

10. Essentials of English Grammar

*When I die bury me deep;
Bury my grammar book at my feet.
Tell the teacher I've gone to rest
And won't be back for the grammar test.*

—Anonymous

Q. 1 List the basic sentence patterns in English.

There are four kinds of sentences: *declarative, interrogative, imperative* and *exclamatory*.

Simple sentences can also be classified into the following basic patterns, depending upon the nature of the verb used. The following are the important ones:

Pattern I

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Linking verb</i>	<i>Subject complement</i>
Ramesh	is	a student.
Flowers	are	beautiful.
The sky	became	red.

A linking verb links the subject and the subject complement. The forms of *be*—*am, is, are, was, were* (used as the main verb), *become, seem, look, turn, get*, etc., are linking verbs. The subject complement may be a noun/noun phrase/ adjective/adjective phrase.

Subjects and subject complements may be compound expressions:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Linking verb</i>	<i>Subject complement</i>
<i>Ramesh and Leela</i>	are	students.
They	are	<i>angry and hungry.</i>

There are three *extended patterns* of Pattern I.

		+ a form of <i>be</i> +	complement of the verb (a locational adverb) <i>on the table.</i>
i. Subject			
	The books	<i>are</i>	(complement of the verb) subject + location
ii. Introductory subject (or dummy subject)		+ <i>be</i> (<i>is, are,</i> <i>was, were</i>) +	
	There	<i>are</i>	some books in the library.
iii. Introductory subject		+ <i>be</i> (<i>is/was</i>) +	expression of time, weather, speaker's feelings
	It	<i>is</i>	Monday.
	It	<i>is</i>	warm/fine/beautiful.

Pattern I and its extended patterns are very common in English; they are different from the structures in most Indian languages.

Pattern II

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Intransitive verb</i>	<i>Complement of the verb/adjunct</i>
Dogs	bark	(at night). (adjunct)
All of us	breathe.	
Men and women	live and die.	(compound expression)
Mary	sneaked	into the room. (not optional; obligatory— so complement of the verb)

Complements are compulsory; adjuncts are optional.

Pattern III

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Transitive verb</i>	<i>Object</i>
Mohan	killed	a snake.
We	like	good food.
Boys and girls	are learning	English.

Pattern IV

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Transitive verb</i>	<i>Indirect object</i>	<i>Direct object</i>
My sister	sent	me	a present.
Our teacher	gave	us	a book.

The order of indirect object + direct object can be changed as follows:

My sister sent a present to me.
Our teacher gave a book to us.

In the case of some verbs the change in word order is not possible; the indirect object always comes at the end:

My teacher explained the problem to me.
She spoke French to me.

Pattern V

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Transitive verb</i>	<i>Object</i>	<i>Object complement</i>
They	elected	me	their leader.
We	painted	the home	green.
Teachers and students	consider	him	a good scholar.

Note that there are three kinds of complements in English:

A subject complement (after linking verbs)

An object complement (complements that go with the object)

A complement of the verb (if the verb's predication is incomplete as in 'We live in Hyderabad'; without the complement *in Hyderabad*, the meaning of *live* will be different).

Pattern VI

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Verb</i> (like <i>have, cost, etc.</i>)	<i>Object-like expressions</i>
My neighbour	has	a beautiful garden.
This book	costs	fifty rupees.
The parcel	weighs	ten kilos.

Such verbs are neither transitive nor intransitive. They are to be handled with care.

Note: Expressions which are added beyond the essentials in the patterns given above are called **adjuncts**:

He swims *twice a week*.
We met *at the club in the evening*.

The general order is Manner, Place, Time (MPT).

Q. 2 What are the four basic structures in English? Illustrate your answer.

There are four basic structures that operate in the slots in the six patterns listed above:

- (i) Nouns and nounals (or nominals) (i.e. those that function like nouns)—nouns, noun phrases and noun clauses;
- (ii) Adjectives and adjectivals (i.e. those that function like adjectives)—adjectives, adjective phrases and adjective clauses (and relative clauses);
- (iii) Verbs and verbals (i.e. those that function like verbs)—verbs and verb phrases;
- (iv) Adverbs and adverbials (i.e. those that function like adverbs)—adverbs, adverb phrases (and prepositional phrases) and adverbial clauses.

