

# English Reading Strategies under Core Literacy

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**Abstract:** With the development of the times, the teaching community is constantly reforming and upgrading relevant teaching policies and educational concepts. Currently, there is a requirement to focus on cultivating students' core literacy as a key part of teaching, emphasizing the promotion of students' comprehensive development. In middle school English teaching activities, the main content and emphasis are on reading instruction. English discourse reading can enhance students' English language skills and cultivate their ability to apply knowledge in different contexts. However, there are still shortcomings in current middle school English teaching. Some teachers use a single teaching method, leaving students in a passive learning state. Additionally, these teachers are influenced by traditional teaching philosophies, placing more emphasis on students' grades and overlooking the learning process. This leads to less-than-ideal middle school English reading instruction, and students' reading effectiveness cannot be improved. Therefore, English teachers should innovate teaching methods and optimize reading strategies under the guidance of core literacy concepts.

**Keywords:** Core Literacy; Middle School English; Reading Instruction; Effective Strategies

Reading is a focal point in English teaching and greatly contributes to enhancing students' language abilities. Therefore, English teachers should understand the importance of reading for students and prioritize reading instruction in their teaching. Teachers need to embrace advanced teaching philosophies and ideologies, realizing under the guidance of core literacy principles that students are the masters of the classroom and the subjects of learning. They should not passively learn under the commands of teachers. Therefore, to improve the effectiveness of English reading instruction, teachers should enhance their reading teaching strategies. They should employ interesting, unique, attention-grabbing, and initiative-inspiring methods guided by core literacy principles to engage students in reading

activities. Only through this can students actively participate in reading activities, experience the charm of the English language, and become more proactive in learning English. This approach plays a positive role in promoting the development of middle school English reading instruction.

## 1. Current shortcomings in English reading instruction

### 1.1 One-sided reading thinking of students

In middle school English reading, there are notable differences compared to elementary school English reading, both in terms of content and length of passages. Many English sentences pose significant comprehension challenges. Often, when teachers assess students' understanding of the grammar in long



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sentences, most students are unable to respond. They lack sufficient comprehension of the general meaning and main idea of the passages. After reading through the English passages, students often fail to grasp the overall gist or content of the articles, leading to frequent errors in textbook exercises. This situation primarily stems from students' one-sided reading thinking. Coupled with their limited vocabulary, they struggle to comprehend the content of the passages. Furthermore, within a classroom, there are always students with strong English foundations and high grades. Teachers tend to focus their explanations on these students, briefly addressing questions once these students answer correctly. Consequently, the majority of students leave the class without substantial gains. They fail to develop good habits and skills for answering questions during the teacher's explanations. As a result, students' reading thinking remains one-sided, significantly hindering the improvement of their English core literacy.

### **1.2 Lack of learning confidence in students**

As students transition to middle school, the number of subjects they need to study gradually increases, leading to greater academic pressure. Moreover, the content of English learning also expands, requiring mastery of numerous words, phrases, and grammar rules. At the middle school level, the types of reading passages students encounter are no longer limited to narrative texts as in elementary school. Instead, they include expository and argumentative texts, many of which are challenging. Additionally, many words used in these passages are unfamiliar to students and are not included in the vocabulary lists provided in textbooks. Consequently, students struggle to understand the content of the passages, with some students unable to translate the meaning of even a single sentence. This greatly undermines the effectiveness of reading instruction. According to the requirements of the middle school English curriculum, students need to memorize a large number of words and phrases and continuously review them to truly understand their meanings. Moreover, some words have different meanings when used as nouns versus verbs, making it difficult for many students to memorize them with confidence. Some students who have memorized words for a long time still find that they do not recognize

many words in actual passage learning. Consequently, their confidence in learning English is severely affected, and some students even give up learning English altogether. To address this issue, teachers need to improve their teaching methods to enhance students' confidence in learning.

### **1.3 Failure of teachers to promptly adopt advanced teaching concepts**

Despite the implementation of timely curriculum reforms in current middle school English teaching, some teachers are still influenced by traditional teaching ideologies. They prioritize their own positions as instructors over the students' role as learners, emphasizing students' academic performance while neglecting their learning processes. These teachers hold outdated teaching concepts, continuing to employ rote teaching methods that result in passive learning among students. In their teaching activities, they still heavily rely on lecture notes and reference materials without innovating or optimizing the teaching format and content. Consequently, they fail to effectively stimulate students' enthusiasm for reading. Students passively attend classes, repeatedly practice English exercises and papers, while their role as active learners is severely overlooked. Such teaching models, prevalent for many years and even now, impose certain constraints on students. However, they contradict modern teaching ideologies, which prioritize promoting students' comprehensive development and value students' ability to apply knowledge over their grades. Under traditional teaching models, students gradually lose their ability to think critically and cannot engage in active learning, severely limiting the development of English reading instruction.

