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Be Happy 2 Read & Write

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Theoretical principles/basic theories for reading

Reading

Reading is an intellectual activity that applies across the curriculum for 1st and 2nd grade of primary school and high school, it is an important means of self-development of language expression, language culture and aesthetics. **The better reading quality, the better learning.** Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning (reading comprehension).

While Anglosphere nations prefer global method in reading didactics (no analysis of words into syllables, vowels and letters) - the words are seen and read as a whole, in Slovakia the **analytico-synthetic method** is well-known and accepted. It is based on the spoken language. Students learn to analyze words into syllables and sounds and then to combine sounds into syllables and syllables into words, words into sentences, are aware of their importance and finally a sense of the whole text.

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Reading aims

- to learn how to read
- to improve reading quality
- to learn the different types and ways of reading

Reader is a person who is reading a text. It is important to consider the sex, age, socioeconomic status, reading skill and intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation of the reader. There is a substantial difference between the reading of a child and an adult. Some reading disorder is related to the peculiarities at the level of visual perception, others at the level of acoustic-linguistic perception.

Reading purposes (Wallace, 1992)

- reading for survival
- reading for learning
- reading for pleasure

Text

A **text** is any object that can be "read," that transmits some kind of informative message.

Text comprehension

In the general term, text comprehension is subjective interpretation of meaning of the content of the text by the reader. This interpretation is subjective because every reader interprets the text uniquely. There is not such a thing that all people understand the same text identically. This is not possible because of their cognitive, social and cultural backgrounds that play an important role in text comprehension. Text comprehension is a constructive process (Armbruster, 1993).

Text comprehension runs in three levels. These are the relationships:

- among text elements (words, phrases, sentences),
- between text elements and elements of objective reality that are described in the text,
- between text elements and elements of the cognitive structure of the reader (Gavora, 1992).

Text comprehension falls into a broader category called text learning (learning from text). In addition to text comprehension, text learning includes **remembering** the information that a text contains. The outputs of text learning are also affective characteristics of a learner: changes in pupil's attitudes, motives and values. All these qualities are important in school instruction because they make pupils' learning complex and valuable. **Metacognitive knowledge** about reading can significantly help the reader in better reading comprehension and learning (Heldová, 2011).

Social environment

Pupils share ideas in general, so it is with reading. They are influenced by family, friends, school and by the wider social environment, that have an effect on their reading habits. Visiting a library or bookstore is a social event.

Genres

- fiction books – drama, novel, poem, legend, short story, fairy tale, fable
- factual books – biography, autobiography, informational, persuasive, narrative
- school textbooks – Šlabikár (ABC book), Čítanka (reader book) in Slovak schools
- magazines, newspapers, comics
- digital texts
- other – essay, speech, laboratory report, advertisement, menu, shopping list, manual, signs, subtitles, recipes ...

Phases of reading (Nováková, 1991)

1. visual perception
2. assigning to a group of graphemes a group of phonemes (making sound)
3. awareness of the meaning

Theoretical principles/basic theories for writing

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Writing

Writing is transferring thoughts on paper. Writing directs our thoughts, pushes us forward. It reflects our inside, not only by ideas but also by the way we handwrite. We know several kinds of writing. Writing in the school practice focuses on exploring the surroundings, language, and good communication. Recently, the teacher has to modernize and innovate the educational process. One of the innovative ways of writing is called "creative writing".

Within a language system, writing relies on many of the same structures as speech, such as vocabulary, grammar and semantics, with the added dependency of a system of signs or symbols. The result of writing is generally called text, and the recipient of text is called a reader. Motivations for writing include publication, storytelling, correspondence and diary. Writing has been instrumental in keeping history, maintaining culture, dissemination of knowledge through the media and the formation of legal systems. It is also an important medium of expressing oneself by way of written words as do authors, poets and the like.



Good writing skills are essential for effective communication. Yet, learning to write well takes time and practice. It is not uncommon to find great writers musing on the difficulties they experience in writing. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote: “All good writing is swimming under water and holding your breath.” The English poet Lytton Strachey said: “First I write one sentence. Then I write another. That’s how I write and so I go on. But I have a feeling writing ought to be like running through a field.”

Why writing seems to be greater problem than the other language skills? One reason is that writing is detached from the wide range of expressive possibilities in speech – gesture, body movement, facial expression, pitch and tone of voice, stress and hesitation. Effective writing requires a high degree of organization in the development of information, ideas or arguments, a high degree of accuracy, the use of complex grammatical devices and a careful choice of vocabulary.

What philosophers and writers think about reading

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“Books were my lively friends. There were few, but I read out of them even what the authors didn’t put into them.” Mária Rázusová-Martáková (Slovak author)

“I like the smell of manure in stables, but I can’t stand it in books.” Janko Jesenský (Slovak author)

“With the help of books many become learned even outside of school. Without books nobody is usually learned even in school.” Jan Amos Komenský

“He who does not love a book, does not love wisdom. He who does not love wisdom, becomes a fool.” Jan Amos Komenský

“There are many little ways to enlarge your child’s world. Love of books is the best of all.”
Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis



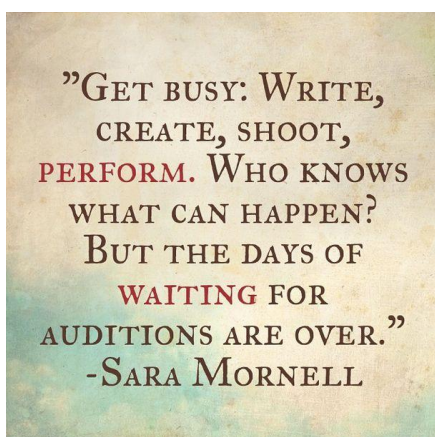
“Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him.” Maya Angelou

