

# Teaching Reading and Writing

Getting your learners reading and writing

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## Learning outcomes

This module of teaching reading and writing focuses on giving learners tasks to improve reading and writing skills. By the end of the module you will be able to:

- identify a number of reasons why it is important to teach and learn reading and writing skills
- compare your own experience of teaching reading and writing with experiences described by ELT practitioners and learners in the video
- identify a number of approaches to address the challenges of teaching reading and writing skills.

## 1 Before you watch

a. What kinds of texts do you write? Why?

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b. Which of the following text types do you read? Put a tick (✓) in the first column.

text messages		
newspaper articles		
reports		
postcards		
emails		
public notices		
stories		
advertisements		

Try to compare your answers with a colleague or partner.

## 2 Watch

### 2.1 Challenges of teaching reading and writing skills

Watch and listen to the commentary at the beginning of **Getting learners reading and writing: Part 1** (00:00 to 02:20). Then pause the video and answer the following questions.

- a. Put a tick (✓) in the second column of 1b for the text types that are mentioned by the trainer. Did the she mention any texts from your answer for activity 1a?
- b. What reasons for reading and writing does the consultant mention?

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- c. Why is it important to consider the reasons for reading and writing different types of texts? Complete the trainer's answer.

*"The variety of texts available to us and our reasons for interacting with them \_\_\_\_\_"*

- d. Complete the trainer's commentary with words from the box. Listen again if you need to. The first one has been done as an example.

employment	rewarding	international	resources
opportunity	education	critical thinking	communicative

*"Developing reading and writing skills can be a stimulating and **rewarding** experience for teachers and learners alike. It brings with it the \_\_\_\_\_ to develop essential \_\_\_\_\_ skills, which could ultimately allow learners to compete on an \_\_\_\_\_ level in areas of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. It brings with it the opportunity to develop creative and \_\_\_\_\_ skills through the variety of \_\_\_\_\_ that learners might encounter in reading and writing lessons."*

## 2.2 The importance of reading and writing

Reflect back on the trainer's commentary and try to answer the following questions.

a. Why do you think it is important to use a variety of text types when teaching reading and writing?

b. There are many reasons for reading and writing. Why are these reasons important to teaching these skills?

### 2.3 Reading and writing skills

- a. Make a list of the challenges faced by you and your learners in teaching and learning reading and writing skills.

- b. Watch the rest of **Getting learners reading and writing: Part 1** (02:30 to 07:48) which show a collection of interviews with teachers and learners from around the world. Think about the following:
- Listen for any points that match your own experience of teaching reading and writing.
  - What challenges are mentioned in the interviews? Write your answers in the table.

Reading challenges (02:30 to 04:58)	Writing challenges (05:17 to 07:48)
Teachers	Teachers
Learners	Learners

## 2.4 Addressing the challenges

- a. Watch and listen to advice from teachers and learners in **Getting learners reading and writing: Part 2** (00:00 to 07:10) Note down the suggested approaches and put a tick (✓) next to the ones you have tried with your learners.

Reading challenges – suggested approaches (00:41 to 01:58)	My class

Writing challenges – suggested approaches (02:06 to 07:10)	My class

### Glossary

**Peer editing:** when learners' work is edited and corrected by other learners

**Process writing approach:** teaching writing skills by following key stages in creating a text: pre-writing, drafting, editing and publishing.

**Wiki:** an online application which allows learners to add or amend content in collaboration with each other

## 3 Reflection

Think back over the module. What have you learned? What is the most useful piece of advice? Which techniques or approaches do you think you will try with your learners?

# Transcripts and answers



# Transcripts of trainer's talk

## 2.1 Challenges of teaching reading and writing skills

Welcome to the Teaching English Reading and Writing Video Training series from the British Council. Through this series we're going to explore different ways of developing reading and writing skills. We're going to visit classrooms from around the world, showing how teachers everywhere work with their learners to develop the skills of reading and writing.

In our everyday lives we encounter a variety of texts for reading and writing, such as stories, articles, reports, emails and messages. And we all have different reasons for reading or writing these texts – for example, for fun, to communicate, to give information, or to learn something new. The variety of texts available to us, and our reasons for interacting with them, affects how we teach these skills.

