain process is to be followed.

3.4.2 PROCESS

Step 1: A model reading is given, by the teacher, with correct pronunciation, punctuation, rhythm etc. According to Dr. West, "Until the pupil can read, the teacher is the sole source of the language. He is like the mother bird putting gobbets of English into the open beaks of his pupils"[Cited in Pahuja, 2004:173].

In case students require repetition of model reading, the teacher should do so, however, teacher should crab formation of this habit in his students.

The aim of model reading is to train the auditory nerves of students.

Step 2: Students should read loudly. Here, the teacher should correct the pronunciation etc. of reading. Such corrections are to be done, only after the student finishes reading and not in
between. Speed along with reading may be emphasized at the senior stage but at junior stage more emphasis to be laid on accuracy.

Certain precautions, if observed, loud reading can be successful.

3.4.3 PRECAUTIONS

(i) The loud reading should be done only after the teacher has given a model reading.

(ii) The passage for reading should be within comprehension power of students.

(iii) Frisby suggests, “over emphasis on reading aloud in the early stages will often promote word by word reading, and, pattern reading by the teacher may not help in any long-term way. Positive measures to improve phrases and recognition, may be taken by the institution material, followed by a few questions to make sure that what has been read has also been understood” [Cited in Pahuja,2004:174].

(iv) Mistakes in reading should be checked and corrected by the teacher.
(v) In the beginning speed should never be emphasized.

(vi) The teacher should check student's postures, while they read.

(vii) Special attention be given to weak students.

(viii) Before loud reading, pronunciation drill is essential.

N. P. Pahuja describes various advantages of loud reading.

3.4.4 ADVANTAGES

(i) Students learn the proper method of reading.

(ii) Students develop the skill of speech and giving lectures.

(iii) The mistakes related to pronunciation can be corrected.

(iv) It trains various sensory organs such as eyes, ears, mouth etc.

(v) Students learn by imitation which is a natural method of learning. Loud reading has many limitations. These limitations are described by N. P. Pahuja.

3.4.5 LIMITATIONS

(i) In the opinion of E.W. Manzel loud reading is not a source of pleasure [Cited in Pahuja, 2004:174].

(ii) It does not help in penetrating the meaning.

A. W. Frisby says, "The danger of too much reading aloud is that it may lead to the short circuiting of the meaning, whereby the written word does not convey meaning but
becomes merely a symbol for the collection of sounds and is translated straight in sound" [Ibid:175].

(iii) In later life, it is silent reading which is preferred.

(iv) If a student becomes habitual to loud reading, he cannot become an extensive reader.

(v) Generally the students of a class pay no heed to what the other student is reading aloud.

(vi) Just a few students are benefited.

(vii) In most of the public places such as library and reading rooms, only silent reading is allowed.

Besides the aforesaid limitations and objections raised by the eminent language masters, reading aloud has its place in the teaching of English. Frisby’s statement can be accepted in toto. It may be his warning against its over-use. While developing a correct speech habit in the learners, the importance of loud reading can never be under-estimated. It also helps the learners to understand the passages read. It is undoubtedly a source of pleasure when one recites a poem.

3.5 SILENT READING

It is the most important type of reading. Students must be initiated into silent reading habit as early as possible. It enables the students to read faster. In the words of Mehta, “we all read
faster than we speak and children must be initiated into the silent reading habit as early as possible" [Cited in Pahuja, 2004:175].

In silent reading

(i) Students are asked to read a passage,

(ii) They are abstained from making sound, whispering, murmuring or moving the lips while reading,

(iii) Pupils do not stop at punctuation marks. The movement of their eyes stops only at difficult places.

Various aims of silent reading as described by Pahuja are as follows.

3.5.1 AIMS OF SILENT READING

(i) To enable students to read without making sounds and moving lips, so that they may not disturb others.

(ii) To enable students to read with ease, speed and fluency.

(iii) To make students read with comprehension.

(iv) To get students' vocabulary expanded.

(v) To be able to read for interest and to get information [Ibid:176].

To enhance silent reading, it is necessary to follow a process.
3.5.2 WHEN TO BEGIN SILENT READING

In the opinion of many a scholar it is desirable to start silent reading as soon as possible. The right time is:

(i) When pupils know fairly well the basic structures,
(ii) When they can perceive and recognise words,
(iii) When they can pronounce words,
(iv) When they can understand the meaning of words.

