



Sudan University of Science and Technology



College of Languages

**Investigating the Problems Facing Sudanese Secondary
School Students in Reading Comprehension**

تقصي المشكلات التي يواجهها طلاب المرحلة الثانوية في القراءة الصامتة

**A thesis Submitted to the Partial Fulfillment for the
Requirements of MA Degree in English Language (Applied
Linguistics)**

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DEDICATION

To my parents, sister and brothers, my husband and my friends.

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All praises be to Allah the Almighty for giving me enthusiasm and strength to conduct this study. I would like to express my deep gratitude to my distinguished supervisor Dr. Mahmud Ali Ahmed who has patiently and sincerely guided me towards various routes of knowledge, which have led to the completion of this study. Also, I appreciate his willingness to devote his time and efforts for every help whenever I needed. Thanks are due to, Dr Hillary Marino Pitia, Dr. Abbas Mukhtar and Dr. Tom for reviewing my test. I'm very grateful to the Alklakla Aljadidah Secondary school for their co-operation. My heartfelt thanks go to all those people who assisted me in various ways from time to time to complete this work successfully.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the problems facing secondary school students in reading comprehension. The researcher adopted the descriptive analytical method. The study sample was mainly drawn from secondary school students in second year at Jebel Awlia Locality- Klakla Algadida. The sample comprised (30) students of first year at the mentioned schools. A test was used as a main tool for data collection. The statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program was used to analyze the obtained data. The findings revealed that: Secondary school students' performance in reading comprehension is poor, secondary school students cannot understand reading texts because their vocabulary knowledge is weak and they have not learned reading skills well. Based on the findings the researcher recommended that: Secondary school students should be encouraged to improve their vocabulary and taught to practice reading skill. Teachers of English at secondary schools should be trained to use different techniques of teaching new vocabulary.

ABSTRACT

(Arabic Version)

هدفت هذه الدراسة لتقصي المشكلات التي يواجهها طلاب المدارس الثانوية في استيعاب المطالعة. تبنت الباحثة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. تمثلت عينة الدراسة من طلاب المدارس الثانوية الصف الأول بمحلية جبل أولياء الكلاكلة الجديدة. احتوت عينة الدراسة على (30) طالباً. استخدم الاختبار كأداة رئيسية لجمع البيانات الخاصة بالبحث وتم استخدام الحزم الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية لتحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها وكشفت الدراسة أن أداء طلاب المدارس الثانوية في استيعاب المطالعة باللغة الانجليزية ضعيف ولم يتم تعليمهم مهارات القراءة بشكل جيد. على ضوء النتائج أوصت الباحثة بأن يتم تشجيع طلاب المدارس الثانوية على تحسين حصيلة المفردات الانجليزية وأن يتم تدريبهم على عليها أكثر، كما أن يتم تدريب معلمي اللغة الانجليزية في المدارس الثانوية على استخدام مختلف الطرق في تدريس المفردات الجديدة.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Linguistic competence plays a vital role in reading comprehension. Its role in reading comprehension can be compared to the role of running in the game of football or ice-skating in the game of ice hockey. One cannot play football if one cannot run, and one cannot play ice hockey if one cannot skate. One cannot read a book in a language unless she/he knows that particular linguistics competence. If a student's knowledge of English is poor, then his/ her reading will also be poor, and naturally also his/her reading comprehension.

If there were only one aspect of language that students could study (or that educators could teach), it would invariably be reading comprehension. Beloved comprehension is a close friend to every teacher of language.

English is now being offered in large amount not only at the basic school level but also in many primary schools and even at secondary school across the world. Interest in English language learning has increased dramatically in recent years for many reasons. It's the language of modern science and technology, a means of study in some countries and a job requirement. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is the widest spread in the world. That is why it is taught in Sudan and other Arab Countries.

Reading is an essential process in learning language, because where there is little reading, there will be little language learning. In addition, reading is highly effective means of extending the command of language.

There are many ways of reading; skimming, scanning, extensive...etc. the students have many problems in any of these reading skills, but the researcher will focus on reading comprehension. Reading comprehension means getting

meaning from what you read. It's an active, thinking process that depends not only on comprehension skills, but also on your own experiences and previous knowledge. Comprehension involves understanding the vocabulary seeing relationships among words and concepts, organizing ideas, recognizing the other's purpose, evaluating the context and making judgments.

Specific comprehension skills cannot be completely isolated to some degree on the other skills.

Most reading skill teachers might have heard of the terms 'fluency and comprehension'. As teachers we want to teach our students how to read fluently and comprehend, these are always good reason for teaching reading comprehension, but sometimes teachers find that they can also be conflicts goals in their reading classes. On the one hand we wonder how we can teach for reading fluently without checking our students level of comprehension successful reading requires that readers not only decode words in a text may actually help readers not only decode the words in a text but also comprehend that text. This research will try to indicate that the effort expended to decode words in a text may actually help readers to comprehend that text.

1.1 Statement of the Study Problem

Through observation in the period of teaching at secondary schools the researcher observed that students had problems in reading comprehension at secondary school in Jebel Awlia Locality.

EFL learners have specific problems in reading comprehension. The students cannot understand the meaning which is provided by passages and that may refer to teacher's qualification or the students' carelessness to learn vocabulary.

Among many problems that are faced by Sudanese Secondary School students in English Language is reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is one skill suggested by language scholars in the field of reading.

It is regrettable that Sudanese secondary school students are weak at reading comprehension, i.e. guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words they are exposed to in written tests.

Therefore, the problem of this study is represented in the following main question: To what extent can they improve their reading comprehension by using different ways of reading?

1.2 Questions of the Study

The study attempts to answer the following questions branched from the above stated main question:

1. What kind of problems do secondary school students face in reading comprehension?
2. To what extent students are able to understand and comprehend reading texts?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To explore whether secondary school students are able to choose the correct form of word.
2. To investigate the problems facing secondary school students in reading comprehension and the causes of those problems.

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses are the hypotheses upon which the research will be conducted:

1. Secondary school students have many problems in reading comprehension.
2. Secondary school students are able to understand and comprehend reading texts.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is significant because it attempts to discover the causes behind deterioration of students in reading comprehension in order to come up with reliable solutions which enhance reading comprehension. The research will be of great value to the readers and everyone who is interested in the reading comprehension. Moreover, the research is pedagogically significant because it provides some recommendations with regards to teaching reading comprehension.

