

Reading race

About this activity

'I use Reading race to practise skimming and scanning skills. It helps learners to work quickly, and to realise that you can be a good reader even if you don't understand every word. It's also good for developing other skills, particularly listening and writing. Learners love it because they can work in teams and win points.'

Stage 1: Prepare	Choose a short text from the textbook (or create your own) which contains language the learners have already studied, e.g. present simple and daily routines vocabulary. Make 1 copy per group of 5. Prepare 5–6 questions about the text. Write these on the board. Cover them with paper so that they are hidden. Variations If you don't have large paper, give each group 1 copy of the questions or dictate the questions at the start of Stage 4.
Stage 2: Introduce	Say: 'Let's play a reading game.' Put learners in teams of 5 and check they all have a paper and pen. Say: 'Number yourselves.' Check each player knows their number. Say: 'All 1s raise your hands; all 2s raise your hands, etc. Choose 1 team player to be the writer.' Stick the texts on the walls so learners can't read them from their seats. Tell each team which text is theirs. Tell learners to put all bags and books under their desks so they can move safely and easily. Say: 'I will show (or give) you some questions. You will take turns to go to the text and find the answer. You return to your team, say the answer and the writer writes the answer on the paper. When your team has all the answers, shout 'Finished!' Everybody stops. The 1st team to finish wins 2 points. Then we check the answers. Each correct answer wins 1 point. The team with the most points is the winner.'
Stage 3: Model	Say: 'Let's try. Number 1s, are you ready?' Ask: 'What is the title of the text?' (Number 1s go, find the answer and tell their team. The team writer writes the answer. The 1st team shouts 'Finished!') Say: 'Good. 2 points for the 1st team. Let's check the answer.' Give all teams with the correct answer 1 point.

Stage 4: Play the game	<p>Say: 'Let's play. 1s, you go first.' Uncover the questions if they are on the board and say 'Go!'</p> <p>Monitor and check all players have a turn. If a learner can't find the answer, tell the next player to try.</p> <p>When a team shouts 'Finished!' check the answers with the class. Award points. Clap the winners.</p> <p><u>Variations</u></p> <p>Play outside in a corridor or a yard. The learners may find it easier to move around.</p> <p>Write the text on the board. Cover it so it is hidden. Uncover it for 5 seconds, cover it and repeat. Teams work together to find answers to the questions.</p>
Stage 5: Extend and share	<p>Focus on the language in the text, e.g. underline all examples of the present simple.</p> <p>Ask each team to write 1 or 2 questions about the text. 2 teams exchange questions and answer them.</p> <p>Give teams 1 or 2 follow-up questions to answer, e.g. What do you think about this daily routine? Is it similar or different to yours?</p> <p>Ask learners to write a similar text about their daily routine.</p>

With time, your learners will understand they don't need to read or understand every word in a text to answer questions. This will help them with reading tests, too.

Author: British Council