3.5.3 PRECAUTIONS

(i) Only those passages should be read which can be understood and appreciated by the students.
(ii) Special attention is paid to weak students.
(iii) The paragraph for reading should not be too long.
(iv) The teacher should be particular about giving students a task of wide reading by gradually selecting fresh and unseen paragraphs.
(v) Teacher must give necessary instructions before silent reading.
(vi) Teacher must ask comprehension questions after silent reading.
(vii) The duration of silent reading should differ according to the nature of the matter and the standard of the class.
3.5.4 PROCESS

**Step 1:** Teacher explains to the students about silent reading and its aims.

**Step 2:** The teacher asks students to read a passage silently.

**Step 3:** To check, if the students are whispering or murmuring, teacher takes a round of the class. During his round he also supervises the postures of the students.

**Step 4:** After allowing sufficient time to the students to complete silent reading, the teacher asks a few questions so as to test the understanding of the students. He asks only simple and direct questions. Ryburn suggests, "He should test what the pupils have gained from what they have read, by questions on the subject matter. Another good way of teaching is to get pupils to give the substance of a paragraph they have read" [Cited in Pahuja, 2004:176].

3.5.5 ADVANTAGES

(i) It is time saving and quick.

(ii) It saves energy as well.

(iii) It develops the ability to read with interest.

(iv) According to Mehta, "It acts as a deterrent against the tendency so common amongst beginners to translate what
they read in English into their mother-tongue [Cited in Pahuja, 2004:177].

(v) It is quite useful in later life as it is used in public places and libraries.

(vi) It initiates self-education and deep study.

(vii) It enables attention and energy to be concentrated on meaning and so saves a division of attention, resulting in a greater assimilation of information [Ibid].

The skill of silent reading, however, varies from person to person and depends upon several factors including each one's requirements.

Broadly speaking there are five uses of silent reading. These are as follows:

1. To make a survey of materials to be studied and look through indexes, chapter headings and outlines.

2. To skim.

3. To familiarise one-self with the material and its thought content.

4. To study the material in depth, and

5. To study the languages in which the material is written from a literary or linguistic point of view.
3.5.6 LIMITATIONS

(i) It is not advantageous for beginners.
(ii) It does not teach correct pronunciation.
(iii) It cannot be checked if students are actually reading.
(iv) The mistakes of students cannot be corrected.
(v) It is uninteresting.
(vi) Sometimes students cannot understand same parts of a passage, but they cannot take the help of teachers.

According to Morrison, “Reading as an end in foreign language, may be confined to silent reading” [Cited in Pahuja, 2004:178].

3.6 SUPPLEMENTARY READING

It is just like extensive reading but its function is to supplement intensive reading of a detailed prose lesson. It is generally introduced in the middle stage with one to three supplementary readers. It follows the same procedure of teaching as for the extensive reading.

3.7 LIBRARY READING

It is also like a supplementary reading but;

i) It is not a supervised reading.

ii) It is not done in a formal situation of a classroom.

iii) It is not done in set lessons.
It is an unsupervised reading done so as to:

a) Supplement extensive reading.

b) Have private reading.

c) Have enjoyment, and

d) Have information and knowledge [Ibid:184].

3.8 BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

The chief proponent of the bottom-up view of reading was Gough. According to this view the smallest units of the lowest level such as morphemes and words add up to higher constituents such as sentences, adding up the meaning cumulatively in hierarchical order. This resembles an inverse pyramidal structure. In this case meaning is built, unit by unit, in a serial fashion to generate the meaning of the higher order unit, which is then understood by the reader. Thus, meaning of the text as a whole is the sum of the meaning of the parts. The reader's role is confined to successfully understanding of each individual element of the linguistic units and deriving the total meaning from the aggregate of the parts. This makes it a mechanical process of accumulating meaning, bit by bit, without any contribution by the reader himself.
A critical evaluation of the traditional concept of the bottom-up view of reading reveals that an act of reading is indeed unidirectional, originating in the text and terminating in the mind of the reader. This view is extremely limiting insofar as it envisages that the strings of linguistic symbols embody units of meaning without any addition of nuances of meaning from the reader who is reduced to mere passive calculator. Other studies carried out by Weber and Kolers, found a number of inadequacies in this theoretical approach. It was found, for example, that the lower processes of identification of smaller units are mediated by very complex psychological processes related to sentence comprehension and contextual clues. Comprehension of a text was believed to be incidentally visual and the meaning that the reader got was not entirely from the addition of the linguistic units in the text. Also, it has been pointed out that bottom-up models lack feedback, in that no mechanism is provided to allow for processing stages which occur later in the system to influence processing which occurs earlier in the system. Also, Rumelhart points out that bottom-up or linear models which pass information along in one direction only and do not allow the information in a higher stage to promote the processing of a lower stage are deficient models of reading.
3.9 TOP-DOWN APPROACH