Also the study is significant because it will be show the learners and teachers of English as a foreign language, that learning to read is not learning just a single skill. It is learning many skills that work together and build on one together. Each time you improve any skills. It strengthens all the others. As learner's vocabulary improve the will be able to understand and interpret their reading. And as they learn to comprehend and interpret better. They will gain more clues about the meaning of unfamiliar words.

It provides the learners and teachers with enough materials about what to do before they read, (Reason and purpose for reading and ways of reading)?

1.6 Limits of the Study

This Study is limited to investigate the problems facing secondary school students in reading comprehensions, at (some secondary schools in Jebel Awlia Locality) for the academic year 2019 – 2020.

1.7 Methodology of the Study

The study applied the descriptive analytical method. A test was designed to investigate the problems facing secondary school students in reading comprehension and measure their ability to read and understand the written texts.

1.8 Structure of the Study

The study includes five chapters:

Chapter one: an introduction which contains the background of the study, objectives, questions, hypotheses and methodology of the study.

Chapter two: Literature review and previous studies

Chapter three: methodology of the study

Chapter four: data analysis of the study

Chapter five: findings, recommendations and references

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the conceptual frame work of the study and sheds some light on reading comprehension. Therefore, the chapter reviews the relevant literature of concepts and previous studies.

Learning to read is not learning just a single skill. It is learning many skills that work together and build one on another. Each time you improve any of the skills, you strengthen the others. As your vocabulary improves, you will be able to understand and interpret your reading. And as you learn to comprehend and interpret better you will gain more clues about meaning of unfamiliar words.

2.1 Definition of Reading Skill

Goodman (1973: 162) states that listening, speaking, reading and writing are regarded as the four fundamental skills to acquire/learn a foreign language. The reading skill is a necessary skill for a language acquisition because it has positive effects on vocabulary knowledge, spelling as well as the learners' writings. Reading is viewed as an interactive process between the reader and the writer in which the former has to understand the message of the passage and then to decode it. Moreover, it is a dynamic process in which information from the text and knowledge possessed by the reader interact to enable him to construct meaning before, during and after reading. In this respect, Goodman further added "the learner: "interacts with a message encoded by the writer. He concentrates his total prior experience and concepts he has attained, as well as the language competence he has achieved.

Similarly, Dubin (1982:125) assumes that the task reading is a complex skill

that contains a number of psychological, physical and social elements. Therefore, reading is considered as the most difficult language skill, which involves the interaction of multiple cognitive, meta-cognitive, linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects. i.e.; some other sub-Skills operate all together in order to perform the task.

According to Rivers (1981:147), reading is not a passive task, but rather an active one. In fact, reading requires both the learner's mental and experimental inputs of who is expected to comprehend the written message. In highlighting the importance of reading comprehension, Rivers further stated "reading is the most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's which are knowledge of the language". Reading is composed of two parts; the written form, and the meaning of the conveyed message.

In this regard, Penny (1996: 138) defines reading "reading means reading and understanding." A foreign language learner who says, „I read the words but I don't know what they mean" is not, therefore, reading in this sense. He or she is merely decoding translating written symbols into corresponding sounds".

2.2 Importance of Reading

Mundhe (2015) defines English language skills essential in attaining proficiency. These skills are either receptive or productive skills. Receptive skills involve reading and listening while productive skills consist of writing and speaking. Learners acquire receptive skills by receiving the language from oral or written material. In this case, learners decode the meaning to comprehend the receptive material. The importance of reading as a language skill can never be underestimated. It is one of the essential means through which information can be obtained especially for educational purposes. Reading serves as one of the most commonly utilized language proficiency skills across the globe. In

addition, lack of reading ability results in poor academic performance among students. They also face various challenges outside the academic environment due to reading deficiency. Learners who do not understand reading material cannot enjoy reading. Along with that, lack of understanding might be as a result of insufficient knowledge of vocabulary. This indicates that there is a strong correlation between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, EFL learners must acquire adequate knowledge of vocabulary to comprehend text. EFL students who developed a habit of dislike for the foreign language tend to have many difficulties in understanding reading materials related to the language. In addition, prior knowledge (schemata) helps learners to comprehend reading materials and construct meaning.

Nezami (2012); Hart & Risley, (2003), in this regard, state that EFL learners who fail to connect their previous knowledge and predict the possible meaning of the text can face difficulties in understanding the text. This might be due to lack of in-depth knowledge of English derivation., the most noticeable issues faced by the teachers today is insufficiency in reading comprehension among students of higher institutions of learning. This deficiency might affect their academic performance. A great number of students without sufficient vocabulary knowledge or effective learning strategies mostly face reading comprehension difficulties. They mostly encounter a series of continued failure during their studies due to bad experiences they had from the beginning. This connection seems logical since students need high level of vocabulary in order to comprehend reading materials.

Researchers pointed out that the degree of learners' vocabulary knowledge, prior knowledge, and grammatical knowledge are some of the significant difficulties influencing the reading comprehension (Koda, 2007). Nergis (2013) posited that deepness of vocabulary knowledge, syntactic consciousness and metacognitive

recognition are some of the important factors influencing the reading comprehension.

2.3 Types of Reading

Hafiz and Tudor (1989: 5) stated that the reading skill can be divided into two main types; intensive and extensive reading. Hafiz and Tudor compared between the two types: In intensive reading activities learners are in the main exposed to relatively short texts which are used either to exemplify specific aspects of the lexical, syntactic or discoursal system of the L2, or to provide the basis for targeted reading strategy practice; the goal of extensive reading, on the other hand, is to „floód learners with large quantities of L2 input with few or possibly no specific tasks to perform on this material.

2.3.1 Intensive Reading

Nuttal (1962: 23) claims that intensive reading refers to detailed focus on the reading texts which usually take place in classrooms. It tends to develop the strategies of the learners. In this respect, the intensive reading lesson is intended primarily to train students in reading strategies. However, sometimes the learner may prefer to read the text in which he/she divides it into parts and then to read each part alone in order to comprehend it very well.

