

KINDS OF EXERCISES TO INCLUDE IN THE APP

1. Vocabulary

Taking the Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead 2000) as a starting point, the following types of exercises will be created. In all exercises, the topic will be education.

- a. Multiple choice
- b. Match 10 sentences with a blank space with 10 words (link 2)
- c. Gapfill (link 3)
- d. Exercises in which students first read a text and then do a gapfill
- e. Exercises to help students guess the meaning of unknown words using affixes (link 7)

Useful links

1. <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/> (AWL)
2. <http://www.englishvocabularyexercises.com/AWL/id17.htm> (Matching exercises with hotpotatoes)
3. <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/alzsh3/acvocab/awlgapmaker.htm> (It creates gapfill exercises with any text you want.)
4. <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/alzsh3/acvocab/awlhighlighter.htm> (It highlights AWL words of any text you want.)
5. <http://www.uefap.com/vocab/vocfram.htm> (many vocabulary resources)
6. <http://www.uefap.com/vocab/build/bldfram.htm> (list of useful affixes)
7. <http://www.uefap.com/vocab/exercise/exfram.htm>

2. Skimming

A text is provided, with a very limited time, and then MCQ or T/F questions must be answered, to see if the gist of the text has been understood.

3. Scanning

Before reading the text, users are given pieces of information that they have to find in the text. Then, the text is provided for a limited time, and users must answer questions by typing the right answer.

4. Developing reading fluency

1. Students do paced readings and then solve exercises. Especially good with 400-word texts. Students are imposed a given pace, e.g. 200 WPM. Text is divided into 100-word chunks. After 30 s, they move to next chunk (even if they haven't finished), etc. The score in comprehension should be 7 or 8 out of 10. App will log these results so that students can keep track of how they are doing.
 - a. T/F statements
 - b. Y/N questions
 - c. MCQ
2. Students do timed readings and then solve exercises. Texts of 500-1000 words. Students take the time they need (which is logged). The score in comprehension

should be 7 or 8 out of 10. App will log these results so that students can keep track of how they are doing.

- a. T/F statements
- b. Y/N questions
- c. MCQ

5. Reading to understand text fully

1. Lexical cohesion
 - a. Which words in the text refer to a given word? Students highlight them. At level 1 the number of words is specified, but not later on.
2. Identification of antecedents of pronouns and demonstratives
 - a. Highlight a pronoun or demonstrative and ask them to highlight the antecedent. Make sure that the whole NP is highlighted (not only head).
3. Distinguish main ideas from supporting detail
 - a. Matching exercises between ideas and detail: chunks from text.
 - b. MCQ: for each paragraph, which of these sentences best summarizes it?
 - c. Highlight sentences that express main ideas in a text. Once the sentences have all been identified, there will be a message making explicit where the sentences are located in the text (beginning of paragraph).
4. Identification of rhetorical patterns
 - a. Identify the connectors that signal progression, or contrast, or addition, etc.
5. Identification of heavy NPs
 - a. What is the subject of this verb? Highlight.
 - b. Identify the head: highlight the most important word in the NP.
 - c. MCQ: Which of the following can replace the highlighted part?
 - d. MCQ: Which of the following means the same as the highlighted part?

Features of good comprehension questions

- 1) Answering questions should require reading of text, not background knowledge alone, nor from the way the questions are formulated.
- 2) The question should not use the exact words from the text. However, if using paraphrases, it might be the case that the learner doesn't know the words used for the paraphrase.
- 3) Questions should measure reasonable comprehension, not memory, not small detail, no calculations or logical deduction beyond normal comprehension.
- 4) Order questions consistently with the order of the info in the text.

Issues in question design

- 1) Questions should not contain harder vocabulary than the text.
- 2) Questions should have only one unequivocal answer.
- 3) If the student understands the text they should be able to answer the question.
- 4) Rejection of alternatives on grammatical grounds should not be allowed.
- 5) Skills not related to reading, e.g. mathematics, should not be tested.
- 6) Incidental insignificant info should not be tested.
- 7) Questions that require stylistic or other ambiguous judgments should be avoided.

Features that the app should include

1. It should provide feedback for answers both incorrect (hints, to help users to get the right answers), and correct (make explicit what the users have done well, so that learning takes place).
2. Control time.
3. Control number of tries.