The shortcomings of the bottom-up approach made reading theorists and cognitive psychologists look for a more satisfying and more adequate theoretical framework with greater explanatory adequacy to more adequately explain the reading process and product. These theorists paid more serious attention to the process view of reading, not taking it as a mere product. Therefore, their view is called the ‘process’ view reading. And insofar as they took larger linguistic units or chunks, to be the unit of processing by the reader, they were viewed as the proponents of the top-down approach of reading.

A top-down model of reading assumes that the reader brings a great amount of information into the reading process in order to smooth the way for even the lowest reading sub-skills. In this view, graphemic encoding can be facilitated by expectation, and reading becomes a matter of hypothesis testing in which it is predicted that the most skilled readers make the most hypotheses using context to generate expectancies at even the graphic level. Wallace says ‘Top-down processing awareness of reading texts, which attend to global meaning are activated largely by existing knowledge of the world rather than the specific linguistic features of the text’ [1992:147]. Srivastava mentions that the concept-
driven, top-down model suggests the reader’s exploitation of the knowledge of the context and ability to make predictions about the text based on prior experience. Comprehension is thus the result of reading in form of psycholinguistic guessing. As he observes ‘It should be noted that pictures do provide necessary context in the concept-driven, top-down model of reading comprehension in which predictions are made more on the basis of semantic and contextual knowledge’ [1995:119].

However, just as the bottom-up models have problems, the top-down models have problems too. One of the problems for the top-down models is that for many texts, the reader has little knowledge of the topic and cannot generate predictions. A more serious problem is that, the amount of time necessary to generate a prediction may be greater than the amount of time the skilled reader needs simply to recognize the words. Moreover, top-down models emphasize the prediction of meaning by means of context clues or background knowledge at the expense of the rapid and accurate identification of lexical and grammatical forms. They tend to de-emphasize the perceptual and decoding dimensions of the reading process.

Thus, the model they promote is an accurate model of the skilful, fluent reader, for whom perception and decoding have
become automatic, but for the less proficient, developing reader, like most second language readers, this model does not provide a true picture of the problems, such readers must overcome.

3.10 NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF GOOD READING HABITS

In this science-based world of today we want to acquire more knowledge and information. Besides, we do not want to waste our time in entertainment, although it is good for health but it should not be done at the cost of mental attitude. Good reading, too, can entertain and thus become the source of pleasure. Through reading good material, we can broaden our mental horizons. As such one needs to develop a good reading habit for making many-sided development in one’s life.

3.11 WHY IS THERE RETARDATION IN READING ACTIVITIES?

If the teaching of reading is of prime importance, why is there great retardation in reading activities of our pupils? At present pupils do not read. They are mostly fed on cheap guides and notes. The reasons are:

1. Developing the skill of reading is a difficult task for the students. For this, the students will have to master spellings
of words, meanings and use of words in different context, phrases and sentences.

2. Defective examination system.

3. The teachers themselves do not read.

4. The method being used in teaching English, leaves little room for it. At present Grammar-cum Translation / Lecture Method is used in teaching English which ignores the importance of reading.

5. The Textbooks are defective because:
   a. They are with printing errors.
   b. The material contained in them is not selected and graded properly. It does not suit the student’s standard and is uninteresting.
   c. Their context matter is difficult.

6. The importance of reading is not emphasized in the students’ mother tongue, hence they fail to develop this skill in English.

7. The classes are generally over-crowded. Individual attention cannot be paid to a learner’s progress.

8. There is a dearth of good books, periodicals, magazines and newspapers in English in the school and college libraries.
9. Lack of incentive and appreciation.
10. Lack of research work on reading problems of pupils.
11. Lack of discussion on the books read by pupils.
12. No proper guidance is available to pupils.
13. Lack of follow-up activities.
14. Due to poverty pupils cannot purchase good books.
15. Some of the institutions also suffer from the shortage of accommodation where students can sit and pass their leisure hours.

