LESSON FOUR: THE COMPONENTS OF READING

Objectives:

Learners will be able to:

- ✓ Identify reading as a developmental process, with several components.
- ✓ Use the following reading-related vocabulary words: ***automatic, decode, blend, fluency, analyze, vocabulary, comprehension,*** and ***components.***
- ✓ Develop an awareness of their own reading development.
- ✓ Identify some skills they need in order to move ahead in their reading development.

Note to Teacher

When dealing with beginning-level readers, you should always read aloud what you write on the board to the class.

Materials:

- blackboard or newsprint (one newsprint with the made-up "word" on page 25)
- "The Components (Parts) of Reading" handout (on page 31)
- "Using the Components of Reading" handout (on page 32)
- learner notebooks

Vocabulary:

- *analyze*
- *automatic*
- *blend*
- *components*
- *comprehension*
- *decode*
- *fluency*
- *vocabulary*

Time: About 2 hours

Note to Teacher
This lesson, using the analogy between learning to drive and learning to read, introduces students to the concept that reading involves a series of steps.

Steps:

1. Go over first steps in learning to drive

- **Explain** to learners: *Learning to read involves learning things step by step just like learning anything else. For example, let's think of how you learned to drive.*
- **Ask:** *How many people in the class drive? How many would like to know how to drive?*
- **Ask:**

  ⇒ *When you started learning how to drive, what did you have to learn first?* (Use learners' responses to these questions. Possible answers appear below.)

  ⇒ *What did you have to learn next?*

  ⇒ *How did you become comfortable before you started driving on a crowded street? What did you have to do before driving alone on the highway?*

  Possible answers:

  ⇒ *First, learn parts of the car.*

  ⇒ *Next, learn to drive in a safe place with an instructor.*

  ⇒ *Then practice a lot.*

Note to Teacher
If learners are unable to answer easily, you can guide them to some of the possible answers like those listed at right. Other ideas that reinforce the comparison between reading and driving may come from the learners.

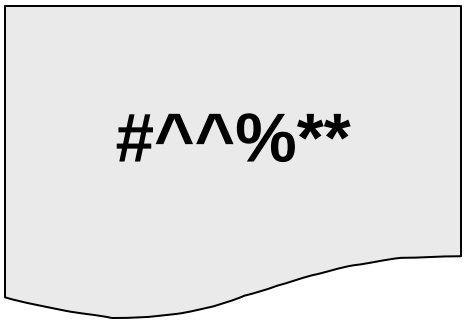
- **Ask:** *How do you feel when you drive now? Do you have to think about which pedal to step on for the gas or which one for the brake?*
- **Summarize:** *So, learning to read is like learning to drive. In the beginning, you have to think about everything that you're doing. Eventually, it comes easily and automatically and you don't really have to think about it. But first you have to get good at the skills that make it up, through instruction and practice.*

2. Go over first steps in learning how to read

(Go over the following activity as a preliminary to walking learners through the stages of reading:)

- **Explain:** *Learning to read requires learning things step-by-step or in stages just like learning to drive. Let's find out how we learn to read.*

- **Post** a newsprint with the "word" #^^%** on it. Ask learners why they can't read it.



Answer: They have not seen the word before and do not know what all the symbols mean or understand how they go together to make a word.

- **Ask** learners what they would need to know in order to understand the "word." If they have trouble responding, guide them to realize that they first need to recognize the letters of the "alphabet" and to produce the sounds that correspond to the letters before they can read the "word."

- **Ask:** *So, what is the first thing you need to be able to do in order to read real words?* In the steps below, you will guide learners to realize that they must sound out (**decode**) the individual letters in a word and then pull (**blend**) them back together by modeling the process for them.

- **Write** the word "yit" on the board.

Note to Teacher
It is important to spend some time defining the word "analyze." You can ask: "Has anyone heard of the word "analyze?" What does it mean? Analyze means to take something apart in order to look at it more closely. For example, when someone is angry with you, you might try to analyze the situation by thinking of all the things you might have done to make your friend angry. Encourage learners to think of other times in their lives when they analyze something.