Harmer (2001) stated that in palmer’s (1964) view on intensive reading, the learner focuses on using the dictionary in which he has to analyze, compare and translate while reading texts. Therefore, the use of a dictionary helps the learner to progress in his language learning process. However, this may interrupt the learner’s reading speed. In the same line of thought, the Reading comprehension task for Harmer means not to stop for every word neither to analyze everything, that is to say, the reader should not stop at every single point or analyze each idea alone, but rather he should make a general comprehension of the text and to extract the meaning by taking the content into account.

2.3.2 Extensive Reading

Hafiz and Tudor (1989 : 5) argue that extensive reading refers to reading that learners often do away from the classroom for instance: reading novels, magazines, and newspaper articles .. etc.

The pedagogical value attributed to extensive reading is based on the assumption that exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting L2 material will, in the long run, produce a beneficial effect on the learners' command of the L2.

Extensive readers read for the sake of pleasure. This type is labeled as ‘joyful reading’ by Richard Day in 1998. Through extensive reading, the reader enriches his background knowledge, and expands his vocabulary; he also recognizes the spelling forms. Therefore, the learner chooses his\her own books and reads at his\her pace. Then, the teacher has to guide learners to select books depending on their levels of comprehension that lead to comprehensible input. According to Day and Bamford (1998), extensive reading is a part of second language curriculum ,i.e. as a separate course, as a part of an existing reading course, as a non –credit addition to existing course, and as an extra-curricular activity. Thus, students have to rely on themselves and gain knowledge from their readings outside the classroom.

2.3.3 Reading Sub-skills

According to Oxford (1990) defines the concept of reading strategies as actions that make the learning task easier, enjoyable, effective and self –directed. The term strategy refers to learning techniques that help learners solve the problems they face whenever they read.

There are different types of learning strategies which help learners to solve their problems and improve their language competency. Many research works have

been done on learning strategies and studied the effectiveness of using them in the learning process.

Anderson (1991); Phan (2006:01) stated that reading strategies mean cognitive steps which readers can take into account in order to acquire, store and retrieve data. In reading comprehension, there exist four major categories of strategies: skimming, scanning, careful-reading and predicting. These are considered at the same time as the sub-skills of reading. In this sense, the strategies may involve skimming, scanning, guessing, recognizing cognates and word families, reading for meaning, predicting, activating general knowledge, making inferences, and separating main ideas from supporting ideas.

2.3.4 Skimming

Skimming is a common technique in reading comprehension. It is a method of rapidly moving the eyes over text with the purpose of getting only the main ideas and a general overview of the content. In other words, skimming is to read more in less time and to help the learner to cover a vast amount of material very quickly. In sum, when skimming, learners go through the text quickly in order to gist of it and have an idea of the writer's intention.

2.3.5 Scanning

Scanning is a speed-reading technique and a useful reading activity in which learners need specific information without dealing with the whole text. This means, they do not read all the text word by word, but rather they extract specific information (names, dates, statistics) without reading all the passage.

In short, when scanning, learners try to locate particular information by moving their eyes over the text rapidly, and then get the required information to complete a certain task.

2.3.6 Careful Reading

Urquhart and Weir (1998) argue that this reading strategy requires from the reader to obtain detailed information from the entire text. Moreover, the reader is expected to read slowly, and to reread the text for the sake of connecting and comparing information with his prior knowledge. In the same line of thought, this type of reading takes the meaning of reading to learn i.e., the learner reads for the sake of learning also its reading speed is rather slower than skimming and scanning since the reader attempts to obtain detailed information.

2.3.7 Predicting

Predicting is a very useful sub-skill that the reader may use it in which he makes predictions relying on his previous knowledge, and then extracts the meaning of the text even if there exists unfamiliar words in the text .so that, he gets the meaning from the whole passage. Learners use information from graphics, text and experiences to anticipate what will be read, viewed, heard and to actively adjust to comprehension while reading, for example before and after a chart, students' list predictions before and after reading. As they read, students either confirm or reject their predictions.

2.4 Reading Models

Richards (1990:77) stated that reading comprehension is crucial in every grade level and in every subject. It has been divided into three models: the bottom- up reading model, the top-down reading model and the interactive model. It is agreed that the interactive model is the complete one in reading comprehension because it includes the interaction of both (the bottom-up and the top-down processes).

In this respect, reading is an integration of top-down processes that utilize background knowledge and schema, as well as bottom-up processes that are primarily text or data driven.

2.4.1 Bottom-up Reading Model

Nunan (1991:64) says that the bottom-up model emphasizes the written or printed text, which is also called data driven. This model stresses the ability to decode or put into sound what is seen in the text in which the readers derive meaning in a linear manner.

Moreover, the bottom-up model suggests that learning to read processes from learners learning the parts of language (letters) to understanding the whole text (meaning). In this regard, These letters or graphemes are matched with The Phonemes of the language. Theses phonemes, the minimal units of meaning in the sound system of Language are blended together to form words.

The derivation of meaning is thus the end of process in which language is translated from one represent action to another This model of reading focuses on decoding the language, i.e, the learner is supposed to decode the words without understanding the entire text.

2.4.2 Top-Down Reading Model

Clarke et al (1977) argues that this reading model focuses on the readers' background knowledge in the reading process in which meaning takes precedence over structure. Hence, it tends to neglect that grammar is important for the use of higher levels. In this context, maintain that the reader brings information, ideas and attitudes from the text, in which this knowledge is accompanied with the capability to make linguistic predictions.

2.4.3 Interactive Reading Model

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983, 557) stated that the interactive reading model recognizes the interaction of bottom-up and topdown processes simultaneously throughout the reading process. Hence, it relies on both graphic and textual information, which means that there is a combination of both surface structure systems (bottom-up model of reading) with deep structure systems (top-down aspects of reading) to build meaning . In the same line of thought, Carrell and Eisterhold regard the processes involved in this interactive process where both bottom-up and top-down processes occur at the same time:

The data that are needed to instantiate, or fill out, the schemata become available through bottom-up processing; top-down processing facilitates their assimilation if they are anticipated by or consistent with the listener/reader's conceptual expectations. Bottom-up processing ensures that the listeners/readers will be sensitive to information that is novel or that does not fit their ongoing hypotheses about the content or structure of the text; top-down processing helps the listeners/readers to resolve ambiguities or to select between alternative possible interpretations of the incoming data. Thus, this model views reading as an interaction between the reader and the text, and not simply a one- way exchange of information.