“There is a great deal of difference between an eager man who wants to read a book and the tired man who wants a book to read.” Gilbert K. Chesterton

“A book is a version of the world. If you do not like it, ignore it or offer your own version in return.” Salman Rushdie

“Reading a book is like re-writing it for yourself.” Angela Carter

“A good book has no ending.” R.D. Cumming



Everyone should read,
we say, but we act as if
only those with special
talent should write

Roy Peter Clark

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“No two persons ever read the same book.” Edmund Wilson

“A book is a dream that you hold in your hand.” Neil Gaiman

"Make films. Draw. Write. It'll make a world of difference." Peter Docter

"All the world's a stage." William Shakespeare

"Self-consciousness is the enemy of all art, be it acting, writing, painting or living itself, which is the greatest art of all." Ray Bradbury

"I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library." Jorge Luis Borges

Reading and writing from three to fourteen years

Kindergarten: 3 – 5 years

Reading and listening – children learn to read at the first year of primary school; they develop listening comprehension in the kindergarten. Children extend their active and passive vocabulary, distinguish sounds, are taught to be interested in books, letters, they listen to children's folk and authorial poetry, fairy tales and stories, "read" a cartoon story and image series.

Writing and speaking - children learn to write in the first year of primary school; they develop communication skills and draw in the kindergarten. Children learn to pronounce certain sounds, syllables, words, sentences, answer questions, communicate in the mother tongue, use literary language, synonyms, antonyms and homonyms, create rhymes, play analytic-synthetic games with words, learn basics of a foreign language, memorize and recite short literary forms, eg. rhymes, riddles, chants, short children's poems etc., freely reproduce folk and author's fairy tales and stories, express feelings and impressions of fairy tales, stories and theatre via art, music, drama, "write" an image letter.

Drawing can be understood as preparation for writing. Children learn to sit properly, to keep the paper in the right inclination, sit at the table, coordinate the movements of eyes and hands, draw with large graphic movements. It is important to draw with a relaxed hand, smoothly and confidently.

Creativity is developed in many different ways.

Teachers from our Kindergarten described their work with children:**Writing:**

We cover the basics of first steps to writing. Although, we do not teach children how to write the letters or numbers, we teach them to recognise and identify them. We are working on fine motor development by various activities such as drawing dots, straight/curved lines (circles), diagonal lines (triangles), draw pictures that are recognisable.

We teach children to hold the crayon with their fingers, to sit properly, to copy a model of a horizontal and a vertical line, to copy and draw geometrical shapes: circle, triangle, square, to trace around the edge of a basic shape template.

Spelling:

We teach them spelling. They should be able to identify the first and the last sound of a word. We teach it, for example by prolonging the given sound. They should notice a spelling pattern in a poem. We teach poems by clapping hands. By this way they learn the rhythm of a poem. They are able to divide the words into syllables.

Listening:

We read the books aloud. To keep their attention we ask them questions about the story, the characters, the plot of a given book. Sometimes we dramatize the text. We show them pictures. They might draw pictures about the books/stories.

Reading:

They should be able to tell a story based on pictures.

Speaking:

They should be able to express themselves clearly. We encourage them by having conversational lessons in the morning circle. They are asked about their feelings, their hobbies, their family, friends...

Singing and learning lyrics:

We motivate them by stories, puppets that are related to the topic of a song. We use Orff instruments or we are declaiming the text by clapping our hands or by body movements.



Examples of GOOD PRACTISE

Songs:

Open shut them - <https://youtu.be/U-PGpJOZxGU>

Put on your shoes - <https://youtu.be/GFKwKUe-1Jo>

Rhythm:

Fruits - <https://youtu.be/74i-UxIPRh4>

Who took the cookie - <https://youtu.be/Q6ZcJGMXwqE>

Reading:

Storybird - <https://youtu.be/KQEddeOXBZg>

Speaking:

How 's the weather - <https://youtu.be/TCg50wLRbtM>

eTwinning projects:

CHRISTMAS STORY

GREAT ARTISTS, SMALL PAINTERS

LET'S SING A SONG

ONE DAY IN KINDERGARTEN

DIGITAL ART TECHNIQUES PAINT/PAINTBRUSH

A VIRTUAL EUROPEAN EXHIBITION OF CHILDREN'S ART PRODUCTIONS

FOLK TRADITION-THROWING MORENA FIGURINE INTO THE RIVER

THERE IS ETWINNING IN OUR SCHOOL

PAY TRIBUTE TO ETWINNING

I LOVE MY KINDERGARTEN

AUTUMN DECORATION OF OUR KINDERGARTEN

MAGIC HANDS, CREATIVE MINDS

A LITTLE PRINCE FOR A GREAT STORY

WELCOME TO CREATIVE LAND!

WE ARE NEIGHBOURS - TELL ME LEGEND FROM YOUR COUNTRY

VISUAL DESIGNS WITH LITTLE HANDS

MUSIC IS MY UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE



Primary school: 6 – 14 years

The aim of Slovak language at the primary level of education is to teach literary language at a level that pupils can use in everyday life. Language use is perceived as complex - speaking, writing, reading and listening.

The basic objective of Slovak language and literature in the **first year** is to learn how to read and write. More emphasis is put not only on the ability to rewrite texts but also on independent creative writing.

The aim of teaching literary language in the **second year** is to learn basic principles of the language system. Pupils get acquainted with grammatical and linguistic rules. They significantly enhance the technique of reading and writing as well as reading comprehension. They familiarize themselves with independent text creation.

The aim of language teaching in the **third year** is to learn orthography rules. Intense attention is paid to work with a text. We increase demands on reading comprehension and independent text creation according to specification. Pupils learn to present the results of their work orally, to speak according to a pattern or specification and write short forms according to the specific curriculum focus.