- **Slowly sound out** each letter /y/-/i/-/t/ and ask the learners to describe what you are doing. You explain that this process of sounding out the letters is called sounding out or ***decoding.*** Then you model how to put the sounds back together to form "yit," and again ask the learners to describe what you have done. You explain to learners that putting the sounds back together is called **blending.**
- **Explain:** We call decoding and blending words back together *"**analyzing words.**"*
- **Explain:** *When we read the word "yit," we have to look at each letter and sound it out. Then we have to blend the sounds back together. When we "decode" or "blend" sounds back together, we are analyzing words because we are looking very closely at parts of individual words.*

3. Explain parts of reading

- **Explain** to learners that you are going to introduce the various parts, or components, involved in the reading process and that you will return to each of these components in more detail in later lessons. Post these definitions on newsprint.

Note to Teacher
Some students learn words by sight before they learn how to decode. Sight word reading, however, becomes a less effective strategy as higher level texts begin to include a larger number of unfamiliar words.

Automatic	Feeling comfortable with something: doing it without having to think
Decode	The process of sounding out individual letters
Blend	Putting individual letters back together again
Fluency	Reading with ease, reading with speed
Analyze	Decoding and blending words back together
Vocabulary	Words and their meanings
Comprehension	Understanding what you read
Components	Parts

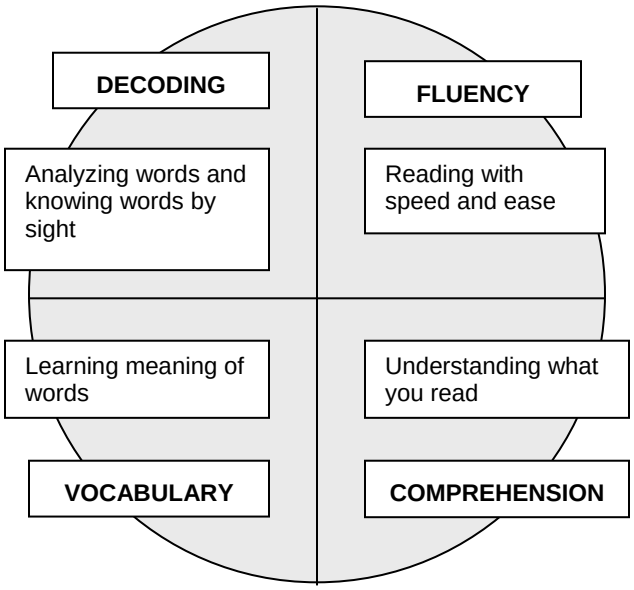
- **Pass out** the pie chart titled "The Components (Parts) of Reading" to each learner (a reduced version is shown below; the photocopyable full-size master can be found on page 31). Point out that "components" means "parts." Ask learners to save the pie charts in their notebooks because you will be referring to it frequently in future lessons. You can also enlarge the pie chart on newsprint or make an overhead.

- You can point to the various sections of the pie to **explain each part.** Refer to the pie chart to explain the following:

  ⇒ ***"Decoding"*** is the process of sounding out or analyzing individual letters and words.

  Explain that sometimes it is not possible to sound out or decode a word because the word does not follow the rules. For example it is difficult to decode the word "because." It is easier to memorize the word or "learn it by sight."

The Components (Parts) of Reading



(full-size photocopyable master can be found on p. 31)

Go back to the driving analogy. Explain to students that after they learn to analyze words, they need to practice their reading skills in order to read fluently or smoothly,

the same way they had to practice driving in order to drive smoothly.

⇒ ***"Fluency"*** is reading with ease.

Explain that we need to read with speed and accuracy to easily understand what we read. Practice builds fluency.

⇒ ***"Vocabulary"*** refers to words and their meanings.

Explain that knowing what a word means is often as important as knowing how to say it.

⇒ ***"Comprehension"*** means understanding what you read.

