

## Cultivation of Reading Comprehension Strategies in Middle School English

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**Abstract:** Middle school English reading comprehension plays an important role in English learning, and developing effective reading comprehension strategies is crucial for students. This paper discusses the importance of reading comprehension strategies and provides five effective methods for developing reading comprehension strategies in middle school English, including vocabulary skills improvement, use of context clues, topic sentence identification, prediction and inference skills, and the use of diverse reading materials. These methods will help students improve their reading comprehension and enhance their English learning.

### 1. Introduction

English is an international common language, which is crucial for middle school students' academic and future career development. And reading comprehension is one of the core skills in English learning. However, many junior high school students encounter difficulties in reading English. To help them overcome these difficulties, it is crucial to develop effective reading comprehension strategies. In this paper, we will discuss the importance of reading comprehension strategies and provide some practical ways to help junior high school students improve their reading comprehension.

### 2. The Importance of Reading Comprehension Strategies

Reading comprehension strategies have a crucial place in middle school English learning. They not only help students to better understand the content of the text, but also help to improve their English language skills and academic performance. The following are the importance of reading comprehension strategies:

**Promoting language skills:** Through reading comprehension, students are exposed to English texts of different types and levels of difficulty, thus expanding their vocabulary, grammar and language skills. This helps to improve their overall listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

**Deepening understanding of text:** reading comprehension strategies help students learn to think actively, ask questions and analyse text. They can develop a deeper understanding of the meaning in the text, the author's point of view, and the structure of the text, rather than just a superficial literal understanding<sup>[1]</sup>.

**ENHANCED ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:** Reading comprehension is one of the key factors in academic success. Through effective reading comprehension strategies, students are able to better understand the material, articles and test questions, thus performing well on tests.

**Increased self-confidence and interest in learning:** when students master reading comprehension strategies, they are more likely to cope with challenging texts, which can increase their academic self-confidence. In addition, being able to understand and enjoy English texts increases students' interest in learning English.

**Meeting real-life challenges:** English is an international language, and having good reading comprehension skills will help students to better cope with the demands of international communication, job hunting and the use of English in daily life.

### **3. The cultivation method of reading comprehension strategies in junior high school English**

#### **3.1 Improvement of vocabulary skills**

Improving vocabulary skills is crucial to middle school English reading comprehension. Here are some ways to help students improve their vocabulary skills:

**Active reading:** Students are encouraged to read a wide range of English texts, including novels, news, magazines and academic articles. Reading a wide range of different types of texts helps to expand vocabulary by exposing them to different areas of vocabulary.

**Vocabulary notebooks:** Students can create vocabulary notebooks to record newly learnt words, phrases and example sentences. This helps to consolidate memory and allows them to review at any time.

**Contextual Vocabulary Speculation:** teaches students how to guess the meaning of vocabulary words through context. When they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, they are encouraged to look at the surrounding sentences for clues to the meaning of the vocabulary.

**Roots and Affixes:** Students are taught some common roots and affixes, elements that often have specific meanings. Understanding roots and affixes helps students to infer the meaning of words.

**Vocabulary games:** use vocabulary games and activities such as spelling bee, crossword puzzles and vocabulary cards to increase student interest and engagement with vocabulary.

**Vocabulary Recitation:** Students are encouraged to memorise lists of commonly used high-frequency vocabulary words, such as lists of common core English words. These words occur frequently in English and are the basis for reading comprehension.

**Diverse learning methods:** Different students may prefer different learning methods, including learning vocabulary through audio, visual, and handwritten memory. Understand your students' learning styles and help them find the most effective way to learn.

Through these methods, students can gradually improve their vocabulary skills and enhance their abilities in reading comprehension in middle school English. Importantly, developing vocabulary skills takes time and persistence, and educators should encourage students to learn and apply these strategies consistently.

#### **3.2 Use of contextual clues**

The use of context clues is crucial to middle school English reading comprehension. It refers to the use of surrounding sentences and passages to infer unfamiliar vocabulary or to understand the author's intention when reading a text.

(1) **Finding synonyms and near-synonyms:** When students encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, they can search the surrounding text for synonyms or near-synonyms related to that vocabulary. Often, authors use multiple words to explain a concept in a text, which helps students understand the meaning of the vocabulary word.

(2) **Attention to definitions and explanations:** Authors usually provide definitions, explanations or examples in their texts to help readers understand particular concepts or vocabulary. Students should pay special attention to these sections as they often contain clues that explain vocabulary.