## **2. Strategies for English reading instruction under core literacy**

### **2.1 Emphasizing student-centeredness to enhance teaching effectiveness**

To prioritize student-centeredness in English reading instruction and understand its significance, teachers must first change their teaching mindset. They need to keep pace with the times, learn advanced teaching concepts and methods, and apply them to English reading instruction to optimize classroom teaching. Teachers should stay updated on new policies in the education sector and carefully study them, discarding

traditional educational ideologies to truly recognize the importance of students as the main entities in the classroom. Then, they can start thinking about issues from the students' perspective. Additionally, English teachers should observe each student's learning situation in daily teaching, understanding their grasp of English foundational knowledge, and adjusting teaching strategies accordingly. Teachers should also value students' learning processes and provide evaluations based on them, acknowledging students' efforts to actively engage them in reading instruction activities.

For example, in order to enhance students' learning enthusiasm, teachers need to focus on cultivating students' independent learning abilities. Therefore, teachers can assign learning tasks to students in group teaching formats, encouraging them to engage in divergent thinking and improve their reading levels through group interactions. For instance, when teaching the unit "Healthy food," teachers can use question-based teaching methods to inquire about students' understanding and knowledge of healthy foods. This encourages students to think and learn with questions in mind. Group discussions on this topic can help refresh students' understanding of reading instruction and foster positive learning attitudes. Additionally, meaningful questions can help students pinpoint key content in the reading process and grasp teaching focuses more effectively. Teachers should ensure that student discussions are not merely formal activities but include assessments of students' discussion results to maintain their agency in the learning process and avoid wasting teaching time.

## **2.2 Optimizing English dialogue training to enhance student reading interest**

In traditional middle school English reading instruction, most English teachers focus on teaching according to the curriculum guidelines. Often, to keep up with teaching progress, they do not deliberately train students in English language skills. Consequently, many students struggle with reading English sentences and words. Moreover, many teachers believe that as long as students remember the meanings of words and can answer questions in exams, it is sufficient. This mindset hampers the improvement of students' English literacy and restricts the development of their English

language skills. To address this issue and enhance students' interest in English reading, teachers can allocate five to ten minutes in each class for students to write English dialogues based on the teaching content and practice them together. Teachers should also check students' writing and use this opportunity to gauge students' comprehension of the English reading content. This approach greatly improves teaching effectiveness and encourages students to actively participate in learning activities.

For example, when teaching the unit "Lost and found," teachers can encourage students to read the text independently and understand and grasp its core content and key phrases. Then, teachers can ask questions related to the text to evaluate students' independent learning outcomes. Based on this, teachers can provide clear guidance on the text's structure and theme, enabling students to master key sentence structures and vocabulary tenses. Application of knowledge is the ultimate goal of teaching. Teachers can organize students to engage in dialogue practice in pairs and conduct English writing exercises. This not only enlivens the classroom atmosphere and enhances students' learning efficiency but also encourages students to integrate previously learned content with current learning content, effectively stimulating their thinking. Furthermore, collaborating with peers in dialogue composition makes learning more enjoyable for students. After students complete the dialogue composition, teachers should select some groups to showcase their dialogues. This not only enhances students' English language abilities but also deepens their understanding of the knowledge taught in the class.

## **2.3 Utilizing micro-lessons to overcome reading difficulties**

In recent years, information technology has gradually entered the education industry, with multimedia devices installed in almost all primary and secondary classrooms. This not only saves teachers' teaching time but also helps students access more learning resources. Particularly in English reading instruction, teachers can use multimedia to create courseware, uploading textbook content, correcting students' English pronunciation, and simplifying the process of writing on the board, thereby leaving more time for teaching.

With the maturity of information technology, teaching formats such as micro-lessons and smart classrooms have gradually entered middle school English courses. In English passages, there are inevitably difficult content areas. Therefore, teachers can use recorded micro-lessons to help students overcome difficulties in English reading.

For example, when teaching the phrase “Could you please tell me where the restrooms are?” the main teaching challenge is to help students understand the meanings of some key words in the text. Therefore, the goal is for students to grasp the sentence structure “Could you (please) + verb base form” and be able to use this pattern to form sentences and apply it in various contexts. In traditional teaching, some students find it difficult to grasp these concepts, and combined with some students’ inability to concentrate in class, they may only have a superficial understanding of the sentence structure. To overcome this reading difficulty, teachers can use recorded micro-lessons to explain this sentence structure in advance, upload them to the class group chat, and allow students to watch and study them. Even if some students do not understand in class, they can study the material during their spare time. Micro-lessons are characterized by their concise nature, typically lasting 3-5 minutes, ensuring students’ attention and enabling them to review the content repeatedly. Additionally, teachers can use recorded micro-lessons to help students preview and review English reading content. For example, for previewing, teachers can inform students of some difficult words in advance and annotate individual word meanings in the text, guiding students to think about how to guess a word’s meaning based on the context of the sentence.

For reviewing, teachers can use micro-lessons to highlight the key knowledge points students need to review, such as essential words and phrases to master and words and phrases that only need to be understood.

Conclusion: In middle school English textbooks, the length of passages has increased, and there are more challenging words, making it difficult for students to better understand the content of the passages during reading and consequently affecting their performance in answering questions. In light of this situation, English teachers should start by changing their English reading teaching strategies, shifting their teaching mindset, prioritizing student-centeredness, helping students regain learning confidence, and then employing a series of teaching methods to carry out reading instruction.

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