2.5 Reading and Text Selection

Shahidullah (1995-96: 226) states that reading materials play an important role in a successful reading comprehension process. Selecting proper text is important both for learners and teachers. There must be an appropriate, selected teaching material that depends mainly on the learner's cognitive level. In fact, learners themselves should select materials that go with their interests, i.e. it is better to let the learners to select what kind of texts they prefer to read and

which topics interest them ...etc. Above all, selecting carefully texts creates a kind of motivation and participation in the classroom, and it is helpful for both the teacher and the learner. Text selection takes into account several factors that can lead to the successful use of texts; among them the use of authentic materials since the reader can react whenever s/he reads texts: “Students present linguistic level, and the level of their content and cultural schemata have to be taken into consideration in selecting texts for them.”

2.6 What is Comprehension?

Nation (2005) states that comprehension is the goal of both reading and listening. Successful comprehension enables readers and listeners to acquire information to experience and be aware of other works, to communicate successfully, and to achieve academic success. When learners comprehend texts, they interpret, integrate, critique, infer, analyse, connect and evaluate ideas in them. They negotiate multiple meanings not only in their heads but also in the minds of others. Good reading comprehension involves reading the words on the page, accessing their meanings, computing the sense of each sentence and establishing local coherence. Readers also need to establish how the information fits together as a whole.

2.7 Reading Comprehension

Lorch et al (2007) states that, reading comprehension can be defined as understanding the written message that has been deciphered or decoded. This includes the ability to “select, encode, interpret, and retrieve relevant information, use story structure and background information, and draw inferences from the information presented”

2.8 Comprehension and Reading Comprehension

Bernhardt (1987) argues that comprehension depends on knowledge. Comprehension as defined by, is the process of relating new, or incoming information to information already stored in the memory (background knowledge). Obviously, during the process of reading, readers must not only look at the words on the pages (bottom-up processing), but also activate background knowledge (topdown processing) and then build all the elements into comprehension. Furthermore according to Bernhardt` organization, reading comprehension can be defined as, 1) is topic depends 2) involves making appropriate decisions from the beginning of a text 3) involves the selection of critical features of processing 4) involves the rapid processing of text 5) involves meta- cognitive awareness of comprehension process.

2.8.1 The Ground Knowledge

Hirsch (2006) and Khamhin (2007) stated that there is a growing body of evidence supporting the concept that a readers back ground knowledge about what he is reading is one of the most critical factors in determining whether student will understand what he is reading or not In other words if you know nothing about a topic you are likely to have more difficulty in understanding what you are reading than if you are very familiar with atopic. This phenomenon illustrated very clearly in a study where they compared reading comprehension of students who were considered to have low technical reading skills. The difference between the groups was in the amount of knowledge they had about the subject matter, in this case, football. The skilled readers know a great deal about football. Guess who had better read comprehension skills? If you predicated that low skilled students had higher scores you would be correct. This

of course demonstrates the importance of prior knowledge on actual reading skill.

2.8.2 Vocabulary

Daneman (1991) & Mckenna (2004) argued that a student's vocabulary knowledge is highly correlated with his ability to comprehend, yet most acquisition and learning of new vocabulary at basic level and beyond is gained from reading. They further sum it up neatly "they need to learn more words to read well, but they need to read well to learn more words". Yet, vocabulary knowledge is essential for comprehension to take place. Most researcher estimate that child or an adult must be able to understand around 90 percent of the words in passage in order to figure out what the other 10 percent of the words mean. And of course, the more familiar the learn is with the context, the easier it is for him to guess the meaning of new words. However, many students with reading comprehension difficulties have weak phonological processing and weak verbal working memory which can make vocabulary development more difficult. We know that they more difficulty inferring meanings of words from context and more difficulty than their peers learning vocabulary through direct instruction. If they have decoding problems or if they have weak vocabulary skills, they will have more difficulty understanding what they read. If they have difficulty understanding what they read, they will avoid reading if they don't often, they will fail to learn new vocabulary words and the cycle continues. Naturally from diagnostic stand point it's important to obtain a measure of student basic vocabulary found to determine if a weakness here is contributing to his reading comprehension difficulties.

2.8.3 Sentence Comprehension

Carlisle and Rice, (2002) & Moats (2005) stated that many students have comprehension problems because they have difficulty interpreting the meaning in sentences .One reason they might have difficulty is because they are unfamiliar with the complete sentence structure that occur in written language that do not occur in oral language some refer to book language as formal literate language students with weak verbal memory may also have difficulties interpreting sentence because they are not able to hold the words in mind long enough to process their meaning. This is particularly true of long complete sentence, sentences with many clauses, or sentences where the subject is separated from the predicate by clauses Lastly, they are certain sentence structures that are notoriously more difficult for students to comprehension. These include passive voice constructions (The dog was chased by the cat.) double negatives (none of them had ever not worn the uniform at one time or another.) sentences with small words that change meaning with word order (The man gave the only dog a bone)the only man gave the dog a bone .The man only gave the dog a bone)sentences with prepositions that require a student to have comprehension of space (He went to summer camp after he took archery lessons.) sentences with conjunctions that represent logical relationships(even though, although, since, if.....then unless)and sentence with ambiguous figurative language (How did the sod houses holdup?) .

2.9 Teaching Reading Comprehension

Harmer (1991: 188) defines teaching reading comprehension as a challenging and demanding task which is at the same time difficult to improve the learner's capacities.

Good readers are flexible and have the capacity to choose the suitable reading strategy according to the specific text; they read according to the type of the text they are going to read. For instance, reading a poem is not like reading a newspaper. Skillful readers skim to extract general ideas of the text and scan to have specific needed information from it, hence, skimming and scanning are useful reading strategies.

In addition to that, teachers should train learners to skim, for example to extract the key sentences of the text. Skillful readers also interrogate texts of all sorts by looking for clues in titles, sub-titles and the written text itself.

Pre -reading questions are useful and helpful for a better understanding of the passage since they emphasize on the attention of learners on the types of data they are going to read. Moreover, learners should be encouraged to dialogue with the writer and guess what will come next.