(3) **Understanding grammatical structure:** Students can infer the meaning of vocabulary by analysing the grammatical structure of sentences. For example, learning the endings and prefixes of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs can help them understand the lexical nature and meaning of vocabulary.

(4) **Emphasis on the importance of vocabulary:** Students should pay attention to emphasised vocabulary in the text, such as "especially", "importantly", etc., which usually suggests the key message that the writer is trying to convey.

#### **3.3 Identification of topic sentences**

The identification of topic sentences plays a key role in middle school English reading comprehension. Topic sentences are usually the core sentences in a paragraph or article, containing the main idea or central theme of the paragraph or article. Learning to identify topic sentences not only helps to catch the point of the article faster, but also helps to understand the content of the

article more deeply.

Firstly, students should pay attention to the beginning and the end of the paragraph, as topic sentences usually appear in these two locations. The opening topic sentence usually introduces the topic of the paragraph, while the closing topic sentence usually summarises the main ideas of the paragraph. In addition, topic sentences usually contain some keywords, words that help students identify the topic sentence. These keywords may be nouns, verbs, or adjectives related to the topic of the paragraph. Students can locate the topic sentence by looking for these keywords<sup>[2]</sup>.

Secondly, students need to practice extracting topic sentences after which they can further analyse the content of the topic sentences to ensure that they truly understand the core idea of the text. This includes understanding the theme, argument, or message in the topic sentence, as well as the supporting details associated with the topic sentence. Students can deepen their understanding of the text by asking questions, summarising the content of the passage or discussing the topic sentence<sup>[3]</sup>.

In English reading comprehension, topic sentence identification not only helps to increase reading speed, but also contributes to a fuller understanding of the meaning of the text. Educators can develop this skill by providing texts that contain topic sentences and guiding students to identify the location and content of the topic sentences.

### **3.4 Forecasting and extrapolation techniques**

Predictive and inferential skills are key strategies in middle school English reading comprehension that help students gain a deeper understanding of text content, infer the author's intentions, and improve their reading comprehension skills. These skills not only help solve vocabulary and complex sentences, but also improve students' critical thinking and analytical skills.

Firstly, prediction is an important skill. Before beginning to read a new text, students can scan the headings, subheadings, and first paragraphs and then ask questions or make guesses about the theme, content, and likely direction of the text. This activity sparks students' interest and leads them to read more purposefully, rather than just mechanically skimming the text. In addition, predictions help students build background knowledge related to the text and help them understand it better.

Secondly, inference skills are the key to deeper understanding of the text. Students can analyse information, details and clues in a text in order to infer information or ideas not explicitly mentioned by the author<sup>[4]</sup>. This requires critical thinking and logical reasoning skills on the part of the student. Inferences can cover various aspects, including the motivation of the characters, the development of the plot, and the author's attitude. By practising inferencing skills, students are able to understand texts more fully and develop their analytical and reasoning skills.

### **3.5 Diversified reading materials**

In order to improve junior secondary students' English reading comprehension, diverse reading materials play a key role. Diverse materials cover a wide range of topics, styles and difficulty levels to help students cope with different types of reading tasks, expand their vocabulary and knowledge areas, and improve their reading skills. Here's what you need to know about the importance of diverse reading materials and how to implement them.

Firstly, diversified reading materials help students develop a wide range of knowledge and interests. Through exposure to articles on a variety of topics, students can learn about new concepts, cultures and social issues, which helps them broaden their horizons. For example, students can read articles on different topics such as science, history, literature, art, environment and so on, so as to gain a more comprehensive knowledge<sup>[5]</sup>.

Second, diverse materials help students adapt to reading at different difficulty levels. Some texts may be easier and suitable for beginners, while others are more challenging and suitable for students at an advanced level. This variety allows students to progressively improve their reading skills and challenge themselves, rather than being limited to just one difficulty level.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Overall, middle school English reading comprehension is a core part of English learning, and mastering effective reading strategies is crucial. This paper has explored ways to improve vocabulary skills, utilise contextual clues, identify topic sentences, predict and infer skills, and apply diverse reading materials. These strategies will not only improve students' reading comprehension, but also stimulate their interest in learning and help them become more confident in tackling English reading challenges. With continued practice and instruction, students will be able to achieve greater success in reading, improve their English language skills, and prepare for future academic and professional endeavours.

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