In the **fourth year** the language system curriculum is systematized. Pupils acquire additional rules of Slovak orthography. Throughout the school year they intensively work with texts focusing on understanding their content and describing their basic properties. We increase demands on the quality of created texts in spoken and written form.

The Slovak language in the 1st year of elementary school has a priority and a specific position. The ability to read and write is one of the basic life skills that pupils learn in the 1st year of elementary school. A pre-school learner brings with him/her certain language skills and habits that he/she has to develop from a number of aspects. The main aspects include the development of vocabulary, gaining the foundation of spelling and knowledge in the field of literature, which should be dealt with at elementary level. Within the reading and literacy component, emphasis should be placed on reading with comprehension. Pupils



get familiar with literature and authors. It creates a positive relationship to reading books. Writing is a basic tool of literacy and also serves as a means of communication. In writing classes, pupils learn to write the prescribed letter and numeral (Latin) shapes with respect to hygienic and aesthetic principles. In the field of style, pupils are taught to speak in short oral phrases, answer questions, they can formulate a request and thank, they can apologise, congratulate, formulate a brief report.

The content of reading and writing in the 1st year is divided into three periods:

1. PREPARATION

The length of the preparatory period may be variable (3-5 weeks) and in justified cases even more. It also depends on the child's pre-school experience, which can greatly speed up the process of preparation.

2. TRAINING PERIOD – USING PRIMER /ABC Book/

The aim of the training (syllabic) period is to acquire reading in the following thematic units:

1. the use of letters of the large printed alphabet for reading to help and speed up the understanding the principle of reading,
2. learning - reading letters of the Slovak alphabet - following the order given in used valid textbooks,
3. detailed analysis of words and determination of the position of vowels in words,
4. reading syllables, words, phrases and short texts that contain open syllables,
5. reading syllables, words, phrases and short texts that contain syllables with a consonant group,
6. reading syllables, words, sentences, and short texts that contain a multiple consonant group,
7. reading of syllables, words in sentences and short texts that contain syllabic r - ř, l - ľ,
8. reading written letters, syllables, words, sentences and short continuous texts.

There are several reading instruction methods

- Skriptologic method: children are taught to read the text that they have written themselves
- Phonemic method: the learning of vowels is connected with movement
- Global method: teaches reading words at once as a whole
- Sfumato - flowing reading
- Vowel Analytical - Synthetic Method: is based on the perception and understanding of the vowels and their arrangements in the stream of speech. Words are analysed for syllables, sounds, and vice versa, vowels are joined into syllables, syllables into words and words into sentences. Awareness of the content and, finally, the sense of the whole text should come. Reading and writing are learnt at the same time.
- Synthetic Method: using some of the simplest elements of the analytical method.

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The first class teachers can choose one of the three Primers /ABC Books/ which are approved by the Ministry of Education.

3. READERS PERIOD

The aims of the Readers Period are:

- Improving reading techniques,
- Reading comprehension,
- Practicing the correct intonation,
- Retelling the text,
- Expressing the feeling caused by reading the text (sad, entertaining, instructive, ...) - perception of artistic texts of different genres
- Preparation for silent reading.



Second stage: 10 – 14 years

These objectives are followed in the subject of Slovak language and literature:

Reading comprehension

- Focus reading as needed
- Understand the meaning of the text
- Understand the formal aspect of the text
- Distinguish between sentence and text
- Understand the purpose of fiction and factual texts considering their use
- Understand the importance of lexical units

Writing

- Express ideas and information with different objectives for specific audiences
- Organize text in terms of composition
- Synchronize stylistic standards with the aim of writing and with readers
- Stylize simple sentences and simple compound sentences
- Use information and text passages from other sources, for example humorous story and material from other media
- Transform texts from one genre to another
- Repeated reading and correcting a draft text with the focus on grammar, punctuation and orthography
- Review and edit a concept with the usage of feedback from a teacher and classmates
- Respect language rules

Speaking

Objectives are similar as for writing.

- Organize and develop ideas in accordance with the communication situation
- Use vocabulary appropriate to specific communication objectives and to audience
- Use linguistic and extra-linguistic resources to communicate.

Objectives are the same for each year, only demands are higher year by year.





Language and literature teaching at ISCED 2 is focused on reading, speaking, writing and listening comprehension. Literature and language are taught in communication and experience. Very important is the interpretation of various texts, the production of oral and written expressions by pupils.

These areas are supported and developed by various activities.

Extensive Reading is very important and it is used in Slovak and English language.

In Slovak language *Recommended reading for primary school* is different for each year/grade.

5th year:

Slovak fairy tales, H. Ch. Andersen, R. Dahl, Nonsense, Legends, M. Ďuričková

6th year:

E. Petiška, M. Rázus, R. Arthur, J. Mlčochová, R. Moric

7th year:

D. Defoe: Robinson Crusoe, E. Hemingway, J. G. Tajovský, M. Kukučín, K. May, J. London, R. Kipling

8th year:

J. Blažková, S. Townsend, A. de Saint Exupéry, S. Chalupka, M. Figuli, J. Verne, V. Kotzwinkle

9th year:

J. R. R. Tolkien, J. G. Tajovský, J. D. Salinger, František Hečko, Charlotte Bronteová

In English readers from Oxford and MacMillan publishers are used at our school.

Worksheets

Worksheets are created for different themes, focused on group work or independent work of pupils with texts.





Projects focused on reading and creative writing

5th year: Creation of own puppet theatre play

Pupils make their own puppets and they must invent a script for a puppet play and then perform it. The products are puppets, scripts and video recordings.

6th year: The Book of Fables

Pupils create their own fables with illustrations and finally compose a book.

7th year: Own radio game

Pupils convert a text into a script and make a recording of a radio game.

8th year: Class calendar

9th year: Collection of poems

Recitation competitions

They support artistic performances and dramatization of texts.

Modern ICT technologies

Work with electronic book reader for directed reading, dramatized reading and reader's marathon. We use different games and competitions on interactive boards.

