

VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HANOI

**UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION**

**GRADUATION PAPER**

**A STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF INTEREST AND  
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE ON READING COMPREHENSION  
AND TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE PRIOR  
KNOWLEDGE IN READING COMPREHENSION TO  
THE 12<sup>TH</sup> FORM STUDENTS AT HIGH SCHOOL**

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## ACCEPTANCE PAGE

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Finally, I would love to show my gratitude to my family for their special care and support me to fulfill my research the best. Thank you all for supporting me!

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**ABSTRACT**

Reading and writing are two basic and critical skills from the very beginning of English language teaching process. However, it does not always

perform the best outcome under the influence of various factors. The purpose of my study is to address and investigate how interest and prior knowledge affect reading comprehension and the techniques to enhance reading capability at the outset by means of reviewing major concepts of interest, prior knowledge and reading comprehension and techniques and related studies on the effect of interest and prior knowledge, the teaching English currently at high school. Subsequently, the paper continues with investigation involving the participation of 100 students for questionnaires of the general information on level of interest and prior knowledge. After defining three reading text ranging on level of interest and prior knowledge, reading test on three text was launched among 50 students who previously took part in questionnaires of the general information on level of interest and prior knowledge. Finally, 10 teachers were requested for information of questionnaire on techniques to enhance prior knowledge. The analyses of the collected data demonstrated a wide range of preference and the amount of knowledge among students as well as corroborate the influence in response to the first three proposed research questions.

On the basis of these findings, the question four of the research were developed from researchers' perspective in cooperation with the teachers' questionnaire on the application of techniques to enhance prior knowledge. Some common and effective techniques had been brought to light to implement the best techniques to boost reading capacities.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1. Statement of the problem and rationale for the study

The ongoing process of regional and global intergration has resulted in an increasing demand for English language teaching across our country. Regarding our English teaching major focuses at high school, out of the four skills, reading is considered as the basic and essential skill to be mastered. According to Carrell (1984), “For many students, reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in English as a second or foreign language”. It is the process of receiving and analyzing information so that people can perceive fully the information conveyed. In our country, this skill is considered to be central than any other skills from the very early stage. In late 2011, the reports released by the British Council and Apollo Education Center highlighted the fact that Vietnamese students ranked the 8th out of the 20 surveyed countries in reading and writing skills. Additionally, it is evident for all to commit to a fact that in our curriculum and educational system, reading is still major criteria to access students’ level in learning and teaching English. In majority of examinations, there are approximately over 70 % or even 100% of reading content. Despite having enormous practice, in the case of some students at My Loc High school in Nam Dinh province, they still addressed their poor reading performance and revealed some difficulties in reading parts of the exams they encounter. Some reported that they did not like the topics in reading passage because these topics were boring with them. If the students are captivated by the text, they will be happy to spend more time analyzing and manipulating. On the contrary, while doing something not motivating, students were discouraged and not enthusiastic at all. In accordance with this, some figured out that some reading passage had complex and strange content compared with their general understanding. For this reason, it seemed intricate for them to interpret the reading passage thoroughly. They concluded that upon coping with these challenging passages, they felt depressed and easily failed to perceive the passage. As a result, with this reality, in this research, the researcher would like to attach the

influence of interest and prior knowledge on reading comprehension amongst 12<sup>th</sup> form students to have deeper look at this issue.

Moreover, out of the two, the researcher also would love to expose which one affects more deeply. Once investigating thoroughly this effect, some techniques to increase prior knowledge in reading skill for the 12<sup>th</sup> form students at high school were able to be implemented.

Additionally, this issue has drawn much notice of many researchers, yet the researches focusing on both interest and prior knowledge still exist with limited numbers. So carrying a research on this issue can make great contribution to expose the problem. Furthermore, there are some researchers paying attention to this matter; however it is barely considerable with partial finding of the influence of one of the two aspects. Therefore, the researcher would like to make a part on presenting a thorough look at the influence of these two elements. On the other hand, out of the two, the researcher desires to define which one influence significantly on reading comprehension or there exist any relationships between them to suggest and implement proper techniques in learning and teaching English reading comprehension.

## **2. Significance of the study**

This study is conducted with the hope that its findings will be beneficial for students; the teachers and researchers on the matter of reading competence.

Firstly, for the students, the results may enable them to determine proper ways and usefulness of this study in enhancing reading proficiency. It is constructive for them to decide which topic-interest and topic knowledge they should stress more on to balance and master their comprehension. Students will have greater motivation to enrich their knowledge on topic they love in the first place. By degree, they will broaden their deep understanding for other topics so that their love for reading will be enhanced and cultivated conspicuously.

Secondly, on part of the teachers, it also allows them to come up with appropriate adjustment to their teaching methods. They will handle the situations to

manage, put more priority and enhance students' fondness and knowledge on variety of topics in reading.

On researchers' account, I hope that my research will provide a source of useful information for further study in the future to have complete look at the issue. For all, with these researches, we can implement and apply constructive and feasible methods and techniques for teaching and studying English as a second language.