To develop strategies and methodologies in teaching reading comprehension, pre-reading while reading and post-reading activities have been suggested

2.9.1 Pre-reading Stage

Harmer further added that pre-reading is a very important stage in which the topic and type of the text are introduced first. Harmer clarifies this saying: “We will not get students to interact properly with spoken and written materials unless we ensure that their desire to read or listen has been awakened. Especially where the subject matter of the texts may not be immediately appealing to them we have the responsibility to make students interested and to encourage them to tackle the text with positive anticipation. In this phase, the teacher can use various techniques in order to make the reading activity easier:

- a) Using picture or any visual aid that can help the learner to make predictions.
- b) Ask questions related to the topic.
- c) Prepare the learner for the content of the text.

d) Think of some of the vocabulary items that will appear in the text.

These steps may arouse the student's interest and help to pre-teach some vocabulary as well as they set the mood for reading. Also, the teacher should move gradually from easy to difficult in order to reach a better understanding. The pre-reading stage seeks to:

- a) Improve the interest of the students in the topic.
- b) Lead them to make predictions\guessing for the reading passage.
- c) Relate the students' background knowledge with the topic.
- d) Prepare them for the content.

2.9.2 While-reading Stage

Harmer also stated that during this phase, the learners read the passage silently and the teacher plays the role of the monitor. Richards sees reading or the while reading stage: "as an integration of top-down processes that utilize background knowledge and schema, as well as bottom up processes that are primarily text or data driven."

The while- reading phase or simply the reading stage attempts to:

- a) Develop the student's comprehension of the writer's purpose.
- b) Develop the student's linguistic knowledge.
- c) Make the student recognize the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- d) Develop conscious reading.
- e) Teach the student how to skim and scan.

2.9.3 Post-Reading Stage

Harmer says at this last phase, the teacher acts the role of the evaluator; he has to look whether the objectives of the reading task have been achieved or not, taking into account the understanding of the text and recognizing the new

vocabulary and the grammar and then evaluating the text .Students might ask comprehension questions.

After the reading comprehension task, it is better to follow it by giving the learners other activities that have relation with the text like asking questions about reading comprehension \true, false statements, matching activity...etc.

Therefore, readers can improve their reading having comprehension achievement by expanding their vocabulary knowledge having the ability to understand sentence structures.

2.10 Reading Comprehension Difficulties

2.10.1 Inadequate vocabulary knowledge

Hamza & Nur (2018) stated that Many studies investigated reading comprehension difficulties among students. In investigation of English reading problems among Thai EFL learners, the study found that most of the students face difficulties in reading English texts. Inadequate vocabulary knowledge was recognized as one of the main issues. Vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in understanding complex reading materials such as textbooks, particularly those containing technical expressions.

2.10.2 Poor Vocabulary Knowledge

Hamza & Nur ,cited (Nuttall, 2000; Carlisle, 2000; Vilenius-Tuohimaa, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2008), because students with poor vocabulary knowledge face difficulties in understanding technical words such as superordinate, synonyms, antonyms, or words with multiple connotations. Text complexity influences reading comprehension. Meaning that, learners' fluency in language enables them to have more in-depth understanding of text. Hence, oral ability is prominent when it comes to recognize how skilled a reader can be since students acquire new vocabulary through listening. Having adequate vocabulary helps

students in clarifying the strange words by relating them with the context in which they are used.

2.10.3 Inability to Understand Complex Sentences

Hamza & Nur also said in their thesis that another problem facing EFL learners is ability to understand complex sentences in reading comprehension. Complex sentences are sentences that consist of several clauses, and at times contain conjunctions such as although, because, furthermore, and however. Other causes of difficulties in reading comprehension among EFL learners include coordinating conjunctions, prepositional phrases, participial phrases, and nominalizations. They cause a lot of difficulties in reading comprehension because they make the writings more complex and difficult to comprehend. However, they further identified other factors such as useful learning methods, reading habits, text form, and effective reading comprehension strategies.

Part Two: Previous Studies

2.2.1 Study one

Entitled: Investigating Reading Comprehension Problems Among EFL Learners

Written by ElobaidAbdan Mohammed

This study aimed at investigating reading comprehension problems among EFL learners. The case of the study of second year Klakla model secondary school students. The researcher used a test to accept or refute the hypotheses mentioned in chapter one. The researcher also has used the descriptive analytical method to analyse the collected data. The study found out that the EFL learners face many problems such as slow reading, poor background knowledge, lack of vocabulary and lack reading habits. The researchers recommended that families and teachers should concern building rich background by encouraging student to read materials full of cultural information. Teachers should choose short text according to student's level and devote enough time for silent reading.

2.2.2 Study two:

Entitled: Investigating Reading Comprehension Difficulties Encountered by EFL Learners (A Case Study at Karari Locality Secondary Schools)

Written by Salah Mohammed in 2017

This study aimed at investigating reading comprehension problems encountered by 3rd year secondary school students in Omdurman, Karari locality. The study was conducted on 40 students that represented the sample drawn from 3rd year secondary school students at Karari locality, Omdurman including both male and female students. The study data were collected through a questionnaire for the English language teacher and test for the students. After analysis of data, the results have shown that the teachers of English language at secondary schools do not play a significant role in addressing reading comprehension

difficulties. The results also have shown that secondary school syllabus dose not participate in addressing reading comprehension difficulties. The study, recommended that the ministry of education should provide syllabus to students to give them more practice in reading comprehension. The ministry of education also should give enough training to English language teachers on how to teach students reading skills.

1.2.3 Study three

Entitled: Investigating Problems Encountered in Teaching and Learning Reading Comprehension.

Written by AbuelgassimAbdalrhman Adam Deni

This study investigated an important area of English Language teaching and learning. It examines the present situation of teaching and learning reading skills of English, the problems student encounter during reading English text and the learners proficiency level of reading skills when they are at secondary school level in Sudan (Omdurman Locality). It is firstly hypothesized that the students have many problems in reading comprehensions. Secondly, teachers don't give the students chances to participate inside the class. Thirdly, teachers don't explain the new words well; the students as result don't know the skills of reading. The sample of the study was 30 students, the data collected from these participants were statistically analysed and the results were obviously discussed. The results of the study proved that of the students lack motivation to learn English and some of them don't know how to read. It also proved that some teachers don't take care of their students and some of the students are careless to learn vocabulary.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide full description of the methodology that was used to carry out this study. It contains the research tool, subjects validity and reliability, and procedures for data collection.

