

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Effective strategies for developing reading comprehension skills in English language learning

Hamidova Rayhona Olimjon qizi¹

Supervisor: Tuxtaxujayeva Madina Ulugbek qizi²

¹O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti, 3-kurs

²O'zDJTU, senior teacher, dotsent

ARTICLE INFO

Received

28 October 2026

Published

28 October 2026

ISSN

applied for

Keywords: reading comprehension, English language learning, B2 learners, reading strategies



Read online
unipublish.org

Abstract. This article examines effective strategies for developing reading comprehension skills among B2-level English learners. It focuses on teaching skimming, scanning, vocabulary in context, inferencing, summarising, and critical reading. The article also explores practical teaching methods, including pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities, collaborative learning, and extensive reading. Furthermore, it discusses assessment techniques and feedback to help learners improve comprehension, develop independent reading skills, and understand authentic English texts more effectively.

How to cite: Hamidova, R. (2026). Effective strategies for developing reading comprehension skills in English language learning. *UniPublish Journal of Science*, 1(1), 17-20. <https://unipublish.org/articles/effective-strategies-for-developing-reading-comprehension-skills-in-en>

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is central to successful English language learning because it helps learners gain information, develop vocabulary, notice grammatical patterns, and engage with academic and everyday texts. However, understanding a text involves more than translating individual words. Readers must connect ideas across sentences, recognise relationships between claims and evidence, use prior knowledge carefully, and monitor whether the text makes sense. The RAND Reading Study Group describes comprehension as a process in which readers construct meaning through interaction with written language and within a particular context (Snow, 2002).

2. Who to Teach: B2-Level Learners

The target group is learners working at B2 (upper-intermediate) level according to the CEFR. At this level, students can generally understand the main ideas of complex texts on both concrete and abstract topics, including discussions in their areas of interest (Council of Europe, 2020). They should be challenged to interpret longer authentic texts, distinguish a writer's main argument from supporting details, infer attitudes that are not directly stated, and compare information across sections or sources.

3. What to Teach

Reading for gist and specific information. Skimming means reading quickly to understand the overall message, while scanning means searching for a particular fact, name, date, or example. Learners should choose the technique according to their reading purpose rather than read every text in the same way.

Text structure and relationships. Students should recognise topic sentences, supporting evidence, examples, cause-and-effect links, comparisons, and contrast markers such as *however*, *although*, and *as a result*. Understanding organisation helps readers follow the writer's reasoning and distinguish central ideas from details.

Vocabulary and meaning from context. Learners need strategies for dealing with unknown words: examining surrounding sentences, identifying word parts, noticing synonyms or examples, and deciding whether a word is essential to the main message.

For second-language learners, comprehension can be affected by limited vocabulary, unfamiliar sentence structures, insufficient background knowledge, and a lack of purposeful reading habits. Grabe (2004) explains that reading instruction needs to address both language knowledge and the cognitive processes that support meaning-making. Effective teaching should therefore combine language development with strategies that help learners read actively and independently.

B2 learners are not a uniform group. Some may read quickly but misunderstand implied meanings; others may understand the main idea but struggle with academic vocabulary or dense paragraphs. Teachers should begin with a short diagnostic task to identify learners' strengths and needs. Texts should be appropriately challenging rather than overloaded with unfamiliar language. Topics such as education, technology, health, culture, the environment, and social change can support discussion while allowing students to connect the text with prior knowledge.

Teachers should explicitly teach a small number of high-value words while avoiding the practice of translating every unfamiliar item.

Inference and critical reading. B2 learners should use textual clues to infer a writer's attitude, purpose, implied meaning, or likely conclusion. They should also ask whether claims are supported by evidence, identify the intended audience, and distinguish fact from opinion. Inferences should be justified with specific evidence from the text, not guesses alone.

Summarising and comprehension monitoring. Students should express the main point of a paragraph or whole text in their own words, leaving out minor details. They should notice when meaning breaks down and respond by rereading, slowing down, checking a reference, or using context. Grabe (2004) identifies vocabulary learning, text-structure awareness, fluency, strategic reading, and extensive reading as important elements of second-language reading instruction.

4. How to Teach: A Three-Stage Lesson

Before reading: prepare and predict. Start with the title, headings, images, or a short question related to the topic. Ask learners to share what they already know and predict the text's content. Pre-teach only essential vocabulary that would otherwise block understanding. For example, before reading an article about plastic waste, students can predict the writer's likely position and list two questions they want the text to answer. This stage activates relevant knowledge and gives students a reason to read.