Innovative methods and procedures

Innovative methods and procedures are often used.

Developing reading literacy according to M. Lapitka (2005)

At first stage a child acquires three skills in reading:

1. Elementary literacy - learning to read and write (1st year)
2. Continuous/Fluent reading (2nd year)
3. Understanding of the text (3rd year)

At the second stage of primary school developing reading comprehension continues. Emphasis is placed on the acquisition of new, more demanding reading competencies:

4. Text analysis (5th -7th year)

5. Basics of interpretation and evaluation (8th - 9th year)

The third stage continues to focus on understanding the content of the text, with an emphasis on:

6. Analysis and interpretation of texts (from 1st year)

7. Metainterpretation and evaluation of works (3rd - 4th year).

Different types of reading

Types of reading

Silent reading (comprehension) - extends to a short literary texts (stories, poems), artistic - educational and journalistic texts, texts that pupils already know but read them again with regard to the selection and collection data, facts.

Speak out loud reading - improves the technique of reading. The student can practice accenting of words, modulation and power of voice, intonation and rhythm of speech. It is closely linked with cognition, analysis and interpretation of texts learned in the lesson, it occurs alternately with silent reading. It becomes part of an hour organizationally tied to the aesthetic recital of poetry and prose.

Critical reading - reading, where literary (as well as other) text is a subject to assessment; while reading student follows (examines) cognitive or educational values of text and critically deals with it. He also notes the stylistic and linguistic ways of expression and presentation of content and he is aware of their use.

Creative reading – is reading in order to create problems and then solve them, reading inspiring creative activity. The result of this thought-activity is creating someone's own outlook on life and the world.



Intensive reading - means reading short texts at school with deeper understanding. It focuses on grammar, new vocabulary, specific information and details. After intensive reading the following exercises are highly suggested: Testing → understanding, spelling and grammar, Closed exercises, True/false, a, b, c – choose the right answer, Matching – making pairs or clusters, Open exercises, Gap filling, Short answer – yes, no, Open ended.

Extensive reading - reading longer, continuous texts requiring a general understanding - is an increasingly important part of language education. It gives students the opportunity to see the language they learn in class in the context of a story or factual book. Choosing a book they want to read, and when and where they want to read encourages learner autonomy. It improves reading skills and also supports the development of writing skills. But perhaps the most important for many students is a pleasurable way to use their language skills. In extensive reading it is crucial to understand the main points, not necessary to translate each unknown word. Students learn to read by reading, not by translating or studying grammar. Reading the same patterns of letters, words and combination of words again and again, students process them more quickly and accurately and thus develop a sight vocabulary, that means words that are recognized automatically. As a result, they increase their reading speed and confidence and are able to give more attention to working out the meaning of what they are reading (Day, 2011). The book for extensive reading needs to be chosen according to the age, language level and student's choice. The enthusiasm of the teacher can be very motivating. Pupils have required or recommend reading at school. Because it is often compulsory, they feel resistance to read it. Why isn't it called "forbidden reading"?

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According to Gavora (2012) reading can be:

- collective - the most common form of reading (1 student reads loudly, the others have to follow the text visually)
- choral - all students read at the same time
- group – expressive reading of students' groups
- reading with emphasis on the role.



Ways of reading (Mistrik, 1980)

- informative – looking for some important information
- orienting – looking through books
- interrupted - with intermittent breaks, analytical, detailed
- recreational - relaxation, learning emotional and rational understanding of the text
- combined - specific, changing different types of reading
- selective – a reader selects information from the text
- reading comprehension = conscious reading - the most perfect form of reading.

The teacher should lead pupils to recognize that only reading comprehension has meaning for them, it enriches the thinking, attitudes and opinions and they can gain something.

Writing: teaching and production

According to Hadfield (2000) **writing process** in the classroom consists of three main stages:

1. Lead-in - introduces the learners the topic and focuses their attention.

- **preparation** for the task
- **stimulation** of students' imagination
- “**warming up**” - starting thinking about the topic
- **practising** some language that will be needed

2. Organizing texts – provides controlled writing practise in preparation for a freer writing task.

- **completion** – filling in the gaps to practise in a particular language point,
- **describing** a picture - practise in organizing a spatial description,
- **joining** – joining words or sentences using a linking word /“and“, “but“/ to develop the skill of linking ideas logically and write more fluently,
- **matching** – matching two separate halves of sentences to understand how sentences are constructed and which words can go with other words,
- **reordering** – putting words in the correct order to make a sentence or ordering sentences to make a text,

- **substitution** – varying a basic sentence framework by choosing different words or phrases at certain points to express a number of different meanings,
- **writing from notes** – the students are given notes to expand into text to practice in arranging ideas coherently.

3. Creating texts – gives the opportunity to use the knowledge in producing their own text. It is difficult to write when you do not know who you are writing to or why. In real life we always have a reason for writing - a letter, a shopping list, making notes for a speech, etc. In the classroom we can use the following:

- **writing from a picture** - a picture is a starting-off point for creating a text,
- **responding to a text** - reading a text before writing as a source of inspiration,
- **survey and report** - gathering information from each other to write a report,
- **visualization** - children close their eyes and visualize a scene to describe and write,
- **write and do** - some students write texts /a letter, some instructions, a description of the scene/, the others read them and respond in an appropriate way
- **write and draw** - students draw pictures and describe them or pass their description to another ones to draw pictures or the pictures and descriptions are put up in the classroom and the learners match them,
- **write and guess** – the students write a description or riddle for others to read and guess the person or the object being described.

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Tricia Hedge (2005) introduces four stages of the writing process itself.

1st stage: **communicating** - thinking of the target reader should encourage the writer to think about the appropriate writing style to use.