3.1 Methodology of the Study

The population of this study consisted of the secondary school students at Alkalakla Algadida, Jebel Awlia Locality.

3.2 Sample of the Study

The sample of the study was drawn from the above mentioned population. The sample included (30) secondary school students of first class 2019-2020.

3.3 Tool of the Study

The researcher adopted one tool to conduct this study. The tool used was a test which designed to investigate and measure the awareness of students and their performance in reading comprehension.

The test contained four questions and was checked by three of English language experts.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

The tool that is used to collect that data is a test which believed to have content validity as it aimed at assessing the students, achievement in reading comprehension. The tasks required in the test were comparable to the covered in the book and practiced in class. In addition, the test instructions were written clearly in English and the examinees task required was defined. Furthermore, the test was validity by a group of experts who suggested some valuable remarks

about the test and the researcher used the test-retest method of estimating a test, a test reliability involves administering the test of the same group of people at least twice. Then the first set of score is correlated with the second set of scores. Then used SPSS so the results obtained proved that the tool is reliable.

Statistical validity and reliability

Reliability coefficients	Validity
83.3	84.8

As it is shown in the table above of the reliability and validity coefficients, the calculated values are (83.3) and (84.8) which are close to value (1). This is an indication of the high validity and reliability of the test and its statistical significance. The values make the test consistent in its results for the participants.

3.5 Summary of Chapter

This chapter included the population and the sample of the study on which the tool of the study was applied. The chapter also contained the tool of the study the students' test which aimed to investigate students' performance in reading comprehension. In addition to the validity and reliability of the study tool.

Reliability Coefficients

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

Through the lines of this chapter, the researcher presents the results of the students' test analysis. The first step includes the calculation of frequency and percentage of the correct and incorrect answer then a descriptive statistics. Later on, a detailed analysis is done for each question. The researcher also designs charts for the frequency and percentage for further detail.

4.1 Analysis of the Test

Table (4.1): Frequency and Percentage of the First Question:

Students' marks	Frequency	Percentage
.00	19	61.3%
1.00	6	19.4%
2.00	2	6.5%
3.00	2	6.5%
4.00	2	6.5%
Total	30	100.0%

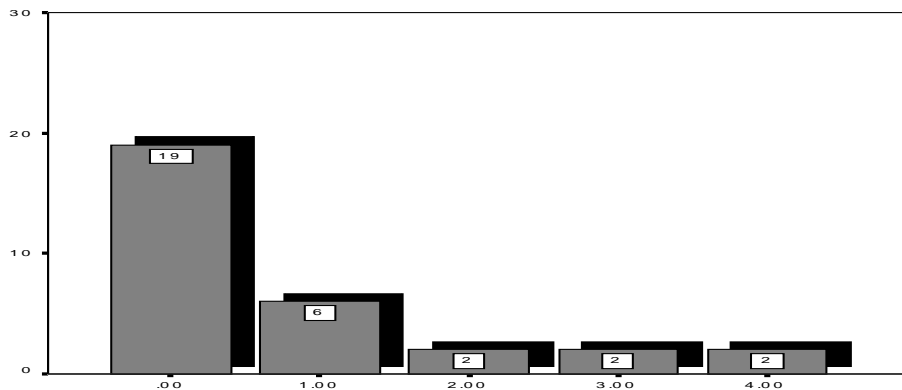


Figure (4.1): Frequency and Percentage of the First Question

The table (4.1) and figure (4.1) above give a detailed result of the first question; the frequency and percentage are calculated for the total 30 students participated in the test. As it is shown in the table, the students' marks range from 0 marks to 4. Out of the 30 students enrolled in the test, 19 get the 0 mark with percentage of 61.3%, 6 get 1 mark with associated percentage (19.4%), 2 students get 2 marks with percentage (6.5%), 2 of them get 3 marks and 2 get 4 marks with percentage (6.5%) for each. Therefore, most of the students (19) get 0 marks indicating difficulties they encounter in understanding the given passage. Also, only 4 students get equal or greater than the pass result (3).

Based on the previous result, the hypothesis one's claim that "*The students have many problems in reading comprehension*" is fulfilled and accepted.

Table (4.2): Frequency and Percentage of the Second Question

Students' marks	Frequency	Percentage
1.00	7	22.6%
2.00	6	19.4%
3.00	8	25.8%
4.00	6	19.4%
5.00	4	12.9%
Total	30	100.0%

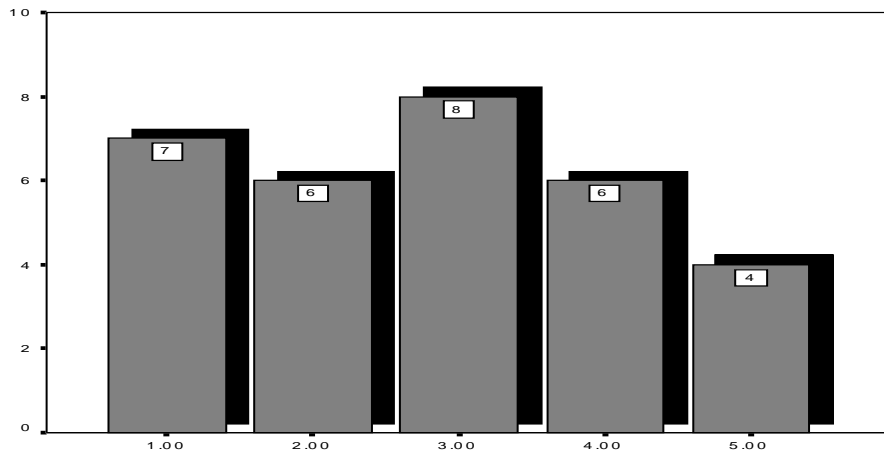


Figure (4.2): Frequency and Percentage of the Second Question

The table (4.2) and figure (4.2) give a detailed result of the second question; the frequency and percentage are calculated for the total 30 students participated in the test. As it is shown in the table, the students' marks range from 1 mark to 5. Out of the 30 students participated in the test, 7 get 1 mark with percentage of 22.6%, 6 get 2 mark with associated percentage (19.4%), 8 students get 3 marks with percentage (25.8%), 6 of them get 4 marks and 4 get 5 marks with respective percentages (19.4%) and (12.9%). Therefore, most of the students (18) get equal or more than 3 mark indicating that students find fewer difficulties in answering the second question.