Examples:

- I. Nouns: truth, beauty, flowers, etc.
Noun phrases: a rose, an expensive car, an extremely interesting book, etc.
Noun clauses: What you say, that can't be true, etc.
- II. Adjectives: beautiful, old, cunning, etc.
Adjective phrases: *an extremely cunning* person, *faster than*, etc.
Adjective clauses: the money *that you gave me*, the place *where they met*, etc.
- III. Verbs: play, run, see, walk, etc.
Verb groups: are playing, can be playing, should have been playing, etc.
- IV. Adverbs: immediately, then, there, always, etc.
Adverb phrases: too long, here and there, very slowly, etc.
Adverbials: under the table, since morning, from top to bottom, etc.
Adverbial clauses: several adverbial clauses of time, place, manner, condition, comparison, etc.

E.g., I don't remember *when we met*.
If you come, I'll meet you.

Q. 3 What are determiners? Make a list.

Determiners are used before a noun to *determine* the character of the noun—singular, plural, countable, uncountable, particular, general, etc. They add meaning to the noun; in that sense, they are adjectives too.

The articles *a, an, the* are determiners: *a car, the car, the cars*, etc.

In addition, the following are listed as determiners; they add meaning to the noun that follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>my pen</i> | <i>each person</i> |
| <i>this book/these books</i> | <i>every person</i> |
| <i>that book/those books</i> | <i>no person</i> |
| <i>some books</i> | <i>many persons</i> |
| <i>enough books</i> | <i>much energy</i> |
| <i>a lot of books</i> | <i>which boy</i> |
| <i>a lot of money</i> | <i>what school</i> |
| | <i>two girls/three boys</i> |

You *cannot* use two determiners together before a noun.

Do not use: *my this pen, this the book, some my pencils*, etc.

Q. 4 Make a list of some important quantity words and show how they are used before nouns.

Quantity words show some quantity or the lack of it. The following chart shows the important quantity words and their use:

	Only with uncountables (e.g. money)	Both (e.g. money/books)	Only with countable plural (e.g. books)
Full	tons and tons of		thousands and thousands of
↑	too much		too many
	so much ... that	more than enough	so many ... that
	a good deal of	plenty of	a good many
	a large quantity of	lots of/a lot of	a large number of
	quite a little		quite a few (many, several, various)
	How much ...?	just enough	How many ...?
	not much	not quite enough	not many
	a little (a small quantity)	not enough	a few (a small number)
	(very) little	hardly any	(very) few
	Nil		no (not any)

Q. 5 When more than one modifier precedes a noun, what is the general order that is followed? Give examples.

When more than one modifier precedes a noun, determiners precede descriptive adjectives. The following chart is meant to show the sequence of modifiers before a noun:

Determines	Possessive forms and their modifiers	Numerals: ordinal, cardinal	Descriptive adjectives	Proper adjectives	Noun/gerunds	Head noun
the	man's	first two	interesting	French	oil	paintings
several			expensive,		four-door	cars
the	general's	next	new out-standing			victory

Q. 6 What are the basic rules for using the articles in English?

Basic rules for using the articles *a*, *an* and *the* are:

- (i) Use *the* when there is only one in the world (i.e. outside the text.): the sun, the moon, the great wall of China, the Gita, the Bible, the earth
- (ii) Use *the* when something is specified in the text—in the previous sentence, in the following phrase, etc.

A cat entered my room. *The* cat ...
The bird *sitting outside the* window ...

- (iii) Use *the* with ordinal adjectives used as nouns, in comparative constructions, etc.

the fifth row, the rich and the poor, the more the merrier, ...

- (iv) Use *the* when it is generic

The cow is an animal. (= cows)

The use of *a* and *an* depends on the first sound of the following noun and not the letter: a university, a unique experience, etc.

Q. 7 What are modal auxiliaries? Illustrate your answer.

The main modal auxiliaries or 'modal verbs' are:

can	may	will	shall	must
could	might	would	should	

Have to, *ought to*, *used to*, *dare* and *need* are also used as substitutes of modal verbs.

Modals have several meanings and the choice of the modal depends on the *mode* of meaning expressed. Permission, obligation, intention, ability, possibility,

probability, desirability, necessity, certainty and prediction are some of the important meanings expressed by modals. Modals are used with the basic form of the verb (verb without *to*):

We must go now, *Not* We must to go now.