During reading: model and practise strategies. Use a short think-aloud demonstration to show how a proficient reader makes decisions. The teacher might say, "I am reading the first paragraph quickly to identify the main point," or "The word 'however' signals a contrast, so I will reconsider my prediction." Students then skim for gist, scan for evidence, annotate key

ideas, and answer questions that require both explicit information and inference. In pairs, one learner can identify the claim while the other finds supporting evidence. Brevik (2019) highlights the value of sustained, scaffolded comprehension practice in English L2 classrooms.

After reading: respond and consolidate. Ask learners to write a short summary, compare interpretations, discuss the writer's argument, or use the information in a short speaking or writing task. Questions should progress from literal understanding ("What happened?") to interpretation ("What does this suggest?") and evaluation ("How convincing is the evidence?"). Students should support answers with details from the text. This moves reading from passive information collection to meaningful communication.

5. Practical Strategies for B2 Classrooms

Think-aloud and gradual release. Teachers should explain a strategy, model it, practise it with the class, and then allow learners to use it independently. Strategy names alone are not enough; learners need to see when and why a strategy is useful.

Question generation. In pairs, learners write one factual question, one inferential question, and one evaluative question about a text. Another pair answers each question and identifies the evidence used. This encourages close reading and helps learners understand that comprehension includes more than retrieving facts.

Graphic organisers. A simple table with columns for "main claim," "supporting evidence," and "my interpretation" helps students organise information. For cause-and-effect texts, a flow chart can show how one event leads to another. Organisers should support thinking, not distract from the text.

6. Assessment and Feedback

Assessment should check both understanding of a particular text and the development of reading skills over time. A short diagnostic task can establish a starting point; later tasks can measure progress in identifying main ideas, locating evidence, inferring meaning, and summarising. Suitable formats include multiple-choice questions, short written answers, paragraph summaries, evidence tables, and brief discussions.

Collaborative summarising. After reading, learners agree on a one-sentence main idea and a three-sentence summary. They then compare their summaries with the original text to check accuracy and relevance. This develops paraphrasing and helps learners distinguish essential ideas from examples.

Extensive reading. In addition to close classroom reading, students should regularly read texts they can understand with reasonable ease, such as graded readers, short articles, and topic-based online texts. They can keep a reading log recording the title, main idea, useful vocabulary, and personal response. A meta-analysis by Yapp, de Graaff, and van den Bergh (2021), which examined 46 studies of L2 reading strategy interventions, reported an overall positive effect and supported multi-strategy teaching.

Feedback should explain why an answer is or is not supported by the text. Rather than simply marking an inference wrong, a teacher can ask, "Which words led you to that conclusion?" This encourages evidence-based reasoning. Teachers can also use self-assessment prompts: "Which strategy helped me most?", "Where did I lose the meaning?", and "What did I do to solve the problem?" Reading speed should not be the only measure of success; accurate interpretation and independent strategy use are equally important.

7. Conclusion

Developing reading comprehension among B2 English learners requires a planned combination of language learning, strategic reading, and meaningful interaction with texts. Teachers should teach skimming, scanning, vocabulary-in-context, text organisation, inferencing, summarising, and comprehension monitoring. These skills are most effective when introduced through clear modelling, practised in be-

fore-, during-, and after-reading tasks, and gradually transferred to independent reading. Regular extensive reading and feedback based on textual evidence can further support progress. The central principle is to teach learners not only what a text says, but also how to approach it, check their understanding, and build a justified interpretation.

References

1. Brevik, L. M. (2019). Explicit reading strategy instruction or daily use of strategies? Studying the teaching of reading comprehension through naturalistic classroom observation in English L2. *Reading and Writing*, 32, 2281–2310. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-019-09951-w>
2. Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment—Companion volume*. Council of Europe Publishing. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/cefr-companion-volume-and-its-language-versions>
3. Grabe, W. (2004). Research on teaching reading. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24, 44–69. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190504000030>
4. Snow, C. E. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension*. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1465.html
5. Yapp, D. J., de Graaff, R., & van den Bergh, H. (2021). Improving second language reading comprehension through reading strategies: A meta-analysis of L2 reading strategy interventions. *Journal of Second Language Studies*, 4(1), 154–192. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jsls.19013.yap>