Some of the steps to make the pupils read would be:

1. The teacher himself should be a good reader.
2. Proper guidance should be made available to pupils.
3. Adequate library facilities should be provided.
4. Libraries should have books of wide interest.
5. Survey regarding the pupil’s interest should be conducted.
6. Pupil’s will to read should be aroused.
7. There should be discussions on the books read by pupils.
8. Class Bulletin Board should be displayed.
9. Follow-up activities should be undertaken.

It would be wise to quote Prof. Raj Gopalan, who says, “We can never hope to improve the standard of English of our pupils, and help them drive full benefits out of learning a difficult foreign
language, unless and until, this desirable habit is found among our students first” [2004:112].

3.12 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE READER

There are four basic prerequisites for comprehension:

i) Adequately functioning perceptive and cognitive skills.

ii) Sufficient prior experience related to the coded message.

iii) Knowledge of the code of writing.

iv) Motivation, purpose and interest.

It is necessary to briefly dwell upon each of the factors leading up to comprehension.

i) PERCEPTIVE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS

Perceptive skills are concerned with seeing and hearing. They are necessary for reading an alphabetic code such as English. In other words, seeing the letters, decoding them and uttering them when one learns to read. Although it is through the sense of sight and hearing that a reader perceives writing, they do not complete the process of comprehension. Other cognitive skills actually bring about comprehension, primarily the mental abilities to remember, to relate either by analogy or by inference, and to classify and distinguish.
ii) PRIOR EXPERIENCE

A person should bring to the reading act a certain background experience in order to make sense of the written text. As Berg points out reading is an experiential process because without experience there can be no perception, for without experience the mind will be unable to invest meaning to the symbols that we see. Reading comes about when we take meaning to the printed page, not just the act of taking meaning from the printed page.

iii) KNOWLEDGE OF THE CODE OF WRITING

A code consists in written symbols. Knowledge of the code is necessary for understanding and comprehension. Three basic types of written codes have evolved: pictographic, ideographic and alphabetic. The first two types of written codes are not relevant for our purpose, since they do not have any relevance to English, which is an alphabetic language. Therefore, we will take into consideration the third type of written codes; alphabetic.

The alphabetic code is related to, and derived from a spoken language. This alphabetic or phonetic code is especially significant in analyzing the process of comprehension in reading English or other alphabetic languages such as French, Russian and Spanish. Assuming a sufficient background of experience, the
fundamental prerequisite for comprehending an alphabetic code of writing, such as English, is the knowledge of the spoken code.

In order to be able to decode a language such as English, one has to know letters, words as well as punctuation, since the decoding process in English is not limited to letters and words but requires an understanding of the conventions of punctuation, which are very essential for comprehension.

iv) MOTIVATION, PURPOSE AND INTEREST

To gain comprehension from the text successfully, one must have motivation, purpose and interest. Therefore, the attitude held by the reader towards the text he is reading, affects his comprehension either positively or negatively. Sometimes, even simple and easy text, will remain incomprehensible to the reader who is not interested and has no motivation.

3.13 SPEED AND COMPREHENSION

It is difficult to define comprehension because there are several variables within the reader which make reading a personal experience. Past experience, personality variables, attitudes, interests, cognitive style, immediate motivation and several other things combine to make comprehension distinctively a personal experience. It is further complicated by chemical and neurological
factors of which we know so little. However, we may do well to examine what experts have said on this subject. Mr. Fry states, "Reduced to its simplest elements we might say that comprehension is a part of the communication process of getting the thoughts that were in the author’s mind into the reader’s mind" [Cited in Yardi, 1994:77]. Questions like whether pure thought exists by itself and, if so, whether it can be communicated in its pristine purity to the reader and whether it can be received in the same by the reader need not detain us here. Mr. Fry himself has said that "Reading can usually conveniently be thought of, as being on two levels at once. First the reader should get the objective facts... On a higher level the reader should also get the subjective information. This subjective information might include such things as the tone and mood of the story ... Readers who can only read facts and nothing more can never be called good readers"[Ibid]. Macmillan defines comprehension as "understanding what is written within, between and beyond the lines-in other words, intelligent interpretation," and includes the following:

i) reading to get the important details

ii) reading to answer specific questions
iii) reading to follow the logical sequence and development of the idea
iv) reading to apply what is read
v) reading for deductions and implications and
vi) reading to evaluate.

