UNIT 12 LESSON 20

Reading and guessing meanings in context

Gray (Gray Williams S. “The major aspects of Reading” in Helen Robinson (ed.)), ‘Sequential Development of Reading Abilities’ (Supplementary Educational Monographs, No 90, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1960, pp 13-19) suggested that different levels of meaning could be obtained from the same material. He identified a literal level, which relates the material to its context, a significance level which involves implications and an evaluative level which requires the reader to react to the material in his own terms.

Recently a prominent linguist wrote, “Anyone who has learnt to read can read many sentences whose meanings are completely unknown to him”.

While we read certain texts, we are unable to get the meaning. We try to infer from the facts which are not stated explicitly. We read again and try to guess the meaning with the help of the context. To avoid this and improve our reading skill we should know the morphology and the rules of word formation. Enhancing your vocabulary will certainly help you to increase the speed of your reading. Every time you infer the meaning may not be correct. To know the exact meaning you will have to refer the dictionary. Such a practice would increase your reading speed. Sometimes a word would have a meaning when used in isolation and a different meaning when used in a group of words.

Reading requires you to make inferences that depend on your previous knowledge. Guessing the lexical and contextual meanings is the first step in understanding a written message. Below given are some suggestions which would help you to recognise the meanings of words in context in which they appear.

- Unless you are familiar with the subject you will not be able to comprehend the meaning. So try to understand the technicalities. Only a fair knowledge of the subject will enable you to infer the meaning.
- Do not stop reading if you are not able to get the meaning of a certain word. Continue reading and gradually you will learn.
- Try to understand the syntax-the sentence structure and guess the meaning of the words with the help of context clues, signal words and derive at the meaning of the unknown words. Prefixes and suffixes and root words can help you.
- You can also get the clue to the meaning of the word from the context. For example, Her prolonged illness has made her very weak and she is not able to walk long distances.
From the above sentence you get the meaning of the word prolonged by understanding the conditions mentioned as an effect of illness.

- You may infer the meaning of an unknown word through its extended definition or qualities mentioned. Example:
  
  **In order to be forgiven for her carelessness Shilpa rendered profound apology to her teacher.**

  You may guess the meaning of profound (as heartfelt, sincere) from the reason stated.

- If you come across an antonym of the unknown word you may be able to guess the meaning. Example:
  
  **Few years ago, real estate was a dull business. While today, it is a very lucrative one.**

  The meaning of lucrative (making large profit) is derived from the word dull.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:

Monsoons have arrived and so have the mosquitoes. As drains get water logged and stagnant pools form in the by-lanes, mosquitoes seem to breed in millions. Incidence of malaria increases manifold and no part of the city remains devoid of the problem.

People use various means to protect themselves from these little biting, blood sucking vampires. Whatever the season, some like to sleep under the mosquito net. There are others who feel safe after switching on mosquito repelling machines or applying mosquito repellent creams. Some go mad trying the various new contraptions introduced in the market every year. The grumbling sorts spend their nights clapping and trapping, hitting sundry objects and pillows. But the mosquitoes are the ones to have the last laugh. Blessed are those to whom any number of mosquitoes playing orchestra near their ears makes no difference.

However, we are as much to be blamed for the problem as is the weather. Coolers are no longer used but the water is never changed or coolers emptied making them a breeding place. Municipal staff claims that delisting and cleaning out drains is done regularly. But the choked sewers and drains overflowing with polythene bags tell another tale. People do not understand one plain fact that garbage is not something which will vanish in the air once it is thrown out of their house. It will very much remain outside the colony from an area or city. Mosquitoes do not demarcate between colonies. Diseases do not choose people. When they strike, they strike everywhere equally. When we act, we don’t reach at the root of the problem. We only look for cures but it is already too late for prevention.
LISTENING AND NOTE TAKING Lesson 21

Listening is very important and essential skill that all students must develop. It has been established through research findings that lack of effective listening tends to impede one’s career advancement in varied forms. Tom Peters, an acclaimed management guru, avers that listening is a potential skill incorporating both management and leadership qualities. Complete comprehension of any oral message / speech / lecture is more challenging than reading. While reading, if you happen to miss a few lines, you can reread and understand the link. But when you are listening to an important lecture or in a meeting, you can not always ask the speaker to repeat, especially while you are in edge of a big gathering on in closed champers meeting with the head of you company. Here comes the art of developing effective listening and the habit of note taking. You can not remember everything you have been listening so while listening, if you take notes, it can be used productively on a later date.

The process of listening comprises of four stages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The listener</td>
<td>The listener</td>
<td>The listener</td>
<td>The listener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>observes and</td>
<td>observes and</td>
<td>judges the</td>
<td>responds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focuses on the</td>
<td>focuses on the</td>
<td>contents of</td>
<td>to it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>message</td>
<td>message</td>
<td>the message.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensing.</td>
<td>sensing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Decoding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Valuation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Listening is a complex process which involves perceiving and interpreting the sound correctly as well as understands the implied or explicit meaning of the message. It includes skills like scanning, prediction, speech decoding, comprehending and oral discourse analysis. Scanning is the ability to locate specific information in a conversation, in a speech/presentation or argument whereas prediction is guessing information.

**Effective listening strategies:**

Most students, who do not have systematic approach to listening, face difficulties in understanding a lecture, a seminar or a discussion. They suffer from lack of concentration, boredom and poor comprehension.

Ten rules for good listening:

1. **Stop talking:** Do not talk while listening. One cannot be a speaker and a listener at the same time.

2. **Stop thinking:** It is not enough if you can stop talking; you cannot listen effectively when you are involved in thinking.

3. **Remove distractions:** Should avoid all distractions; concentrate on listening.

4. Do not let your mind wander.

5. Put your speaker at ease.

6. Do not prejudge, give the speaker a chance to complete.

7. Do not be angry; control your anger if you are irritated with speaker’s ideas.

8. Empathize with the speaker.


10. Take notes.

**Techniques of note taking while listening:**

Taking notes while listening to lectures and talks is an academic activity. There are four steps:

- Listening
- Filtering
- Paraphrasing
- Noting
I. Listening:
1. Follow the rules for good listening and apply active listening techniques for better comprehension.
2. Carefully listen to the verbal message in order to identify its purpose and scope.
3. Identify different modes of styles for example – reading style, conversational style, informal, rhetorical, so on.
4. Deduce meanings of words and phrases from their context and infer relationships.
5. Recognize key terms related to the subject.
7. Recognize function of non verbal cues as markers of emphasis and attitude.

II. Filtering:
1. Do not try to write everything.
2. Filter the information received.
3. Concentrate on the verbal signposts to recognize the organization and main points of the speech.
4. Identify the relationships among units within the speech (that is main points, supporting points, minor points, and hypothesis illustrations and so on).
5. Look out for key words and phrases.
6. Identify the role of discourse markers.
7. Identify the salient points.

III. Paraphrasing:
1. After identifying the core information, rephrase suitably.
2. Use appropriate words and phrases to express the central idea, main points and supporting details.
3. Do not use complete sentences anywhere; use words, phrases, and clauses.

IV. Note:
1. After restructuring and rephrasing the core information, jot them down.
2. Use appropriate reduction techniques such as abbreviations and symbols to save time.
3. Use numerals, numbers, and decimalization and so on.
4. Use note cards and notebooks.

Note taking
- Jot down points
- Use abbreviations and symbols
- Use subordinating techniques and a suitable method of sequencing; numerals, numbers, decimalization etc

Use note cards and note books to jot down points