Modals do not have an *-s* ending with the third person singular:

She can speak Hindi, *Not* She *can's* speak Hindi.

In speech the short form of the modal is used in the negative.

cannot → can't

will not → won't

should not → shouldn't

One meaning can be expressed by different modals:

You *can* go now. (permission)

Could I go now? (asking for permission)

May I borrow your pen? (request with permission)

Modal auxiliaries: can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, must; their substitutes like be able to, be to, ought to, have to, dare to ...

Modals too are used in forming questions and negatives. In addition, they express different *modes* of meaning like ability, permission, willingness, etc.

Q. 8 What are the uses of the simple present, present progressive and the present perfect in English? Give examples.

Purpose	Example
<i>Use the simple present to</i>	
a. express feelings, situations, etc.	He <i>is</i> wrong.
b. express beliefs	I <i>believe</i> in justice.
c. describe routines	I <i>swim</i> regularly.
d. common knowledge	The sun <i>rises</i> in the East.
e. indicate the future	Class <i>begins</i> in March.
f. discuss ideas	Einstein <i>argues</i> for that theory.
<i>Use the present progressive to</i>	
a. describe actions in progress	It <i>is raining</i> .

(Contd.)

Purpose	Example
b. describe an activity taking place over a period of time	He is <i>studying</i> physics.
c. describe a habit (with always)	Lou is always <i>whining</i> .
<i>Use the present perfect to</i>	
a. describe an ongoing activity that began in the past	I <i>have been</i> here for a year.
b. describe an event that happened at an unspecified or unknown time (or did not happen)	I <i>have visited</i> that museum before. John <i>has never eaten</i> meat.
c. describe an event that happened just before the present	I <i>have just finished</i> lunch.
d. describe an activity that has happened several times in the past	I <i>have eaten</i> meat three times before.
<i>Use the present perfect progressive to</i>	
describe an event that started before the present but continues into the present and future.	Marta <i>has been sitting</i> there for hours.

Q. 9 What are the uses of the simple past, past progressive and the past perfect in English?

Purpose	Example
<i>Use the simple past to</i>	
a. specify a definite past time	She <i>visited</i> her parents yesterday.
b. describe an event that took place over a period of time in the past	I <i>stayed</i> in Paris for one year.
c. describe events that took place at intervals in the past.	Mary <i>saw</i> the doctor each Tuesday last month.
<i>Use the past progressive to</i>	
a. describe an ongoing activity that was happening at the time another activity occurred.	I <i>was sleeping</i> when the telephone rang.
b. describe an activity that was in progress in the past	We <i>were walking</i> around the park last night.
<i>Use the past perfect to</i>	
a. describe an activity that ended before another event in the past	Martha <i>had already left</i> when they arrived.

(Contd.)

Purpose	Example
b. describe a situation that happened before a specific point of time	Laura <i>had never visited</i> a cemetery before today.
<i>Use the past perfect progressive to</i>	
describe an ongoing past activity that was interrupted by another past activity	Samuel <i>had been reading</i> for six hours before the movie started.

Q. 10 Why is it said that English has only two tenses? Explain and illustrate.

Most contemporary books on English grammar mention only two tenses—past and non-past. This simply means that the verb in English is *inflected* only for the past tense, as in walked, killed, wounded, etc. For the other tenses the verb is not inflected; in most Indian languages the verb is inflected for the present and the future too. For example, in English the future is expressed by modals, the present progressive forms and other forms like 'about to', 'be expected to', etc. Also notice that the past form of the modal expresses only the future and not the past: He might go there tomorrow (*not yesterday*). The past form in the conditional clause expresses only a hypothetical condition and not the past: If *I were* a bird, I'd fly. These are some of the anomalies that we have to live with!

Q. 11 What are the different ways of expressing the future in English?

- (i) The future can be expressed with the modals *will* or *shall*:
I'll see you tomorrow.
Shall we start now?
- (ii) The future can be expressed by using 'be going to' for something that will happen soon:
It is *going to* rain soon.
- (iii) The future is expressed with 'be about to':
The film *is about to* start now.
- (iv) The present progressive is also used to express future activities that are planned:
We *are leaving* for Mumbai next week.
- (v) The simple present is also used to express the future that is definite:
The train *leaves* at 5 p.m.
What time *does* the film *start*?