Comprehension involves increasing a limited vocabulary by constant use of a dictionary, reading with concentration slowly and reflectively. Hafner opines that: "Comprehension means to 'grasp with'. The proficient reader 'grasps with', that is, understands, the meaning, intended by the author" [1977:127].

A passage can properly be read with varying degrees of understanding. The scale of comprehension ranges from no meaning to complete understanding. The degree of desired comprehension will depend upon the purpose of the reader. The efficient reader will get from the printed page only what he is looking for. He may be distracted and charmed by other sounds and images, but he will not rest until he has discovered the answer to his questions.

Variations in degree of comprehension exist not only among but within individuals. Thus an individual who reads every detail of the directions for performing an experiment may read a newspaper article only to find out whether anyone he knows is
mentioned in it. In some cases, he may want only to get the
general idea of a selection whereas in other cases, he may read
not only to comprehend everything that is written but also to get
the meaning 'between the lines' and 'beyond the lines'. One of the
characteristics of the efficient reader is the extent to which he can
adjust the degree of his comprehension to his objective. Reading
effectively, is reading with speed and comprehension.

Speed in reading is relatively easy to attain. Developing the
power to deal thoroughly with a writer's ideas is more difficult.
Speed is a function of comprehension.

The concern about rate of reading is understandable. The
person who can read a selection rapidly and still accomplish its
purpose has a distinct advantage over the one who cannot.

In the professional and business world, too, reading is an
important asset. The individual who always reads slowly will not
have time to read as much interesting and significant material as
the one who reads rapidly. In the sheer volume of printed matter
available today, much of it is essential to the knowledge of new
developments in the world of ideas and of events. This makes
extensive reading mandatory for the educated person and the
responsible citizen.
Ideally, one’s rate of reading would approximate one’s rate of thinking. Obviously such a standard would be unrealistic in the case of difficult material, but a serious lag between rate of reading and rate of thinking not only results in waste of time but also tends to reduce a person’s pleasure and interest in reading. Slow, cumbersome methods of reading start a vicious circle from less reading to less efficient reading to still less reading.

At first it was widely believed that reading speed was a unitary ability and that improvement in rate was automatically reflected in all kinds of reading. Only gradually did the relation between rate and type of reading material came under intensive study.

The difference in rate between oral and silent reading is dramatically illustrated in the eye-movement. Studies of Judd, Buswell, and others showed that in oral reading the eyes of the good reader run well ahead of his voice. In studies of silent reading it was found that the eyes of the efficient reader move across the line in a series of rhythmical leaps. He makes few, if any, aimless regressions. He makes relatively few fixations, per line, and these are of short duration. He is not delayed by the more physical act of articulation. Obviously the silent reading rate of the good reader must exceed that of his oral reading [Cited in Deboer et al 1969:170].
Reading without adequate comprehension cannot properly be called reading. Good readers differ in their rates of comprehension. It takes some good readers a little longer than others to discover the literal and implied meanings of a passage. An individual's temperament and rhythm of learning sometimes account for these differences.

John Deboer states that: "Standardized tests of reading are usually based on the assumption that speed of comprehension is an essential aspect of reading competence. For this reason they may frequently obscure a pupil's reading potential. Standardized test scores should be interpreted with this fact in mind" [1969:170].

There are important interrelationships between speed and comprehension in reading. On the one hand, improved comprehension facilitates growth in speed. On the other hand, habits of more rapid reading often aid comprehension by shifting attention from individual words to the larger word-patterns that carry the meaning. According to John J. Deboer, "Many readers, even very good ones, assume that all materials must be read at a 'normal' rate. They must be taught how to 'shift gears' when they attack a verbal problem in arithmetic or a difficult passage in science [ibid:172].

When the material is difficult and a high degree of accuracy is required, a very slow rate is appropriate. Thus although superior
readers tend to excel in both speed and comprehension with ordinary narrative material, they employ slower rates when these are needed for maximum comprehension.