Developing reading and writing skills can be a stimulating and rewarding experience for teachers and learners alike. It brings with it the opportunity to develop essential communicative skills, which could ultimately allow learners to compete on an international level in areas of education and employment. It brings with it the opportunity to develop creative and critical thinking skills through the variety of resources that learners might encounter in reading and writing lessons.

But this is no easy task! Developing reading and writing skills presents many challenges for teachers all over the world. So what are these challenges? We asked some teachers – and learners - to explain the issues they have experienced.

While you watch, listen for any points that match your own experience of teaching reading and writing.

Let's start with reading ...

Now let's look at the challenges faced when teaching writing. Again, listen for any points mentioned that are similar to your own teaching experience.

## 2.4 Addressing the challenges

So how do you get your learners reading and writing confidently in English? In this series we're going to look at ways to approach these challenges. Listen now to some of the techniques and activities that these teachers and learners have found to be effective, supportive and motivating.

Watch the interviews and make notes to answer the questions in the viewing task.

Let's start with reading. Which of these approaches have you tried with your learners?

Now let's look at some useful approaches to develop writing skills, starting with pair work and group work. Writing doesn't have to be a lonely task! Listen to some of the advantages to getting learners to work together.

Sometimes learners need an energising activity to get them writing without inhibitions.

Often learners need a guide to help them write specific types of text.

And how do you correct learners' work in an interesting and interactive way? Or get them to correct each other's?

Finally listen to an all-round approach that will help develop all aspects of your learners' written work.

These are just some of the approaches that we'll be exploring in this series. Keep watching to see how talented teachers all over the world rise to the challenge of teaching reading and writing skills to learners of all ages and all levels of English.

## Answers

### 2.1 Challenges of teaching reading and writing skills

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a. stories – articles – reports – emails – messages.

b. Reasons for reading/writing:

- for fun;
- to communicate;
- to give information,
- to learn something new.

c. Why is it important to consider the reasons for reading and writing different types of texts?

*“The variety of texts available to us and our reasons for interacting with them affects how we teach these skills.”*

d. Complete the trainer’s commentary

*“Developing reading and writing skills can be a stimulating and rewarding experience for teachers and learners alike. It brings with it the opportunity to develop essential communicative skills, which could ultimately allow learners to compete on an international level in areas of education and employment. It brings with it the opportunity to develop creative and critical thinking skills through the variety of resources that learners might encounter in reading and writing lessons.*

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### 2.2 The importance of reading and writing

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a. Learners need to practise reading and writing a variety of text types so that they are able to recognise the differences in format, language and style.

b. The reason we read affects how we read so learners need to be equipped with and practise a range of skills for different types of reading.

## 2.3 Reading and writing skills

b.

Reading challenges	Writing challenges
<p><b>Teachers</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor reading skills, eg. skimming and scanning.</li> <li>Limited vocabulary.</li> <li>Lack of background knowledge about the reading texts.</li> <li>Keeping learners focussed and engaged.</li> <li>Monitoring large classes during reading activities.</li> <li>Managing different levels (of ability) during reading activities.</li> <li>Limited resources.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Teachers</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forming ideas to write about; lack of imagination.</li> <li>Getting started.</li> <li>Lack of vocabulary and structural grammar.</li> <li>Lack of interest in writing.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Learners</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long sentences and difficult vocabulary.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linking ideas and sentences in a text.</li> </ol>

## 2.4 Addressing the challenges

Reading challenges – suggested approaches
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use visual aids to motivate learners (and give visual clues about text content).</li> <li>Teach learners to understand meaning from context.</li> <li>Pre-teach key vocabulary.</li> <li>Teach reading skills such as skimming, scanning and guessing the meaning from the context.</li> </ol>

Writing challenges – suggested approaches
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting up pair work and group work activities to generate ideas and encourage peer correction.</li> <li>Specific writing activities (to stimulate learners' ideas and writing fluency), eg. 'crazy writing'; publishing wikis and blogs.</li> <li>Providing a writing model.</li> <li>Correcting learners' work with correction codes and peer editing.</li> <li>Using a process writing approach</li> </ol>

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