2nd stage: **composing** - pre-writing, drafting, redrafting, and editing activities that encourage the learner to gather and organise ideas before actually composing a piece of writing. Planned writing is not a linear process, which requires constant rethinking of one's own ideas and mental outlines.

3rd stage: **crafting** - producing well-structured written work. Putting ideas together requires a good knowledge and an active awareness of how written language is organized and what its main features are.



4th stage: **improving** the quality of writing through raising awareness about writing and text quality, evaluating plans, reviewing a draft for content, using taped comments on first drafts or reformulating the text.

Methodological strategies: reading

Metacognitive processes by phases of reading: (Magulová – Zápotočná, 2007)

1. Before reading - an indicative view of the text, shaping ideas about the text, more precise reading target, the estimated time, activation of one's own knowledge,
2. While reading - change of pace reading, reading interruption because of the interest in the text or problem reading,
3. After reading - back to the text because of misunderstanding, personal interest or fixation already read.

Activities before reading = pre-reading activities = lead in (Hadfield, 2000)

- Teaching the **new vocabulary** in advance (not more than 7 – 10 words)
- **Questions** Why are you reading? What are your personal experiences related to the topic? What is your opinion about the topic?
- **Discussion** around the topic
- **Describing a picture** of something or someone from the text
- **Imagining** a scene/person from the text
- **Brainstorming** – the quantity of words is important
- **Predicting** the content according to the pictures and titles

Activities while reading = read and respond (Hadfield, 2000)

- **Skimming** - first it is needed to fly through the material: to leaf over, view pictures, titles, subtitles, highlighted keywords, content. This initial familiarization with the material should serve to decide whether he will devote more deeply or not. This strategy is a good example when buying books at the bookstore. Students do it to get a main idea of the text.



- **Scanning** - scan text is the usable skill for example when we are looking for specific information - phone number, train departure, some information.
- **Search reading** - research reading is a technique that is good for looking for keywords and phrases that help to find specific information. It is associated with a more detailed study found word or phrase, or writing the notes. All the text in this case is not important.
- Working with **dictionaries**
- **Read and complete** a list, table, chart or picture using information from the text (for example who, what, when, where, why, how)
- **Read and correct** mistakes in the text
- **Read and draw** what is described
- **Read and guess** what is described
- **Read and match** information in a text with other reading texts or pictures
- **Read and reorder** – learners read a text in muddled order and number the sentences or paragraphs in the correct order; or they physically reorder sentences on separate strips of paper; or they make time axes
- **Read and sort** – two texts are mixed together. Learners have to sort out which sentences belong to which text.

Activities after reading = Follow-up

There are several **methods** which serve the purposes of assessing the **pupil's understanding the text**. Many of them are those which are typically used by teachers.

The most frequent methods to assess comprehension of expository texts are:

- **Text retelling** - retelling the content of the text either in detail (typically in rote learning) or paraphrasing it. However, rote learning does not secure text comprehension; therefore literal retelling of the text content is not a valid instrument to assess understanding.
- **Questioning** – answering close ended or open ended questions asked by the teacher or included textbook. An alternative form is self-questioning by the pupil.

- **Text summarising** - text summary is a gist of the text. Expressing the text summary by pupils helps the teacher to assess how the pupil identified the text macrostructure. A similar, though less valid method, is to invent a title for the text, or headings for text paragraphs.
- **Tests** are frequent instruments to assess text comprehension. They can concentrate on specific elements or levels of the text and information processing. Good examples of professionally designed tests are those used in international surveys of reading literacy PIRLS and PISA. They use multiple-choice or fill in test items (Gavora, 1992).
- **Wall posters** with texts written by pupils can be displayed on the wall with a reading activity. Learners can read the posters in their spare time or if they finish an activity early.
- **Reading cards** – If a teacher can get hold of a number of different short reading texts but have no photocopier, he can make reading cards. Each card should have a text and comprehension questions on the front, and answers on the back or on the separate card. The cards can be kept in boxes. They can be graded according to the level of difficulty of the text. The teacher will need more cards than the number of learners in the class. (Hadfield, 2000)
- **Writing a short message** about a text to the teacher or friend
- **Drama** or pantomime about a text
- **Selfie** related to a text, learners can speak about the activities in the selfie on the next lesson
- **Interview** – it is a kind of roleplay where one child acts as a famous person, other pupils act as journalists who ask questions. Everybody knows in advance whether he is a famous person or a journalist to prepare his role.

The most famous contemporary modern activating methods of reading:

- Guided (structured) reading
- The framework for critical thinking EUR and the method INSERT (Kimáková, 2001)

Guided (structured) reading

A teacher divides the text into several parts and prepares appropriate questions. He pauses reading and leads the interview with pupils. Students give predictions about the continuation of the text. Anticipating encourages curiosity, active reading and attention (Steel, Meredith, Temple, 1999). It is not necessary to involve listening to all, children read individually. It will become more a discussion of issues, responses, ideas and opinions that lead and extend pupils through careful questioning, structured activities and reference to the text.

Students can make the chart in the following structure:

- What do you think will happen?
- What is your proof?
- What actually happened?

The framework for critical thinking EUR and the method INSERT

EUR is an abbreviation derived from Evocation, Understanding and Reflection.

- *Evocation* - what do the students already know about the topic?
- *Understanding* - students are looking for information related to their assumptions and predictions
- *Reflection* - what have the students found out?

INSERT (Interactive Notating System for Effective Reading and Thinking) in the framework EUR

- Evocation eg. by brainstorming
- Understanding by INSERT: students read a text and they mark the text using 4 marks:
 - ✓ I know it
 - + It is new for me
 - I know it differently
 - ? I would like to know more about it
- Reflection: Students draw a chart with four columns and they fill it with marked information.

apple. INSERT

✓	+	-	?
Ecosystem		debris	pollution
my name is p. pepi.			
poster. net.			
prod. phone / red.			
poster - konst.			