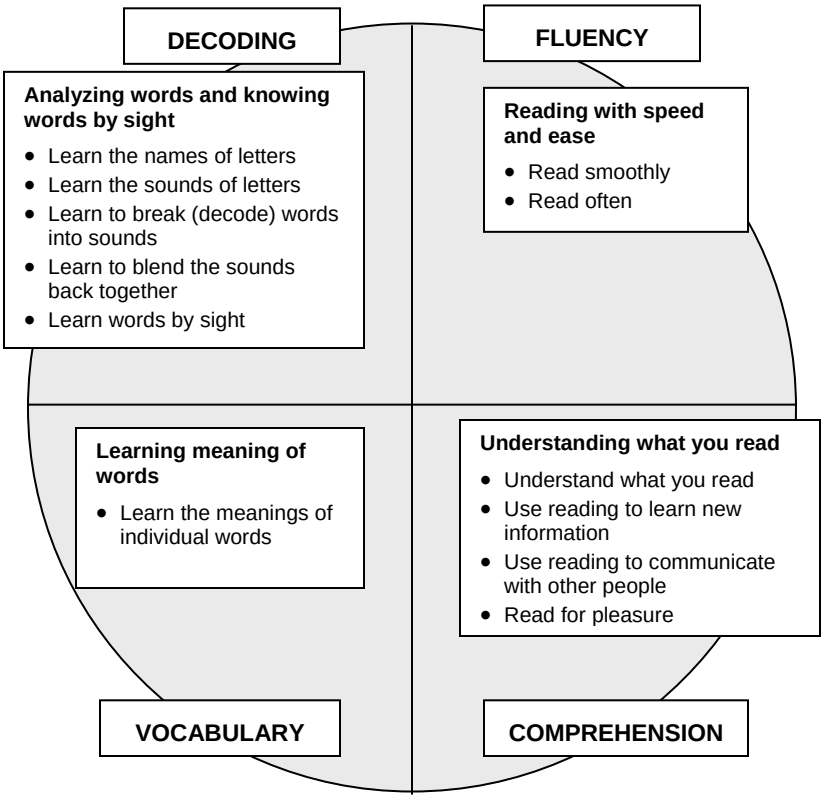
Explain to learners that we need to be able to understand what we read so we can get information, be entertained, communicate, etc.

4. Ask learners to reflect

Note to Teacher
You might want to place learners in pairs as they examine their own reading process. Using a "think aloud protocol" where learners talk about their reading may help them articulate their strengths and weaknesses.

- **Ask** learners to think about which components of reading they feel better at and which ones need more work. Have learners explain the reasons for their choices. Ask learners what skill(s) they need to focus on.
- **Explain** that skilled readers use all the components of reading simultaneously. For example, a proficient reader decodes words and understands their meanings at the same time while she reads.
- **Pass out** the "Using the Components of Reading" handout and review the suggestions for each component (a reduced version is reproduced on the following page; the full-size photocopyable version can be found on page 32):

Using the Components of Reading



(full-size photocopyable master can be found on p. 32)

Analyzing words and knowing words by sight

- Learn the names of the letters
- Learn the sounds of the letters
- Learn to break (decode) words into sounds
- Learn to blend the sounds back together
- Learn words by sight

Reading fluently

- Read smoothly
- Read often

Learning new vocabulary

- Learn the meanings of individual words

Understanding what you read

- Understand what you read
- Use reading to learn new information
- Use reading to communicate with other people
- Read for pleasure

5. Wrap up & reflect

There are a number of ways you can help students reflect on what they learned during the session. Use the question prompts below (you should post these on newsprint) and have students choose from the following ways of reflecting:

