

# What makes reading difficult?

1. The situation

2. The reader

3. The text



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## 1. The situation

reading in the cafeteria or on the school bus

reading as one multi-task

## 2. The reader

the reader is tired or bored or anxious or hungry

the reader has no knowledge of the topic

the reader doesn't have a reading purpose

### 3. The text

vocabulary

- *unknown*

- *polysemous ( product / while )*

- *figurative ( idioms / phrasal verbs )*

\*complex syntax

complex ideas

poor writing

# What can you do to improve your chances of understanding a difficult text?

## 1. Optimise the situation

reading in the cafeteria or on the school bus  
reading as one multi-task

- find a quiet, comfortable place to read
- shut out distractions

## 2. Optimise the reader

the reader is tired or bored or anxious or hungry  
the reader has no knowledge of the topic  
the reader doesn't have a reading purpose

- do not read when you are tired or hungry
- read about difficult topics in your own language first
- make sure you always know why you are reading the text
- do not think you must always understand every word or every sentence



### 3. Optimise your chances of understanding the text

vocabulary

unknown

polysemous

figurative

complex syntax

complex ideas

poor writing

- a. vocabulary: focus on nouns and verbs
  - : use your dictionary sparingly
  - : keep reading
- b. complex syntax: identify the main clause, subject and predicate
- c. complex ideas: ask for help
- d. poor writing: ask for help [read something else - Google reading level]



### 3b. Making the text easier to understand: complex syntax

When in 1860 a quarry worker overturned a huge rock that had been covering a large number of stones, the well-preserved fossil, which is the best example we have of an early bird species, was found.

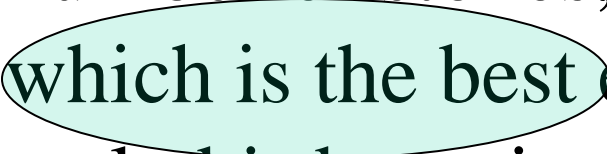



Identify:

main clause: underline

simple subject: ellipse

simple predicate: rectangle

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Inside the stone chapel of Welton Academy, a private school nestled in the remote hills of Vermont, more than three hundred **boys**, all wearing the academy blazer, **sat** on either side of the long aisle, surrounded by proud-faced parents, and **waited**.

What can you do to become a better reader in general?

Read - **a lot**, especially non-fiction

Learn words