Examples of reading strategies

Reading strategy SQ3R

(Acronym SQ3R is created by initial letters of English words: Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review.) The following guidelines are a free application of the SQ3R methodology:

1. Review the text, images, charts, annotation, summary ... all parts of the text, with which you work.
2. Try to write your assumption in one sentence of what the text is about.
3. Review the subtitles and read the first line of each paragraph.
4. Change subtitles into questions.
5. Read the text of each paragraph and answer the questions that you have created.
6. Prepare questions into a discussion about the read topic.
7. Try to graphically process the text.
8. Write the keywords from the text.
9. Write a short text summary (approximately 5 lines).

Reading strategy 3 – 2 – 1

Pupil evaluates received information in the following steps:

- Find 3 important information that were in the text
- Find 2 information that engaged your attention – it might be new information or information that differs from the pupil's previous knowledge
- Find 1 issue that you didn't find the answer in the text – it might be a less clear text or the pupil doesn't have enough experiences or previous knowledge (Gavora, 2008)

Reading club

Pupils are given different roles:

- quotations seeker – looks for interesting quotations from the text or from other sources
- explorer – looks for more information about a topic from different sources
- curious person – thinks of interesting questions related to the text
- word seeker - looks for not clear or interesting words
- illustrator – draws or paints pictures about the text (Kimáková, 2001)

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Digital storytelling

Digital storytelling enriches communication. Digital storytelling has emerged as a fundamental, cross-curricular technique that provides structure for both sharing and understanding new information. It has become an essential way of providing information and enhancing education in the liberal arts and humanities by making abstract or conceptual content more understandable. Used in fields such as medicine, it helps to humanize the patient-physician experience. In all disciplines, it offers more ways to engage students and enrich learning through the inclusion of digital media that represents, illustrates, and demonstrates.

Digital storytelling brings together text, graphics, audio, and video around a chosen theme, often with a specific point of view. Bernard Robin observes that a digital story may be a personal tale, a depiction of a historical event, or simply a way to creatively impart information or provide instruction.

The great value in digital stories comes from the ease with which they allow people to share powerful metaphors and analogies with their friends and colleagues. In the classroom, they can also foster collaboration when students are able to work in groups, and enhance the student experience through a personal sense of accomplishment (Robin, 2006).

The National Council of Teachers of English in 2003, challenged teachers to develop instructional strategies for students to master composing in nonprint media that could include any combination of visual art, motion (video and film), graphics, text, and sound—all of which are frequently written and read in nonlinear fashion (Porter, 2004). Included was the process of digital storytelling, where information is conveyed in a way that is more engaging than plain text.

Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is work in pairs or in groups, which must meet certain criteria and requirements. It generally proceeds in four basic steps:

- the first step is to work (think) individually on the task,
- the second step consists of exchanging views (work) about the performed task with a partner or in a group,
- the third step is a presentation of the results of the task – in front of the whole class,
- the fourth step is reflection.

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Problem teaching

Problem teaching can be understood as a concept, organizational form, but also as a method. When comparing the problem teaching with traditional teaching, the fundamental differences are that in traditional teaching the student knows the input, knows what to solve, knows the process, but does not know the final answers - target. Problem teaching, input and expected results are known. Unknown is a way of solving or uncovering the problem. The problem is a difficulty that needs to be overcome from the input to achieving the target.

The problem can be solved by:

- Trial and error
- Insights (intuitive)



- Analysis.

The most effective way is to solve the problem by analysis as it develops thought-operations of pupils.

Methodological strategies: Writing

CREATIVE WRITING

Creative writing is a combination of something new, which the writer brings and a certain value that the work has. The output is directed not only to the writer, but the addressee, too.

Objectives of creative writing:

- individual writer's development
- to gain writing and communication skills
- to become familiar with different writing methods
- to build self-confidence
- the ability to modify the text according to the structure and style
- to get rid of fear in someone's own oral expression
- to get a certainty and self-confidence
- to lose the fear of the unknown
- to lose blocks to present someone's work in front of classmates.

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The basic principles of creative writing:

There are three rules:

- read as a writer
- show, do not tell
- discover your own voice.

The rule “**read as a writer**” talks about creative writing as reading from the inside. We could say that creative writing is a discipline that a pupil prefers as an active produktor (creator) of the text to the passive reception of knowledge.



The rule **"show, do not tell"** can be explained in the context of understanding the creative writing as a craft, that can be learned. The writer shows the situation as if through a camera. The writer of the text shows what he saw, heard, felt, touched and how it all affected him.

Last mentioned rule **"discover your own voice"** is intertwined with the primary purpose of creative writing, which is to develop the individual style of the writer.

Activities and techniques of creative writing:

- Finding information in the text
- Replying to questions regarding to parts of the text
- Interpreting the text
- Completion the text character
- Evaluation of the text.

Parody of a literary text

The challenge is to understand the text, penetrate it, identify with the text and write a parody of the original text. The original text can be transformed to the present.

Free writing

In limited time (5-10 min.) the hand must be still on the move, do not stop writing. If you do not have any new idea, scribble dots, lines, ... on the edge of the paper so that way thinking is maintained and the new idea will come. Write everything that comes to your mind, no matter whether it is related to your topic or not. Delete nothing, because this can distract the attention from the basic idea.

Clustering

The essence of this technique consists of clustering words and concepts in semantic "grapes", the core of a cluster is one keyword. More clusters or words are gathered around the keyword, that represent other associations.