⇒ Write in a journal

⇒ Discuss the questions with a partner

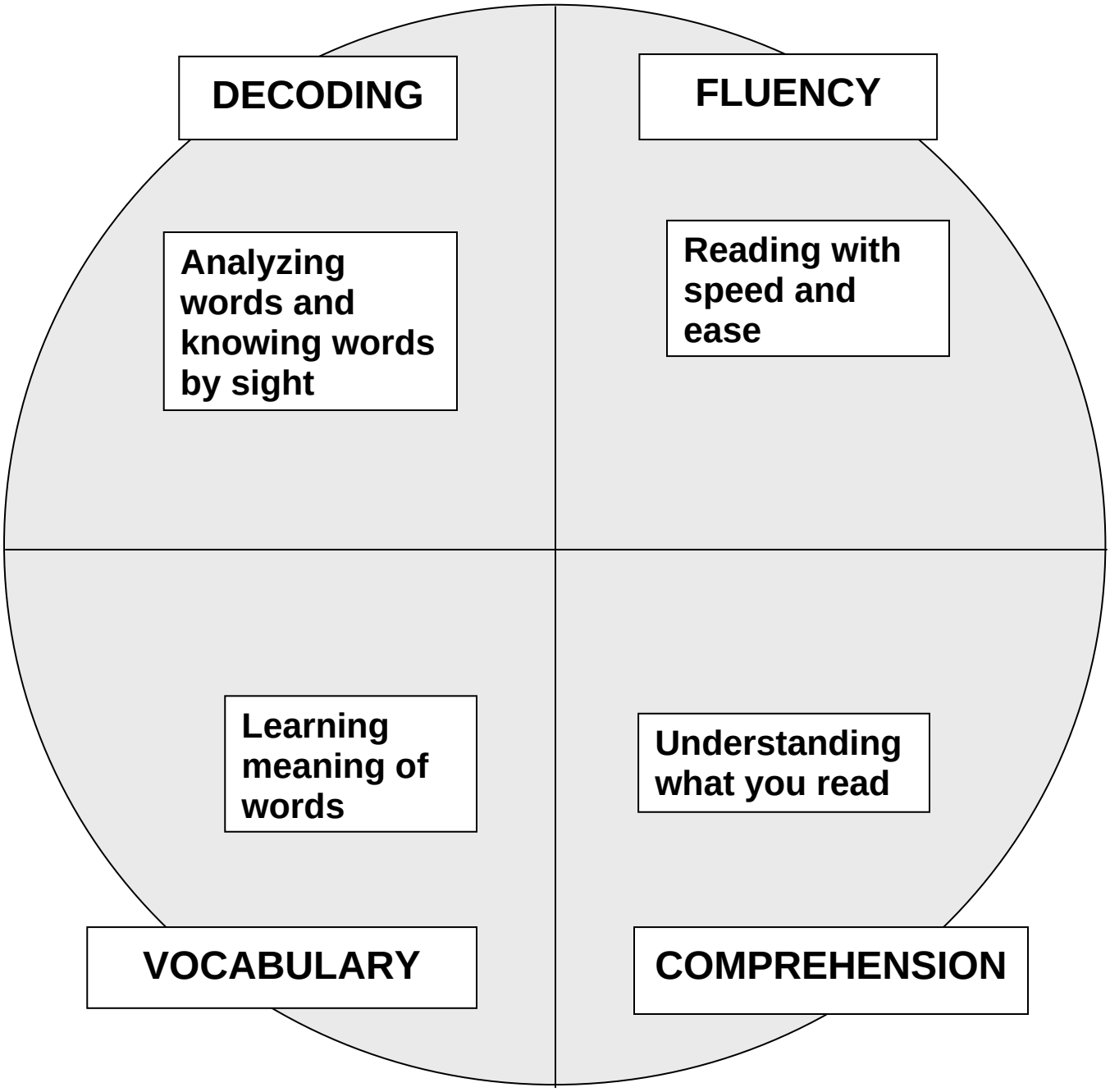
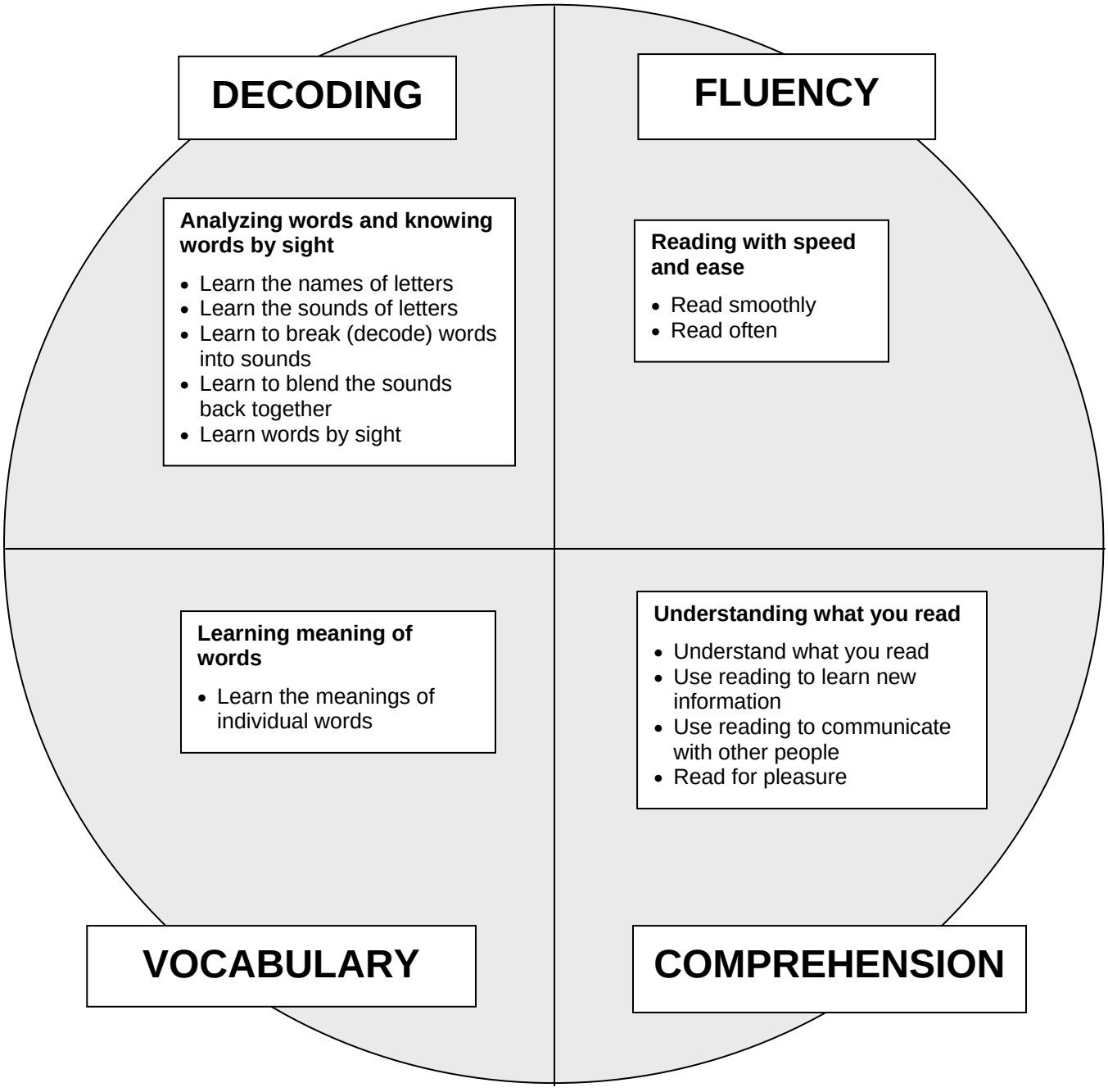
⇒ Make brief notes to himself or herself

Tell learners that spelling, grammar, and correctness do not matter for this kind of writing – here, writing is a tool to help them reflect on what they are learning.

Question Prompts:

- What did you learn today?
- Did you learn anything that surprised you?
- Why do you think I am teaching you about how we learn to read?
- How might this help you?

Handout: The Components (Parts) of Reading



Handout: Using the Components of Reading