Q. 12 Write a note on phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs.

A phrasal verb is a verb + an adverbial particle; the verb and the particle can be replaced by one word:

He *took off* his shirt. (= removed)

A *verb + particle* construction may be transitive or intransitive:

The plane *took off* at six o'clock. (intransitive)

He *took off* his shirt. (transitive)

No *-ly* adverb can be inserted between the verb and the particle:

Look up the word in a dictionary.

Look *immediately* up the word. (not used)

Pronouns can be inserted between the verb and the particle:

He took it off.

In a verb + preposition combination, the preposition goes with the following noun/noun phrase:

She applied *for a job*.

An *-ly* adverb can be inserted between the verb and preposition:

She applied *immediately* for a job.

Q. 13 What are the modifications made while changing from direct speech into indirect?

When changing from direct to indirect speech, you need to modify the pronouns, adverbials, tenses and the structure in questions, commands, requests, etc.

When the *reporting verb is in the past*, the following changes are made:

in tenses present → past
 present perfect → past perfect
 simple past → past perfect

in modals can, shall, could, should

in adverbials here → there

 now → then

 yesterday → the day before

 tomorrow → the next day

in structure change in word order, punctuation and structure as necessary

(Be careful in the use of say and tell. Say "He told me ..." or "he said to me ...".)

While changing a question from direct to indirect speech, we see the following rules:

- (i) In Yes/No questions use *if* or *whether*:

I asked, "Are you a doctor?"

I asked whether he was a doctor.

No question mark is used in the reported question.

- (ii) In information seeking questions, the word order changes:

She asked me, "When will you go to Delhi?"

She asked me when I would go to Delhi.

Notice the change in the order of words; no question mark is used in the reported question.

Do not confuse *say* and *tell*. *Tell* requires two objects:

My grandfather told *me a story*.

Do not say, "He said to me a story."

Q. 14 When is the passive voice used? Give examples.

- (i) The passive voice is used when you want to say something that happens to the subject of the sentence:

The snake was killed by someone.

The snake is the new subject and we are talking about something that happened to it.

Mahatma Gandhi *was assassinated* in 1948 by Godse.

- (ii) The passive is used when talking about the history of something:

The Taj Mahal *was built* during the seventeenth century.

The East India Company *was established* in 1600.

- (iii) The passive is used in scientific writing and in describing processes:

Hydrogen is mixed with oxygen.

They are then frozen.

- (iv) The passive is used if the agent or the doer of the action is unknown.

Many soldiers *were killed* in the war.

The building *was designed* by experts.

It is better not to convert all active sentences into the passive in a mechanical way:

I was born in 1990. (No active is used.)
The table is made of wood. (Not a passive.)

Q. 15 Write a note on the non-finite forms in English.

A *finite verb* is the one that carries tense on its shoulders. Non-finite forms of the verb do not carry tense. When we say the form of be, 'be' is non-finite; the finite forms are:

Present	Past
am, are, is	was, were

Notice that in a verb-group, the first one is finite and all others are non-finite; the last one is the main verb and all preceding ones are helping verbs:

She	might	have	been	working	all day.
	finite	N.F.	N.F.	N.F.	
	H.V.	H.V.	H.V.	Main	

(N.F. = non-finite; H.V. = helping verb)

The first verb *might* carries the tense; we can change it into *may*. The last one *work* is the main verb.

There are two important non-infinite forms in English:

- (i) the infinitive
- (ii) the *-ing* form

(i) *Infinitives*: The form *to* is a preposition when followed by a noun/noun phrase/pronoun.

She went *to* the market/her friend's house.
He gave a present *to* her.

The form *to* is a marker of the infinitive when followed by a verb (i.e. infinite) that does not show the tense:

They asked him *to* go. (The tense of *go* cannot be changed).
To go is also called 'to-infinitive'.

There are bare-infinitives (i.e. infinitives without the marker *to*):

They made him *work*. (bare infinitive)

Infinitives behave like verbs in several ways; they can be modified by adverbs:

She wants *to dress elegantly*.

They take an object if they are transitive:

They went there *to see their friend*.

The infinitive may be passive in form:

This leaves nothing *to be desired*.
This house is *to let*. (= to be let)

Infinitives function like nouns; they have all the liabilities of nouns. They can function as the subject, object or the subject complement.

To err is human.
Sub

Infinitive phrases may modify the entire sentence:

To tell you the truth, I hate grammar.

