

Reading Text

What is text reading?

Reading text as defined by the Essential Skills requires individuals to understand and use information from texts that are organized in sentences and paragraphs.

Here are just a few examples of reading text at home, school and work:

- Reading a note from a classmate about an upcoming assignment
- Reading a newspaper article to learn about a local community event
- Reading text on a web site to find out about a contracting company's services
- Reading an email from the human resources department of a workplace to learn about a new payroll deduction

What makes reading complex?

Reading text can vary from a product description of a few sentences through to lengthy reports and novels. There are a few key features to keep in mind when considering how complex a text is:

- Length of the text
- Complexity of content
- Complexity of finding information in the text

The following table shows complexity elements at Essential Skills Levels 1, 2 and 3.

Complexity Features	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Length of text	One sentence to one paragraph	Several paragraphs	Various sources or several parts of single text
Complexity of content	No knowledge of content	One part of more complex text or several parts of simpler text	Somewhat complex
Complexity of finding information	Follow simple directions	Low level inferences	Inference; Identify relevant information

Complexity levels for Reading Text tasks range from skill levels 1 to 5. This practice activity features levels 1 to 3. For more information on complexity levels, please go to the Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) website at www.ontario.ca/skillspassport.

Using the complexity features above, take a look at how reading tasks become more complex:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Read a brief product description in a home furnishings catalogue	Read a letter from a child's school describing a field trip	Read a manual to set up a DVD player

Knowing what makes using reading complex allows educators to adjust activities to meet the needs of learners at a range of levels. Educators can lower the complexity of reading tasks by introducing briefer texts and focusing on skills such as locating and sequencing information, as well as strategies such as scanning. At the higher levels, educators can introduce longer documents and ask learners to integrate information from different sections of the texts, summarize and draw conclusions using information provided in the text. At level 3, educators can also focus on skills such as identifying bias in texts, and inferring meaning.

The following activities are designed to familiarize learners with reading text. The activities have been organized from least to most complex. Choose the activity or activities that suit the learners you work with.

Practice activity

1. Distribute Document A (fitness brochure).
 - Ask learners whether they have seen something like it before, and what the purpose of the text is.
 - Discuss the organization of the brochure, specifically that it is composed of a number of different parts, each of which addresses one topic.
2. Level 1:
 - Ask learners to point to each of the headings in the brochure. Discuss what the purpose of each heading is.
 - Ask questions to familiarize learners with the organization of the brochure. These might include:
 - 1) In which section might you expect to find information about kickboxing classes? [Fitness Classes]
 - 2) In which section would you expect to find information about costs to join the club? [Membership]
 - Ask learners to read in detail one section of the brochure. Have them answer comprehension questions that allow them to practice reading for meaning.

Instructor notes: To complete the task, learners work with up to one paragraph of text to locate details. While learners may not be ready to read the entire brochure in detail, they are building their familiarity with text structure and purpose, and their skills with locating information.

Level 2:

- Ask learners to read the brochure in order to identify the features of Fitness Zone that appeal to them.

Instructor notes: To complete the task, learners work independently to read the entire text. They must read different parts of a longer text to summarize.

Level 3:

- Introduce the fitness brochure by discussing it as an example of persuasive text. Persuasive text is intended to provide information in a way that will appeal to its readers, and 'persuade' them to take an intended action.
- Ask learners what this brochure is trying to persuade readers to do.
- Discuss other examples of persuasive text that readers encounter at home, in the community, at school and at work.
- Ask learners to perform an internet search to find two or more fitness club or recreational facility brochures from their own community. Ask learners to decide in advance what criteria they are looking for in such a facility, then read each brochure or information sheet to compare features and see which one best meets their criteria.

Instructor notes: To complete the task, learners work with two or more texts to compare information and evaluate content.

The Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) is a bilingual web-based resource that provides easy-to-understand descriptions of the Essential Skills and work habits that are important in work, learning, and life. It includes the Essential Skills identified and validated by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), such as Reading Text, Writing, Document Use, Oral Communication, Money Math, and Problem Solving, as well as work habits such as working safely, teamwork, reliability, and initiative. The OSP also illustrates how people use these skills and work habits in everyday life as well as in specific occupations. It offers numerous tools and resources for use in educational, training, and workplace contexts that can help learners and job seekers assess, practise, and build their Essential Skills and work habits.



Essential Skills for work, learning and life
www.ontario.ca/skillspassport

Document A

<p>Fitness Zone</p>	<p>We put the fun in fitness</p>	<p>Monday – Thursday 6 am – 11 pm Friday 6 am – 9 pm Saturday & Sunday 8 am – 6 pm</p>
<p>Welcome Thanks for taking the time to learn more about Fitness Zone. Our job is to make you feel and look great, and we take our job seriously! Have a look at the services we offer and tour our facilities. No long lines, clean surroundings, and friendly staff. Once you get to know us, we think you'll agree that ours is the best club in town.</p>	<p>Fitness Classes We offer group exercise classes in pilates, yoga, step, kickboxing, spinning, circuit training, athletic training and much, much more.</p> <p>Classes are offered frequently and at a number of different times throughout the day and evening. No matter what your schedule, you'll find a class that's right for you.</p>	<p>Personal Training Our experienced trainers will help you achieve your goals. No need to be concerned about your current fitness level or size. Whether you just want to get into shape, or you're training for a marathon, let us help. Our trainers will work with you whatever your level. They'll design the perfect fitness program to suit your needs and your schedule.</p>
<p>Facilities Our state of the art facilities provide you with everything you need for an enjoyable exercise experience. We offer the most up-to-date equipment, locker rooms with showers and saunas, juice bar and childcare. In short, everything you need to look and feel your best!</p>	<p>Membership Your membership at Fitness Zone will help you achieve the results you're looking for. Whether it's weight loss, toning, or just feeling better, a regular exercise regime is just the thing. Low monthly rates starting at just \$25 mean membership is within reach – ask about our payment plans.</p>	<p>Yoga Studio When the world is just too busy, join us in our beautifully appointed, dedicated yoga studio. That's right, a studio built with yoga in mind. Peace of mind, strength of body – both are yours to achieve.</p>