Based on the previous result, the hypothesis one's claim that "*The students have many problems in reading comprehension*" is fulfilled.

Table (4.3): Frequency and Percentage of the Third Question

Students' marks	Frequency	Percentage
.00	22	71.0
1.00	6	19.4
3.00	3	9.7
Total	30	100.0

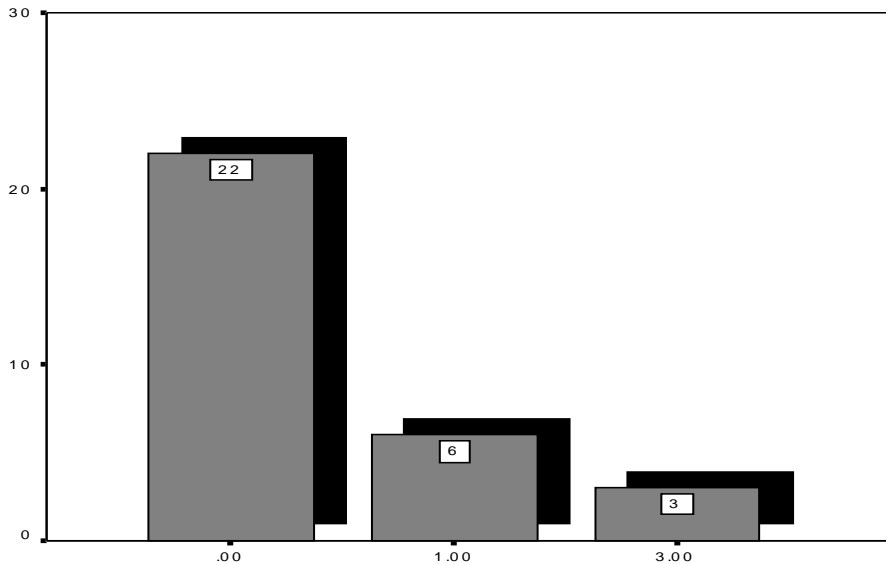


Figure (4.3): Frequency and Percentage of the Third Question

The table (4.3) and figure (4.3) give a detailed result of the third question; the frequency and percentage are calculated for the total 30 students participated in the test. As it is shown in the table, the students' marks range from 0 marks to 4. Out of the 30 students enrolled in the test, 22 get the 0 mark with percentage of 71%, 6 get 1 mark with associated percentage (19.4%) and 3 students get 3 marks with percentage (9.7%). Therefore, most of the students (26) get 0 or 1 mark indicating difficulties they encounter in understanding the given passage. It is also noticed that only 3 students get equal or greater than the pass result (3). Based on the previous result, the hypothesis one's claim that "*The students have many problems in reading comprehension*" is fulfilled.

Table (4.4): Frequency and Percentage of the Fourth Question

Students' marks	Frequency	Percent
.00	12	38.7
1.00	6	19.4
2.00	6	19.4
3.00	5	16.1
4.00	2	6.5
Total	30	100.0

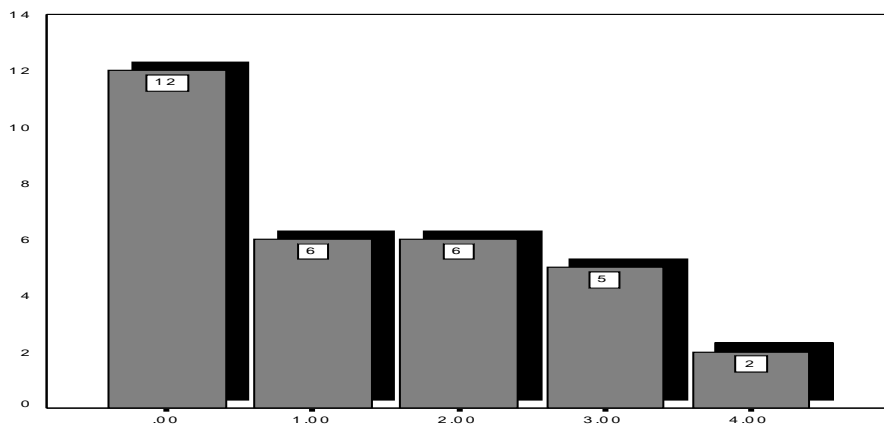


Figure (4.4): Frequency and Percentage of the Fourth Question

The table (4.4) and figure (4.4) give a detailed result of the fourth question; the frequency and percentage are calculated for the total 30 students participated in the test. As it is shown in the table, the students' marks range from 0 marks to 4. Out of the 30 students enrolled in the test, 12 get the 0 mark with percentage of 38.7%, 6 get 1 mark with associated percentage (19.4%), 6 students get 2 marks with percentage (19.4%), 5 of them get 3 marks and 2 get 4 marks with respective percentages(16.1%) and (6.5%). Therefore, most of the students (24) get below (3) marks indicating the difficulties they encounter in understanding the given passage. Only 4 students get equal or greater than the pass result (3). Based on the previous result, the hypothesis one's claim that "*The students have many problems in reading comprehension*" is accepted.

Table (4.5): Descriptive statistics of the test questions

	N	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
Q1	30	.7742	.00	1.23044
Q2	30	2.8065	3.00	1.35202
Q3	30	.4839	.00	.92632
Q4	30	1.3226	.00	1.32633