Infinitive of purpose:

We eat *to live*, and not live *to eat*. (= in order to)

Infinitives function like adjectives too:

They need something *to drink*. (qualifies *something*)

(ii) *-ing forms*: Words ending in *-ing* may be

- (a) nouns (like *a building*, *a painting*, etc.)
- (b) adjectives (like, interesting, charming, cunning ...)
- (c) present participles
- (d) gerunds

Present participles are non-infinite forms of the verb:

Sita	<i>is</i>	<i>dancing</i> .
	finite	non-finite (present participle form)
Harish	<i>was</i>	<i>swimming</i> .
	finite	non-finite (present participle form)
	(past tense)	

The present participle can have an adjectival function:

The crying child (= the child who is/was crying)

The past participle too has a similar function:

The broken window (= the window that is/was broken)

Gerunds are derived from verbs but they are non-infinite forms; they have several features of a noun. Gerunds are hybrid forms.

They were punished for *cheating*.
Most boys like *playing* games.

Q. 16 What are 'linkers and transition words' in English? Give examples.

Transition words and phrases are connecting devices that lead the listener or reader from one idea to the next smoothly. They are very important in speech and writing; these words and phrases express *addition, contrast, consequence, conclusion*, etc.

Addition: besides, furthermore, moreover, in addition, in fact, indeed, likewise

Example: The house was out of our price range and too big. *Besides*, I had grown fond of our little rented house.

Contrast: however, instead, still, only, conversely

Example: She treated you badly; still, she's your wife.

Consequence: accordingly, hence, therefore, consequently, thus, in conclusion

Example: Our policies have not produced the desired results; hence, we need to think along different lines.

Such devices along with the conjunctions—coordinating and subordinating—are very important in connected discourse.

Another important linking device in connected discourse that gives a proper cohesion is 'reference'. We often use pronouns and demonstratives, like *this, that, these, those* and even *similar words* to produce the proper stylistic effect:

Everything was *quiet*; everywhere there was *silence*; no *movement* anywhere...

These stylistic aspects, also called 'style polishing' come out of sustained practice in speaking, reading and writing. Grammar books can only help.

12. Reading and Teaching of Reading

The art of reading is to skip judiciously.

Q. 1 What are the attributes of good reading? How are they useful in teaching reading?

The attributes of good reading are given below:

- (i) **Selection:** Even in our mother tongue, we do not read everything and that is not possible; in newspapers too we read only selectively and not everything in it. We choose our reading material according to our interest and personal appeal. So, the selection and choice of material is important in reading.
- (ii) **Purpose:** We read for some reason; we read novels and short stories for pleasure, a newspaper or a railway timetable for information, a scholarly article in a journal for knowledge, an instructions manual for a particular need and so on. Our purpose in real reading is not to understand every word or analyse the text.
- (iii) **Strategies:** We do not read a railway timetable in the same way as we read a novel or a short story. We read legal documents several times in order to understand the meaning and every nuance clearly; we rush through newspaper articles, just scanning some lines to get to the interesting part which we read more carefully. In other words, we employ different strategies to understand text, depending on the nature of the text and the purpose for which we read it.
- (iv) **Speed:** An efficient reader reads not only selectively but *swiftly* and *silently*. Often readers read silently and privately. This helps us read quickly; reading aloud takes more time.
- (v) **Contextual understanding:** We read a great deal everyday—advertisements, sign boards, posters, reports, newspaper, letters, etc. We may not understand

every word but we guess the general meaning from the context. We do not always keep a dictionary with us; we read through difficulties and become more fluent.

In teaching reading in the classroom, teachers of English must remember the attributes mentioned above.

The texts that are selected for reading must have variety so that students can choose what they want to read; they must be encouraged to read for some purpose, setting some goals for the reading task. Scanning and skimming are essential for extensive reading; for intensive reading they need different strategies. Silent reading must be encouraged so that they can read more; learners must be guided towards greater reading speeds. Learners should learn to cope with passages with words and structures not known to them and read through difficulties by guessing the meaning.

Q. 2 Explain the processes called *scanning* and *skimming* in reading.

The tendency now is to use authentic texts and not contrived or specially written ones. Well-written articles in newspapers and magazines are excellent sources and they offer considerable variety. In addition, simplified books, advertisements, timetables, recipes, menus, leaflets from a medicine pack or an electronic product, an application for a passport or a visa, forms for sending a telegram or a money order—all these offer short texts for reading.