The experiment of J. Harlan Shores with a group of intermediate grade pupils studying science, led them to suggest that speed depends to a large extent upon the purpose set for the reading and upon the nature of the reading material. "With some purposes and some materials", they believe, "fast readers are the best readers, with other purposes and materials, the best readers will read as slowly or even more slowly than the inefficient readers" [1950:52-57].

Better comprehension depends on better reading. Students should be taught good reading habits. It is observed that difficulties in reading act as an obstacle to comprehension. Students should be helped to acquire skills in reading silently the prescribed text material. Proper magazines, books and newspapers can also be made available for more reading. What is the importance of a text book and what role it plays in developing Reading Comprehension must be given importance.

3.14 THE TEXTBOOK

Inspite of the current revolution in the field of various media, textbook still assumes a great role and continues to remain the
main and potent instrument in the hands of the teacher and the learner.

R.S. Trivedi rightly observes, "In the absence of any other instructional material the textbook becomes a potent tool in the hands of a teacher to teach the skill of a language and more so of a foreign language" [Cited in Pahuja, 2004:229]. Textbook is the most widely used teaching instrument. It is not merely a source of information but a course of study, a set of unit plans and a learning guide. It helps to revise and reinforce the language material already taught. The teacher must be able to evaluate the textbook he has to use. For, the teacher must know the criterion of a textbook.

3.14.1 IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH TEXT-BOOK

i) It makes the teaching of English systematic.

ii) It presents in concrete form the limited portion of the language to be taught in a given time.

iii) It checks the teachers from going astray.

iv) It facilitates and stabilizes students learning.

v) It helps students in self-study.

vi) It gives examples of the ways in which certain items of vocabulary and structure can be taught. Such examples are quite helpful to students.
vii) It also serves as an index for academic achievement.

viii) It serves as a memory aid for teachers.

ix) It helps in supplementing pupils learning experiences.

Emphasizing the importance of textbooks, Billows quotes, “To make the best use of time in the classroom and to avoid unintended repetition or the neglect of essential language patterns, the teacher is wise to have a text-book, at least in the back-ground of his mind” [Pahuja, 2004:230].

3.14.2 ADVANTAGES OF TEXT-BOOKS

i) They are Cheap and Economical.

ii) They facilitate individual instructions.

iii) They organize and provide uniformity for class instructions.

iv) They stimulate active learning.

v) They develop the skill of teachers, and

vi) They stimulate self-directed activities of the students.

3.14.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD TEXT-BOOK IN ENGLISH

Following characteristics are desirable in a good English textbook.

i) Adequate subject matter:
a. It should be according to psychological needs and requirements of the child.

b. It should be related to pupil’s environment.

c. It should have a link with the Indian culture and tradition.

d. It should have varied topics.

e. It should be of practical utility as well as informative.

ii) Pictures and Illustrations:

a. It should have illustrations.

b. Pictures and illustrations should be relevant and correct to the nature of topic of the lesson.

c. These should be attractive and clear.

d. Some of them be presented in colours.

iii) Opportunity of Oral work:

a. It should provide sufficient opportunity for oral work.

b. The lessons should be based on the possibility of introductory oral work.

iv) Suitable vocabulary and structures:

a. The vocabulary should be controlled. According to the All India Council for Secondary Education, it should contain 2500 words and 250 structures for six years course of English.
b. The vocabulary should be properly selected and graded.

c. The introduction of vocabulary should be progressive within the series of readers.

d. The word pattern, phrase pattern and sentence pattern or structure should also be selected and graded carefully.

e. A new word or pattern must be repeated.

f. Sufficient pattern-practice be provided through sufficient exercises.

v) Developing language skill:

It should provide necessary facilities for developing the necessary language skills of speaking, reading and writing in the young learners.

vi) Style:

a. The style should be based on the principle of 'simple to complex'.

b. The subject matter should be presented in a logical manner.

c. The style should be appealing to the students.

vii) Contents:

a. It should contain sufficient and suitable teaching and testing exercises on each lesson.
b. The content and the language material in each lesson should be further practiced and tested through a variety of interesting and graded exercises at the end of each lesson.

c. The instructions for each exercise should be simple enough for students to understand.

viii) Cultural content:

a. A good textbook in English must also contain cultural content about the regions of India.

b. Some of the lessons must also be based on English life.

c. Suitable pictures be given to illustrate such lessons.

