

## The Benefits of Graded Reading

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**Abstract:** Doing large amounts of extensive reading at suitable levels of understanding is a productive tool to increase reading rate, vocabulary, motivation, attitude and general language proficiency. The amount of vocabulary and grammar learners has determines their language proficiency. Extensive reading enables learners to attain competencies in language skills. Graded readers are essential materials for doing extensive reading. They are particularly designed to enable learners practice reading skills and provide an opportunity to reinforce known vocabulary. Through multiple exposures learners become familiar with grammatical structures and vocabulary. Moreover, learners experience how they function in texts and they are motivated to use the vocabulary and structures they have learnt in their communication. Graded readers motivate learners, help them gain reading fluency, enhance their vocabulary and grammar knowledge development. This article defines extensive reading, emphasizes its contributions to language proficiency development and finally stresses out the role of grader readers in language learning.

**Keywords:** Extensive Reading, Graded Readers, language Proficiency

### 1. Introduction

Graded reading, mostly known as extensive reading, is reading huge amounts of texts that interest the reader. Rather than learning the language, the focus is on developing reading fluency and general comprehension. Reading a wide variety of things enable learners to build reading speed and enhance reading confidence. Graded reading helps learners to promote grammar and vocabulary knowledge. While reading learners revisit unfamiliar vocabulary and grammar constantly. Constant repetition of the words and structures allows learners to process them faster. Graded reading exposes learners to massive amounts of language practice. Iwahori in a study conducted by Japanese students reported that extensive reading impacts language proficiency and increase in reading rate. Horst (2005) in another study found that extensive reading results in increase vocabulary. Takase (20030 reported that extensive reading leads to increase in motivation. Tsang (1996) found that extensive reading helps with increase in writing proficiency. Elley and Mangubhai (1981) reported that extensive reading plays an important role in listening and writing skills development.

## 2. Graded Readers

Graded readers are produced for second language learners. Hill (2008) defines them as “books written for learners of English using limited lexis and syntax” (p. 185). When learners read at their reading ability, they stand a better chance of developing their reading confidence and fluency. Graded readers include restricting grammatical structures and vocabulary (Nation & Mingtzu, 1999). It is important that learners should read at their level of understanding because facing a great deal of unfamiliar words while reading may discourage them. In graded readers new vocabulary and grammatical structures are repeated and recycled for learners so that they become familiar with them. For that reason, as learners read significantly their ability to understand is promoted and they are encouraged to read more. Learners have an opportunity to improve their skills by means of graded readers. Waring and Takaki (2003) argue that graded readers contribute to vocabulary development. Graded readers help learners with “gaining skills and fluency in reading, establishing previously learned vocabulary and grammar, learning new vocabulary and grammar” (Nation & Mingtzu, 1999, p. 356).



Figure 1: The benefits of extensive reading

## 3. Language Development through Graded Readers

Reading significantly improves language ability and reading comprehension of learners. Learners by means of graded readers experience how structures and words function in texts. This experience at the same time motivates them to use these vocabulary and grammatical structures in their communication.

Research demonstrates that learners make gains in overall language proficiency by reading significantly. Cho and Krashen (1994) found that learners enhanced their listening and speaking abilities through extensive reading. Graded readers are essential materials for doing extensive reading. Learners not only develop their vocabulary knowledge which is one of the keys to language learning but also enhance their writing; listening and speaking skills because of their increased lexical knowledge.

#### 4. Conclusion

The effectiveness of extensive reading has been demonstrated in a number of studies. There is a robust literature that has reported the influence of extensive reading on language learning. It has been found in experimental and quasi-experimental studies that extensive reading results in increase in reading rate, motivation, attitude and enhance in language skills. Learners who read extensively are prone to make gains in overall language proficiency. Extensive reading develops vocabulary knowledge which provides an opportunity for learners to promote writing, listening and speaking skill. Learners are at an advantage to develop these skills if they have increased vocabulary knowledge. In addition, reading significantly allows learners to encounter new words and structures. Multiple exposures to new words and structures enhance learners' language knowledge. As learners understand better in the target language they develop positive attitudes and increased motivation towards language learning.

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