Depending on the nature of the text, reading tasks can be given; simpler texts can be used for difficult tasks and difficult texts for simpler tasks.

We use different strategies for understanding texts. While **scanning**, we try to locate only specific information and often we do not even follow the linearity of the passage to locate the information we need. We simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it be a name or date or some less specific piece of information. A reader with a good ability to scan is at a great advantage; it is very useful for we can scan through books/articles/notes/reports/etc., and quickly locate the relevant information without wasting time. We scan a dictionary, an index of a book, a railway timetable, a telephone directory or even newspapers and advertisements; we do not read them carefully.

Scanning tasks are generally given for a specified part of a text, may be one or two paragraphs. Students are asked to read only that part of the text; they may be asked to find a particular word for which the meaning is given. For example, learners may be asked to find the word that means 'obstruct movements of' or to find an expression that means the opposite of 'hurt' or 'damage' from a

given text; they may be asked to locate a grammatical feature, for example, a passive construction or a particular tense form, etc.

Students may be asked to locate a particular detail in a timetable or a chart: for example, the train fare/departure time/running time, etc., from a timetable. They can be asked to locate a particular advertisement from the classified columns of a newspaper—maybe an apartment for rent, a bride or bridegroom from the matrimonial section, etc. Obituary notices can be used for finding the date of birth or age, etc. Students can be asked to find sets of words—words beginning with *mis-*, *de-*, *un-*, etc., from a given page so that they scan the page. Lists like a shopping list or menu card or the market-rates column in a newspaper can be used and students are asked to find the cheapest/costliest item from the list.

(Teachers will have to be careful in using newspaper items for such activities; the English used may have to be carefully edited since the syntax used may be muddled and deviant. At higher levels, such un-edited texts can be used for error correction too. For example, a common error found in the use of *between* and *to* in announcements like "The *kriya* will takes place ... *between* 4.30 p.m. *to* 5.30 p.m." There may be even humorous ones in the obituary item: We are undone, orphaned and dwarfed. He left for his heavenly abode leaving behind his wife and two sons ...)

Skimming is done at a greater speed without reading each sentence. Skimming through a text means that only a few sentences are read here and there, recognising certain expressions or words as clues to the ideas that follow; skimming makes detailed reading unnecessary. For example, if we are asked to suggest a title for a poem or a passage, we skim through the text to get a general idea of the text in order to suggest the title; in order to get some idea of the characters in a story or draw inferences about certain events, we just skim through the text. Learners can be asked to compare events and say which one happened earlier or later; they can be asked even to frame questions for a given passage or note down important ideas and words. Many such tasks can be set for skimming a text.

Q. 3 Write short notes on *intensive* and *extensive* reading.

If the purpose is to read a text in great detail or carefully, then *intensive reading* is required. Generally, textbooks called *Readers* concentrate on intensive or detailed reading. Comprehension questions, exercises on vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation are set to make the student read the text carefully. Students are asked to identify facts and separate facts from opinions; they are asked to summarize a passage or to fill in the gaps with suitable words or phrases. They can reorder sentences, paragraphs or even parts of a sentence in

order to make them concentrate on details. They can complete tables and graphs or other visual representations, using the details given in a text. They can even be asked to simplify a given text—split sentences or rewrite them. They can match words and produce sets of synonyms or antonyms. At a more advanced stage, students can take sides and give arguments for or against a stated point of view in the text. At the lower levels, multiple-choice questions and other objective type questions can be set to check their reading ability.

Extensive reading, on the other hand, is free reading for pleasure, for interest in the subject matter, or for the acquisition of information. Extensive reading is one of the ultimate aims of teaching English; it will enable the learners to acquire a window upon modern knowledge since modern knowledge is necessary for technical efficiency and empowerment. Moreover, extensive reading provides an encounter with language which is essential for the mastery of the language, its natural contexts and various extended forms in which the language is used; extensive reading alone provides the environment for the proper assimilation of the language and the mastery of expression.

