

Lecture 5: Reading Comprehension in Sports Contexts

Reading in the sports domain ranges from the simple (reading a league table) to the complex (reading a physiological study). This lecture utilizes authentic texts to develop skimming, scanning, and critical reading skills.

5.1 Text Type A: The Match Report

The match report is a staple of sports journalism. It follows a predictable narrative structure, often referred to as the "Inverted Pyramid" style, where the most important information (the score) comes first.³²

Structural Analysis of a Match Report:

1. **The Headline:** Usually contains a pun or strong verb (e.g., "Gunners Silence the Crowd").
2. **The Lead Paragraph:** Summarizes the Who, What, Where, When, and Score.
 - *Example:* "Manchester City took a significant step towards the title with a commanding 3-1 victory over Arsenal at the Emirates yesterday."³²
3. **The Body:** Chronological account of key moments (goals, red cards, injuries).
 - *Language Feature:* Use of dramatic synonyms for "kick" or "run" (e.g., "blasted," "sprinted," "curled," "hammered").
4. **The Reaction:** Quotes from managers or players.
5. **The Conclusion:** Implications for the league standings.

Reading Strategy: Students practice **scanning** reports to find specific data (Who scored? What minute? Who was injured?) and **skimming** to understand the writer's bias or tone.

5.2 Text Type B: Historical and Cultural Texts

Understanding the history of sport provides context for modern practice. Texts about the Olympics or the evolution of rules are excellent for general reading comprehension.

- *Sample Topic: The Ancient Olympics vs. Modern Games.*
 - *Content:* The transition from religious festivals in Greece to the secular, international event revived by Pierre de Coubertin in 1896.³⁴
 - *Vocabulary:* Truce, spectator, pentathlon, chariot, laurel wreath, commercialization, boycott.
 - *Comprehension Task:* Identify the differences in participation (men only vs. inclusion), equipment, and motivation between 776 BC and 2024 AD.

5.3 Text Type C: Applied Science Texts (Nutrition & Physiology)

Students must read texts that explain biological processes. A key topic is **Dehydration and Performance**.

- *Key Concept:* Losing more than 2% of body mass via sweat leads to significant performance decrement.⁷
 - *Mechanism:* Reduced blood volume \rightarrow reduced cardiac output \rightarrow reduced oxygen delivery to muscles.
 - *Cognitive Impact:* Dehydration affects decision-making and reaction time, not just physical stamina.
 - *Academic Vocabulary:* Impairment, deficit, electrolyte, homeostasis, mitigation, optimal.
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