ix) Technical characteristics:

a. The paper used should be white and durable.

b. The print should be attractive with no mistakes.

c. The size of the type should be bold for juniors and small for seniors.

d. Symmetry, margin and spacing should be proper.

e. The headings and sub-headings should be in a very bold type.

f. It should be bound properly.

g. The cover should be thick and crown size for senior class.

h. It should be moderately priced.
x) Teacher's Hand Book. [Pahuja, 2004:234]

A good textbook of English should be supplemented by teacher's handbook. It will guide the teachers. Teaching of English can be made more effective and useful and the teachers can go a long way in the improvement of linguistic attainment of the students with the help of teacher's handbook.

Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that a good textbook must be in harmony with the overall aims and objectives of the whole course of ELT. In this regard, teachers should keep on providing a feedback and the planners should examine it carefully and depend on it in developing teaching materials because developing textbooks and implementing them in the educational institutions must not be a 'top-down' decision or a totalitarian policy. Various agents involved in the whole process must consult each other, in order to maximize the positive aspects and minimize the shortcomings. Keith Johnson assumes that "Consultation and feedback exist in even the most authoritarian system" [1989:57].

3.14.4 DIFFICULTIES ORIGINATING FROM THE TEXT

Texts can cause difficulties in reading comprehension in a number of ways too.

- When the text organization is disrupted or disorganized or when the text is difficult, it should seem logically that a good
comprehender could become a poor comprehender [Spyridakis and Standal, 1987:286].

- When the text is arbitrarily structured. As it is known, readers can remember the logically structured passage better than the arbitrary one.

- When the text is opaque, that is to say, when the text does not contain sufficient textual cues to signal the appropriate scheme to be activated. Opacity of the text causes comprehension failure "even with a text about familiar topic" [Carrell and Wallace, 1988:105]. However certain kinds of cohesive devices in English may render a text opaque to the FL readers. These may take the form of deletion-for instance, by means of gapping, lack of relative pronoun in English relative clauses, substitutes for repeated lexical material, as well as of lexical substitution [Ibid.:105].

The prescribed text of Std. XI is a text book meant for teaching/learning ‘Reading Comprehension’. It has three sections consisting of informative writing, which has five units. The second section is imaginative writing which consists of nine poems two essays and a single one-act play. Section III deals with rapid reading and consists of eleven lessons. Seen passages for the examinations are selected from the prescribed text book ignoring the speed and comprehension of the students.
The prescribed text book for Std. XII has texts / passages which are selected by using certain criteria. The course book includes no information about the writers and their writings. The ultimate objective is the acquisition of communication skills. The text book has three sections. The first section has six units, section two deals with ten poems, two essays and a single one-act play. Section III emphasizes on rapid reading and has seven lessons. The prescribed text books are ill equipped as no attention is paid to the development of the comprehension skill. The classroom consists of pupils coming from different backgrounds. To develop the writing skill, speed of writing is an important factor. Speed and comprehension are inter-related. If comprehension is proper, speed automatically increases. The prescribed books for Std. XI and XII do not fulfil the conditions of a good text book.

3.15 CONCLUSION

The student, therefore, needs a whole range of reading strategies and speeds to suit the purpose of reading. Once again, it is the function of the teacher to equip him with these strategies and speeds.

Most readers lack the flexibility required to handle different kinds of reading material, for different purposes. They tend to read everything at the same speed and with the same degree of attention or the lack of it.
The efficient reader should possess, therefore:

i. The ability to derive meanings from known vocabulary and grammatical structures, contextual clues and derivations.

ii. The ability to read at different speeds to suit different purposes.

iii. The ability to vary the degree of comprehension from complete absorption of details to the retrieval of essentials only depending on the purpose.

iv. The ability to ‘skip’ and ‘skin’ intelligently, when this is possible or necessary.

v. The ability to combine reading at different speeds.

vi. The ability to think selectively during the process of reading, relate significant statements, distinguish fact from comment, etc.

vii. The ability to infer and interpret – read between and beyond the lines.

viii. The ability to anticipate statements, arguments, events, etc.

Thus, it is necessary to test reading comprehension to see if the students have acquired the intelligent interpretation of the text as expected of an efficient reader by the Higher Secondary Board. Hence, chapter IV deals with Testing and Evaluation which assess student learning at the end of course.