Q. 4 Write a short note on supplementary reading.

Supplementary reading is in a sense, or ought to be, voluntary and purposeful; *non-detailed texts* are prescribed mostly to encourage extensive reading. Unfortunately, extensive reading as well as supplementary reading is on the decline. There are many reasons for this, some of them being:

- (i) Lack of direction and guidance in school and at home, particularly in reading books written in English.
- (ii) Lack of proper training in the mechanics of reading: scanning, skimming, silent reading, speed reading, etc.
- (iii) Lack of suitable supplementary reading material for students in India.
- (iv) Lack of proper methods for teaching non-detailed texts.
- (v) Lack of attention to be paid to study-skills.
- (vi) Lack of libraries, reading rooms and accessibility of books and other resources.
- (vii) Lack of 'reading communities' in the form of study circles, etc.
- (ix) The growth of the electronic media.

The selection of non-detailed texts is very important. *Simplification* is extensively used to prepare reading materials for language learners. Simplification, though

it sounds simple, is an art; it is very creative and not all can do it. Simplification can be in terms of language, content or both.

A large number of simplified structural readers are available in the market. Paraphrasing of the content within the vocabulary (500-word level/3,000-word level, etc.) and structural range of the learners at different levels is done by professional writers. Some texts can be simplified by using simple words in place of difficult ones; sentences too can be shortened by removing conjunctions and other connecting words or phrases. The length of the text can also be shortened. Even teachers can produce semi-authentic texts with some effort. Even the passages in textbooks can be rewritten if they are too formal and difficult. Some passages can be rewritten from a different point of view to make them more readable and interesting and, sometimes, even the mode of narration can be changed. More creative simplified versions of stories, fairy tales, folk tales, biographies of achievers, books on general knowledge, travel, etc., are available in the market, quite often with audio or video cassettes, films and computerised reading software.

Q. 5 Write a brief note on silent reading.

There are several controversies and extreme positions taken by scholars and writers in the area of reading at the early stages.

Reading silently or reading aloud is one such area. It is obvious that *silent reading* if done without inner articulation helps speed-reading; *reading aloud*, if properly monitored, will be helpful in polishing up pronunciation and speech. Both are essential and each has its own use.

Rapid silent reading will be helpful in acquiring the habit of reading; students will continue to read and gain knowledge. Silent reading will enable readers to read more and with ease.

Some writers concentrate on the mechanics of reading like eye movement, sitting posture and holding books, etc. Like in the case of cultivating proper handwriting habits, cultivating proper reading habits is essential.

Q. 6 What are the different methods used in teaching reading?

During the period of the Structural Approach, several 'methods' for reading were advocated.

The phonic method: The phonic method teaches the sounds commonly represented by the letters and not the names of the letters; this helps young learners to establish the correct association between sounds and letters. For

example, sets words like *pin, win, kin, spin, skin* or *park, mark, dark, lark, spark* or *see, sea, tea, key*, etc., are taught together.

In this method the pronunciation of a word is learnt easily and correctly; children will be able to read fluently without any anxiety caused by the irregular system of English spelling. This method can be used only with a set of words whose pronunciation and spelling are fairly uniform, and not with all words.

The alphabetic method: This is the traditional method; in this method, the letters are taught by their names in the alphabetical order. Then words are built by putting the letters together. For example, the word 'book' is taught by asking the children to spell the word letter by letter and then the pronunciation /buk/ is taught.

This method is useful for fixing the spelling of words; it is easy to teach reading by following this method. But, this method often results in spelling pronunciation; even silent letters are pronounced by the child. For example, in the word 'almond', the *l* that is silent may be pronounced by the child. Those who learn through this method often speak English like reading a book; their speech is not natural. Even in reading, the letter is not the unit; the word is the unit. If we read by the letter, fast reading cannot be developed.

The word-method or look-and-say method: This method tries to teach the word as the unit of reading. It directs the attention of the child to the whole word and not to the letters as in the alphabetic method. Flash cards containing words are used for this purpose; the cards may be prepared in two sets, one with words and another with pictures to illustrate them or cards which contain both the word and the corresponding picture. The words on the flash cards are graded according to difficulty in respect of spelling and pronunciation.

The sentence method: This method is an improvement on the word method. The sentence is the unit of thought and not the word; so it is better to present the sentence as an integrated unit. Here too flash cards can be used. The phonic method can be combined with the sentence method. For example, *A cat on the mat saw a fat rat* is taught as a unit. This results in unauthentic or concocted sentences but in the initial stages, it may be useful. In practice, however, most teachers combine these methods according to the needs of the classroom.