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 **Title:** *Understanding Reading Comprehension Assessment: What Every Teacher Should Know*

 **YouTube Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyYtys805U>

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## Overview

This British Council webinar provides practical guidance on reading comprehension assessment for ELT (English Language Teaching) professionals. It breaks down reading skills, assessment types, item-writing best practices, and CEFR alignment.

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### 1. Understanding Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the ability to derive meaning from text.

**Grabe & Jiang (2014)** define a proficient reader as someone who:

- Recognizes words efficiently using phonological, morphological, orthographic, and semantic knowledge
  - Uses grammar and background knowledge
  - Applies strategies like inferencing and discourse awareness
  - Demonstrates strong working memory and fluency
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### 2. Purpose-Driven Reading


Assessment should match the **reading purpose**:

- **Skimming** for gist
  - **Scanning** for details
  - **Close reading** for deeper meaning
- The purpose influences task design and expected outcomes.
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### 3. Assessment Task Types

#### A. Receptive Tasks

*Examples:* multiple-choice, true/false, matching, sequencing

-  Pros: Quick, objective, easy to score

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- ⚠️ Cons: Risk of guessing
- ✅ Design Tips:
  - Use **plausible distractors**
  - Avoid **negative stems** and trick questions
  - Ensure **clarity** and **paraphrasing** from the text
  - Questions should be **standalone**

## B. Productive Tasks

*Examples:* short answer, gap-fill, information transfer, summary writing

- ✅ Pros: Reflect deeper understanding
- ⚠️ Cons: Require consistent scoring rubrics
- ✅ Design Tips:
  - Clear expectations
  - Use of scoring guides for fairness

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## 4. Item-Writing Best Practices

- Write 3–4 options for MCQs with at least 2 **plausible** distractors
- Avoid:
  - Trick or ambiguous questions
  - Overlapping options
  - Negatively phrased stems
- Ensure each item:
  - Tests **only one idea**
  - Is based on **explicit or inferable** information from the text

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## 5. Informal Classroom Assessment Techniques

Use **formative assessment** to track ongoing reading development:

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- Ask oral/written **comprehension questions**
- Have students **create vocabulary lists**
- Use **reading logs or portfolios**
- Track **reading speed and fluency**
- Assign **book reports** or summary writing

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## 6. CEFR Alignment

- Use CEFR "**Can Do**" **descriptors** to guide task difficulty
- Match:
  - Text complexity
  - Task format
  - Expected outcome to the student's **proficiency level**

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## Summary Table

Element	Key Focus
Reader Skills	Word recognition, grammar, inferencing, discourse awareness
Purpose of Reading	Skimming, scanning, detailed reading
Receptive Tasks	Efficient, objective; must avoid ambiguity
Productive Tasks	Authentic, require careful marking
Item-Writing Best Practices	Plausible distractors, paraphrasing, clear instructions
Informal Assessment	Portfolios, reading logs, vocab tracking, reports
CEFR Integration	Match tasks with learners' CEFR level

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## Actionable Takeaways

1. Align tasks with **reading purpose**

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2. Combine **receptive and productive** question types
3. Use **clear, fair, and targeted** item writing
4. Monitor progress through **formative techniques**
5. Always reference the **CEFR level** in assessment design

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