



# Office of Literacy and Essential Skills

## Reading Tip Sheet

*This tool provides practical tips to help you improve your **reading** skills. Review each of the tips below and practise the ones that are the most relevant to your learning needs.*

### General Tips

- Use your finger or a bookmark as a guide to help you focus on the part of the text you are reading.
- Read slowly and focus on understanding the content. When you become more comfortable, increase your speed.
- Read in a quiet place where there are as few distractions as possible.
- Keep a dictionary close by so that you can look up unfamiliar words. Start by reading short texts. Slowly increase the length of texts as you become more confident in your reading.
- Highlight or underline the main points in a text to help you focus on key information.
- Before you start to read, ask yourself: “What do I need to learn from this text?”
- Make a list of new words that you come across when reading. Look them up in the dictionary or ask a friend or co-worker what they mean.
- Read whenever and wherever you can. The more you read, the stronger your **reading** skills will become.
- Read with, or to, your children every day, and start at the earliest age possible. Building strong **reading** skills begins at home.
- When you do not know how to pronounce a word, break it down by syllables or look it up in the dictionary—a pronunciation key is included.
- Read articles about topics that interest you (e.g. travel magazines about a city you plan to visit).

### Notes:

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### Literacy and Essential Skills—for LEARNING, WORK and LIFE

To learn more about literacy and essential skills and other related tools, visit [hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills](https://hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills).

## Higher Level Tips

- Try to understand the meaning of new words based on their context (how they are used within the sentence or paragraph) instead of using a dictionary.
- Skim text (read through quickly) to get a general idea of what it is about. When skimming, focus on key words, section headings, introductions and conclusions.
- Scan text when you are looking for specific information. When scanning, run your eyes over the text quickly looking for words or phrases related to the information you are trying to find.
- When you finish reading a paragraph, stop and summarize what you have read in your own words.
- Turn headings and sub-headings into questions, then scan the text for the answers.
- Take breaks often when reading longer texts. This will help you stay focused and ensure that you do not become overwhelmed with too much information.
- As you read, make notes on important sections or key pieces of information.
- While reading a text, write down any questions or thoughts you may have in the margin or on a sticky note so that you can follow up on them later.
- Read the dictionary or a thesaurus to expand and strengthen your vocabulary.

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# Office of Literacy and Essential Skills

## Reading Practice and Learning Exercises

Practise your **reading** skills by completing the following exercises. Use the Reading Tip Sheet if you need additional help as you work through these exercises. A learning plan template is also included to help guide your skills development.

### General Practice Exercises

**1** This exercise will help you to improve your vocabulary.

- Make a list of new words that you come across when reading. Choose a word from your list and write it in the centre of the chart below.
- Use a dictionary to find the definition (meaning) of the new word. Write it in the “Definition” box.
- Think of examples of the new word. Write them in the “Examples” box (e.g. examples of the word “emotion” are: happy, sad, and angry).
- Find synonyms (words that mean the same) for the new word. Write them in the “Synonyms” box (e.g. synonyms for the word “emotion” are: feeling and mood). You can use a thesaurus to help you.
- Find antonyms (words that mean the opposite) for the new word. Write them in the “Antonyms” box (e.g. antonyms for the word “emotional” are: indifferent and unfeeling).

Definition	<b>New Word</b>	Examples
Synonyms		Antonyms

## Higher Level Practice Exercises

- 1 This exercise will help you to improve your ability to focus on key pieces of information. Choose a topic you want to read about (e.g. health) and find a magazine or online article (about one page in length) about the topic.
  - Write the topic of your article in the top row of the chart (labeled “Topic”).
  - In the “K” column, write what you already **know** about the topic.
  - In the “W” column, write what you **wonder** (or would like to know) about the topic.
  - Read the text.
  - In the “L” column, write down what you have learned.

Topic:		
K = What you <u>K</u> now	W = What you <u>W</u> onder	L = What you’ve <u>L</u> earned

- 2 This exercise will help to improve your ability to locate key information while reading. Read the text below and answer the questions that follow. *TIP: It is a good idea to review the questions before you begin reading, so that you will know what information to look for.*

### What is Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeship is an agreement between a person (an apprentice) who wants to learn a skill and an employer who needs a skilled worker. Apprenticeship is a proven industry-based learning system that combines on-the-job experience with technical classroom training to produce a certified journey person. For some apprentices, especially in Quebec, the technical classroom training can be taken upfront through the secondary school system, followed by successive years of on-the-job training. Upon completion of the specified training period, apprentices receive a Certificate of Qualification. On average, 80% of the apprentice’s two to five year program is spent in the workplace; the rest is spent at a training institution.

Each province and territory has the responsibility for apprenticeship training. Canada currently has 13 different apprenticeship systems, where each province and territory governs their own training and certification policies. Legislation permits provinces and territories to designate apprenticeship programs for their own requirements. Over 200 apprenticeship programs are currently available across Canada.

Other key partners are engaged in apprenticeship whereby employers and unions play an important leadership role within each jurisdiction in guiding provincial and territorial officials and providing input to training programs.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. 2007. *Trades and Apprenticeship*. Ottawa. Version updated June 22.  
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fr-an/food-guide-aliment/maintain-adopt/weights-poids-eng.php> (January 8, 2009).

**Question 1:** What is an apprenticeship?

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**Question 2:** How many apprenticeship programs are there in Canada?

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**Question 3:** How much of an apprentice’s training is spent in the workplace?

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**Question 4:** Why are there 13 different apprenticeship systems in Canada?

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**Question 5:** Who provides input into apprenticeship training programs?

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**Answers:** 1. An apprenticeship is an agreement between a person who wants to learn a skill and an employer who needs a skilled worker. Apprenticeship combines on-the-job experience with classroom training. 2. There are over 200 apprenticeship programs in Canada. 3. About 80% of the apprentice’s program is spent in the workplace. 4. There are 13 different apprenticeship systems because each province and territory has its own system. 5. Employers and unions provide input into training programs.

### Additional Learning Exercises

- Create a “reading log” to track what and how much time you read each day. Record: “date”, “type of reading material”, “length of time”, and “a summary in one sentence”. This will remind you to read daily and help you see your progress. Try to gradually increase the length of time you spend reading and the difficulty of the reading material (e.g. from 10 minutes reading a magazine to 30 minutes immersed in a book).
- Read an online or newspaper article and summarize the most important points.
- Read a variety of materials including flyers, books, newspapers, manuals.
- Set aside at least 15-30 minutes to read every day (e.g. when you are riding the bus or in the evening before bed).
- Practise reading more challenging materials, such as research reports, to help improve your vocabulary and level of understanding.
- After reading a text, think about the 5 Ws (Who? What? When? Where? Why?) to help you summarize and remember what you have read.



# My Learning Plan

Complete this worksheet to help guide your skills development. Set a target date to reach your goals and use this date to track your progress.

My learning goal is to improve my **reading** skills by: \_\_\_\_\_ (insert date).

Tips or practice exercises I can use to improve my **reading** skills include:

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Additional resources (e.g. books, courses, workshops, co-workers and/or supervisors) to help improve my **reading** skills include:

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Additional learning activities (e.g. job shadowing, new work responsibilities, volunteering in my community) to help improve my **reading** skills include:

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Examples that show I have improved my **reading** skills include:

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