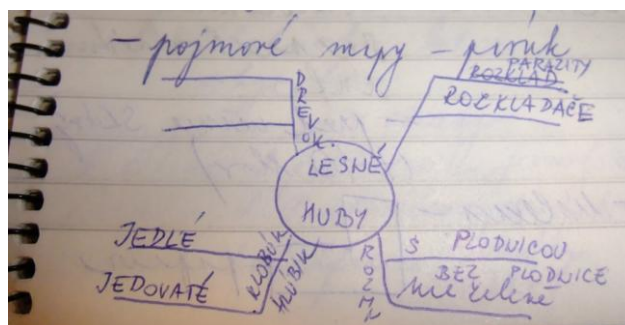
Conceptual and Mind maps

Mind maps differ from conceptual maps in that mind maps focus on only one word or idea, whereas conceptual maps connect multiple words or ideas. Also, conceptual maps typically have text labels on their connecting lines.

Mind map is a diagram used to visually organize information. It is often created around a single concept, drawn as an image in the centre of a blank page, to which associated representations of ideas such as images, words and parts of words are added. Major ideas are connected directly to the central concept, and other ideas branch out from those.

Mind maps can be drawn by hand, either as "rough notes" during a lecture, meeting or planning session, for example, or as higher quality pictures when more time is available.

Mind maps can be used to generate, visualize, structure, classify ideas as well as an aid to studying and organizing information, solving problems, making decisions and writing.



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Cinquain

At the most basic level a cinquain is a **five line poem** or stanza. The poem has one topic and the details describe the topic's actions and feelings.

Line 1 - one word for the topic (subject or noun)

Line 2 - 2 words that describe your topic (adjectives)

Line 3 - 3 words that describe the actions relating to your topic (action verbs)

Line 4 - 4 words that describe the feelings relating to your topic

Line 5 - synonym of line 1 or a word that sums it up.



Acrostic

An acrostic is a poem in which the first letter, syllable or word of each line read from top to bottom form a word, a group of words or a sentence. The most famous and the most common form of acrostic is called the right acrostic in which we read a name from top to bottom (which may be a first name or surname). Students can write down feelings, characteristics using adjectives to the name or create a story about a fairy tale character.

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Abecedary

Abecedary is based on creating a sequence of words that copy the sequence of letters in the alphabet. It serves as a preparatory method before writing a larger text, or as a target method when creating a continuous text with the letters of the Slovak alphabet.

3D technology of creative writing

1. Finishing the text - students make up the end or beginning of the story themselves.
2. Imagining the future - a writer develops his/her imagination and thinks about the future of the story's hero.
3. Deformation - a writer evokes the change - in the circumstances, conditions or in environment of the original story. A certain form of deformation might be a modernization of classic fairy tales.

Best practices

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Methods, forms and strategies

Different forms and methods have been proved to be efficient in the context of reading and creative writing in our school practice: Brainstorming, Role play, Rounds, Discussion, Debate, Mind Maps, educational games, competitions and quizzes, school projects, experiential learning, Guided (structured) reading, INSERT, 3D technology in creative writing, cooperative learning...

Work with flashcards

- Decide – name parts of a picture using cards
- Match – make pairs
- That's what I think – make groups of cards with similar qualities
- Correct order – put the cards in the correct order (Sitná, 2009)



Activities and events

We organize several activities to develop reading and creative writing in our school. In the first grade, we created a new subject Learn From Fairy Tales - where children discover the world around them through fairy tales. Older pupils evaluate read books from different authors and make their own rankings. Literature lessons often take place in the school library. Pupils become literary detectives and adventurers there who are looking for the treasure of books using maps.

March is the Month of Books in Slovakia. Book Exchanging Event or Book Bazaar are interesting activities of this time.

Pupils are always looking forward to Night at school. They work on current project tasks there and also have a lot of fun.

The school realizes a number of events where students can show their creative skills:

- **performances:** Opening and End of the School Year, Dubbing First Graders, Mother's Day, Christmas Academy, performance to celebrate the anniversary of the school
- **project days:** Comenius or recently Erasmus Days, European Day of Languages, Earth Day, Water Day, My Pet, EU Countries, Let's Talk About Food, Space
- **exhibitions:** traditional crafts, models ...
- **fun activities:** Carnival, Children's Day, camp Speak-Land
- **EcoSchool** activities
- Women's Day, Father's Day
- Let's Play Theatre

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Partnerships

Competitions

- recital in Slovak: Hviezdoslavov Kubín, Šalianky Maťko, Dobšinského Košice; recital in Russian: Russian Word
- literary – The King of Children's Readers, The Poem of the Year, I Like Slovakia. We always achieve great results in these competitions.





- competitions in the school club: The funniest is the winner – reading, memorizing and telling jokes, Reading in continuation, saying tongue twisters and reading riddles.

Libraries

Our school cooperates with libraries. Children go to libraries with their teacher to learn how the library works, they visit different discussions and author's readings. They visit the library for children and youth, State Scientific Library in Košice and school library.

Bookstores

When children and teachers go to the city centre to visit for example a cultural event, after that they go to a bookstore called Panta Rhei, where they look for the newest or interesting books.

Secondhand bookshops

Teachers teach in our school that it is better to borrow a book or to buy a second hand book than to buy a new one, because it helps to protect our environment (forests).

Authors

Pupils actively communicate with authors via emails. One of our teachers writes children literature.

Theatres

Pupils visit theatre performances, mostly puppet theatre.

Experts

Teachers cooperate with experts in the field of modern teaching methods from the following organisations: Oxford University Press in Slovakia, University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Košice.



Others

Teachers work on other eTwinning projects, they prepare a performance for the Retired People's Day Celebration, teenagers learn to communicate while raising money on Daffodil Day.

Accessories and materials

Intensive reading

Pupils use Šlabikár (ABC book) or Čítanka (Reader book) nearly every day at the lessons of Slovak. English is taught from books published by Oxford University Press.