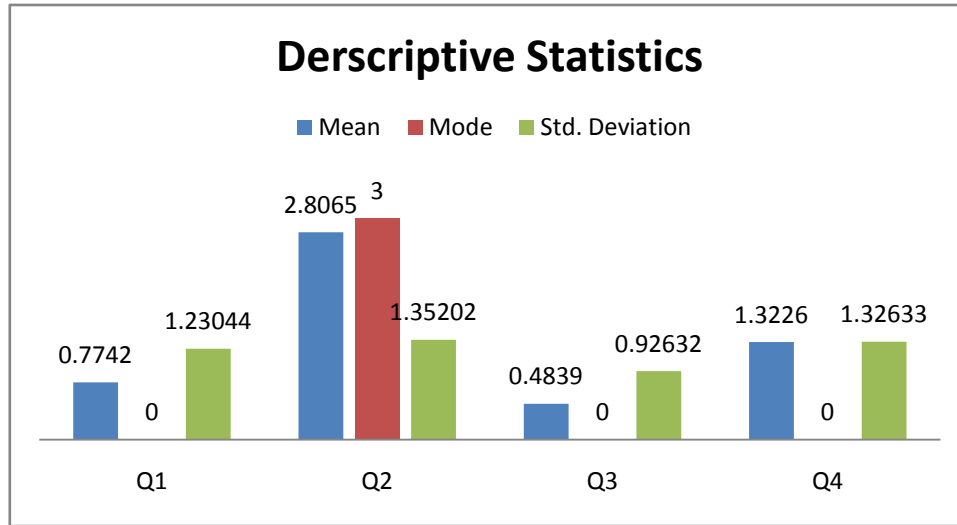


Figure (4.5) Descriptive statistics of the test questions

The table (4.5) and figure (4.5) show the descriptive statistics of the overall test. The mean value shows the average result that students get for each of the four questions and the mode is the most frequent mark that is occurred in the test result. As it is shown in the table and figure, the value of the mean is (.7742) in the first question, (2.8065) in the second question, (.4839) in the third question, and (1.3226) in the fourth question. The researcher notices that the mean value which is the average mark is less than (2) in most of the 4 questions. This indicates that students encounter difficulties in reading comprehension.

4.2 Overall Results

Based on the previous table and figure of the frequency and percentage of the four questions, the researcher notices that the students' performance in Reading Comprehension is poor. The percentage of the correct answers is lower than the percentage of the incorrect answers. The researcher can confirm that study hypotheses are all accepted based on the statistical analysis done on the students' test.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of results (conclusions) recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Conclusion

The study after analyzing the data of the test found that the hypotheses were verified. The findings of the study revealed that the secondary school students' performance in reading comprehension is very poor. The causes of those problems seem to be related to vocabulary knowledge of the students. The students showed unawareness of reading skill, they were unable to get the meanings of words contained in the passage in test. Therefore, there were complex learning and teaching problems stand behind the weak performance of the students in reading comprehension.

5.2 Findings

Based on the results of the data analysis, the researcher came up with the following findings:

1. Secondary school students' performance in reading comprehension is poor.
2. Secondary school students cannot understand reading texts.
3. Secondary school students' vocabulary knowledge is weak.
4. Secondary school students are not able to comprehend English sentence.
5. Secondary school students have not learned reading skills well.
6. English language teachers at secondary schools do not sufficiently explain the new words to their students.

5.3 Recommendations

Because of all the problems and difficulties that faced by secondary school students in reading comprehension, the researcher has made the following recommendations:

1. Secondary school students should be encouraged to improve their vocabulary.
2. Secondary school students should be taught to practice reading skill.
3. Teachers of English at secondary schools should be trained to use different techniques of teaching new vocabulary.
5. Syllabus designers of English language textbooks should enrich the reading skill lessons by adding different teaching techniques and more practice.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

The researcher proposes the following topics as areas to be further investigated:

1. To investigate the effectiveness of teaching methods and techniques used in teaching reading skill at secondary schools.
2. To investigate the impact of grammatical problems facing secondary school students in understanding and comprehending reading texts.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Test

1st year secondary school

This test serves as data collection tool for a research work that aims at investigating the problems encountered by secondary school in Reading Comprehension, this test is significant because it attempts to discover the cause behind deterioration of Students in reading comprehension in order to come up with reliable solutions which enhance reading comprehension.

1. The students have many problems in reading comprehension.
2. The students do not know the skills of reading.

Read this passage carefully then answer the following questions:

The Princess and the Pea

Once upon a time there was a prince who wanted to get married but he said "my bride must be a real princess and she must be absolutely perfect. There was not many perfect princesses available. So he left his comfortable palace and travelled every where on his horse looking for a real princess. But there was something wrong with every one of them; one was too stupid, one was too clever one was too big and another was too small; one hit him and broke his jaw. The prince went back home very unhappy.

One night there was a great storm with thunder and lighting and the rain poured down. There was a knock at the palace gate. The king took his sword and went to the gate there was attractive girl out side. She had the logiest hair he had ever seen. She was cold and wet. She said I... I... I am a princess. The king took her in and gave her some tea and dry clothes. The queen prepared a bed for her she

got twenty mattresses and twenty mattresses and twenty pillows then she took a pea and put it on the bed. And laid the mattresses and feather pillows on top. The princess had supper and climbed up a ladder into the bed exhausted.

Next morning the queen went to see her. "Did you sleep well, my dear?" She asked. No very badly. There was something very hard in the bed and now I'm bruised all over' the queen was pleased to hear this. She knew this was a real princesses have very delicate skins. The prince was glad too.

He married the princess and they live happily ever after. They put the pea in the museum and everyone come to see it.

Question one:

Give short answers:

- 1- Who want to get married?
- 2- When was a great storm?
- 3- What is the weather like?
- 4- Why didn't princess sleep well?
- 5- Is the prince married the princess?

Question two:

Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F)

1. The prince wanted to marry a perfect princess. ()
2. The prince travelled on one of his horses. ()
3. The prince found many perfect princesses. ()
4. The king welcomed the girl. ()
5. The queen put a pea on top of the mattress. ()

Question three:

Fill in each blank with the right word from the passage:

Example: When the teacher likes your composition he may say "Your composition is.....(perfect)

1. To be completely perfect is to be perfect.
2. When there is wind and rain we can say there is a
3. My sister is beautiful. She is
4. It is hard to sleep in a bed without a
5. Please don't drop the vase. It is very
6. A place where interesting and valuable things are kept for the public to see is called a

Question four:

Pair works. Choose a verb and put it into each gap:

(put, gave, was, told, knocked, prepared, asked, for, told, decided)

One night in the middle of a terrible storm, a beautiful princess at the door of a place and shelter. She the queen that she very wet and cold. The queen a bed her and her food and dry clothes. The queen to test the princes. She a pea on the bed of twenty mattresses and twenty feather pillows for her on top. In the morning she the princess. "Did you sleep well? I didn't sleep well" said the princess there was something hard at the bottom of the bed. she a pea. In the morning she the princess. "Did you sleep well? " I didn't sleep a wink" said the princess there something hard at the bottom of the bed.