Extensive reading

Recommended reading for primary school

(not mentioned Slovak books and authors, because their work is very rarely translated into other languages)

- Andersen, H.CH.: The Little Mermaid
- Arthur, R.: Three Investigators
- Brontë, Ch.: Jane Eyre
- Cabot, M.: The Princess Diaries
- Carroll, L.: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland
- Dahl, R.: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, The BFG, Matilda, The Witches, Fantastic Mr Fox
- Defoe, D.: Robinson Crusoe
- Exupéry, S.A.: The Little Prince
- Fables: Aesop, Krylov
- Greek myths
- Kopietz, G. – Sommer, J.: Charly Clever & Doktor Lupe auf Tigerjagd
- Lindgren, A.: Pippi Longstocking, Emil i Lönneberga
- London, J.: White Fang
- May, K.: Winnetou



- Montgomery, L.M.: Anne of Green Gables, Anne of Avonlea
- Němcová, B.: The Grandma
- Rowling, J.K.: Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
- The Thousand and One Nights/The Arabian Nights
- Tolkien, J.R.R.: The Hobbit
- Verne, J.: Around the World in Eighty Days

Other materials used in Slovak and in English:

school library, lesson plans, worksheets, magazines, newspapers, dictionaries, audiobooks, e-books, video with subtitles, maps, posters, flashcards, pexeso, letters, diary, searchword, quiz, crossword, riddles, chants, jokes, tongue twisters...

APP for reading and writing

Creative reading

<http://vcelickyprvaci.webnode.sk/nase-vyucovanie/tvorive-citanie/>

Reading comprehension

<http://www.pastelka.sk/hotpotatoes/Citaniesporozumenim2/cvicenie.htm>

http://www.pastelka.sk/hotpotatoes/citanie_sporozumenim3/cvicenie.htm

Writing text into pictures

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.Luxury.Girl.Text.Images>

Tales, games, colouring, comics ...

<http://rexik.zoznam.sk/>

We also use iTools 3rd edition, digital dictionaries, interactive board, reader, computer, tablet, language laboratory, internet, e-mail communication, webpages, maps, Hot potatoes, camera, video camera.



Educational workshops

For pupils

- Club Monitor – prepares pupils for an important testing in the last (9th) year of primary education from Slovak and Maths, where reading comprehension is one of the most valued skills pupil can have
- Presentation Day – held in Jun, pupils present their best work via Ppt. presentations
- project days dedicated to different topics mentioned above

For teachers

- courses organised by different accredited organisations – innovative or updaters
- seminars organised by Oxford University Press for English teachers
- seminars organised by EcoSchool for teachers dealing with environmental education, they also discuss media education – three times of the year
- methodical days – schools show each other their best practices once a year
- seminars organised by our school - according to current requirements (ICT, reading ...)





Glossary

3D technology of creative writing: finishing the text, imagining the future or deformation

Abecedary is based on creating a sequence of words that copy the sequence of letters in the alphabet.

An **acrostic** is a poem in which the first letter, syllable or word of each line read from top to bottom form a word, a group of words or a sentence.

Analytico-synthetic method in reading didactics is based on the spoken language.

Cinquain is a five line poem or stanza. The poem has one topic and the details describe the topic's actions and feelings.

Clustering words and concepts in semantic "grapes", the core of a cluster is one keyword.

Cooperative learning is work in pairs or in groups, which must meet certain criteria and requirements.

Creating texts – gives the opportunity to use the knowledge in producing own text.

Creative reading – is reading in order to create problems and then solve them, reading inspiring creative activity.

Creative writing is a combination of something new, which the writer brings and a certain value that the work has.

Critical reading - reading, where literary (as well as other) text is a subject to assessment; while reading student follows (examines) cognitive or educational values of text and critically deals with it.

Digital storytelling brings together text, graphics, audio, and video around a chosen theme, often with a specific point of view.

EUR - framework for critical thinking; an abbreviation is derived from Evocation, Understanding and Reflection.

Extensive reading - reading longer, continuous texts requiring a general understanding.

Follow-up - activities after reading.

Free writing - in limited time the hand must be still on the move, do not stop writing. Write everything that comes to your mind, no matter whether it is related to your topic or not.

Guided (structured) reading - students give predictions about the continuation of the text





INSERT - modern activating method: Interactive Notating System for Effective Reading and Thinking.

Intensive reading - means reading short texts at school with deeper understanding. It focuses on grammar, new vocabulary, specific information and details.

Lead-in - introduces the learners the topic and focuses their attention.

Mind maps is a diagram used to visually organize information.

Organizing texts – provides controlled writing practise in preparation for a freer writing task.

Problem teaching can be understood as a concept, organizational form, but also as a method. The input and expected results are known. Unknown is a way of solving or uncovering the problem.

Questioning – answering close ended or open ended questions asked by the teacher or included textbook.

Reader is a person who is reading a text.

Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning (reading comprehension).

Reading cards - should have a text and comprehension questions on the front, and answers on the back or on the separate card.

Reading club - pupils are given different roles: quotations seeker, explorer, curious person, word seeker, illustrator

Reading strategy 3 – 2 – 1: Find 3 important information; Find 2 information that engaged your attention; Find 1 issue that you didn't find the answer in the text.

Reading strategy SQ3R - acronym SQ3R is created by initial letters of English words: Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review.

Scanning - scan text is the usable skill for example when we are looking for specific information - phone number, train departure, some information.

Search reading - research reading is a technique that is good for looking for keywords and phrases that help to find specific information.

Silent reading - reading with regard to the selection and collection data, facts.

Skimming - first it is needed to fly through the material: to leaf over, view pictures, titles, subtitles, highlighted keywords, content.



Speak out loud reading - practice accenting of words, modulation and power of voice, intonation and rhythm of speech.

A **text** is any object that can be "read," that transmits some kind of informative message.

Text comprehension - is subjective interpretation of meaning of the content of the text by the reader.

Text retelling - retelling the content of the text either in detail or paraphrasing it.

Text summarising - text summary is a gist of the text.

Writing is transferring thoughts on paper.



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