### **3. Aims of the study and research questions**

This study aims at investigating 12<sup>th</sup> form students' difficulties in reading texts under the influence of topic interest and prior knowledge. Findings will be used to suggest appropriate instructional support and techniques to help students to improve their reading comprehension skills. To be more specific, the objectives of this study are:

- ✓ Students' viewpoints on the influence of interest and prior knowledge
- ✓ Collection of general information about students' reading interest and level of prior knowledge on a list of specific topics.
- ✓ An investigation the influence of reading interest and prior knowledge on the process of reading through reading test
- ✓ Realization of some techniques to employ successfully with a view to enhancing reading capability.

Therefore the researcher would concentrate on these main questions:

1. *What are students' viewpoints on interest and prior knowledge as well as the influence of these two?*
2. *What are reading topic of interests among 12<sup>th</sup> form students?*
3. *Which topics students possess a great deal of prior knowledge from their own perspective?*
4. *To what extent does interest and prior knowledge affect students' performance of the given reading test?*
5. *What techniques can be implemented to enhance reading proficiency from the teacher's perspective?*

### **4. Scope of the study**

This study focused primarily on the investigation of a small sample of one 12<sup>th</sup> form class at My Loc High school - a school in Nam Dinh province- to find out the influence of interest and prior knowledge on reading comprehension through reading test and techniques to enhance prior knowledge among ten teachers. Besides, students from Phan Dinh Phung high school in Hanoi also involved and supported greatly for some parts of my study. Theoretically, the study focused three elements namely interest, prior knowledge and reading techniques.

### **5. Design of the study**

The study is composed of five chapters: Chapter 1 – Introduction provides rationale, the aims, scope, methods, and design of the study. Chapter 2 – Literature review with key concepts relevant to the topic of the thesis, teaching reading at high school and related studies. Chapter 3 – presents the methodology used in the study consisting setting of the study, the participants and instruments of the study, validity of the study as well as the procedure employed to carry out the research. Chapter 4 – Data analysis and discussion – presents, analyzes and discusses the findings that the researcher found out from the data collected according to the research questions. Chapter 5 – Conclusion – summarizes the main issues discussed in the paper, the limitations of the research, several pedagogical recommendations concerning the research topic as well as some suggestions for further studies. Following this chapter are the References and Appendices.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, the researcher would like to attach major concerns with a number of definitions associated with some keys terms: interest, prior knowledge, background knowledge, schemata, reading and reading comprehension and

technique. The following part was an overview of the effects of prior knowledge and interest on reading comprehension in the course of some correlated previous study. As a final point, the teaching reading at high school which was clearly illustrated with principle and stage of a reading lesson was presented.

## 1. Interest

Interest is a familiar term in our life that denotes a personal characteristic or an affective state. Enormous studies and research has brought out diverse concept of interest which researcher would like to attach with further explanation and investigation to deeply understand this term. First and foremost, interest can be known as one's desire to focus on something or "*to be involved with and to discover more about something*" in relation to Cambridge Dictionaries Online, Cambridge University Press 2011 (Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Apart from the definition in Cambridge Dictionaries, there is a wide range of ways which scholars across the world attempt to define interest. Among many conceptualizations of interest, the most common one is to consider interest as a state and/or as a disposition. Ulrich Schiefele (1991) defined it terminologically as "*content-specific motivational characteristic*" with "*intrinsic feeling-related and value-related valences*". Besides, his article pointed out two typical types of interest: Individual and situational interest. The former is assumed to be a comparatively "*enduring preference*" for certain topics, subject areas, or activities. Regarding the latter, it is understood as an "*emotional state brought about by situational stimuli*" (Anderson, Shirey, Wilson, & Fielding, 1987; Hidi, 1990; Hidi & Baird, 1986, 1988; Kintsch, 1980; Schank, 1979).

In addition, interest is perceived under Suzanne Hidi's conception in the vein of an exceptional stimulating dynamic and a "*psychological state*" throughout "*interactions between persons and their objects of interest*" at a high level of attention, concentration and influence (Hidi, 2006, p. 70). Otherwise, we can also notice further definition in Renninger, Hidi and Krapp's view (1992) which



considers interest as an experience manifesting itself in “*an individual’s interaction with his or her environment*”

In view of the ideas and concepts outlined above, these descriptions of the term “interest” discussed previously in literature all bear numerous similarities to each other. However, the researcher decided to adhere mainly to Hindi’s concept because of its comprehensiveness and simplicity. Briefly, interest is observed to be a content-specific stimulating characteristic with high level of attention, concentration and affect commencing from an individual’s interaction with his or her environment.

## **2. Prior knowledge, background knowledge and schemata**

In the following part, the researcher would like to seek out to build up a comprehensive understanding among fairly complex conceptions: prior knowledge, background knowledge and schemata. Throughout the vast body of research in education, these concepts still hold its vagueness and requires additional appraisal and analysis to understand clearly and deeply about each as well as tell the differences among them.

Initially, for the definition of prior knowledge, we are absorbed in many conceptualizations for this term. In the authors’ view from website “*Achieve3000 Lesson Plan*” concerning “*Activating Prior Knowledge and Building Background*”, prior knowledge is readers’ background knowledge of the topic, vocabulary, and structure of a text. Prior knowledge may come from experience or from reading (Achieve3000 Lesson Plan, 2012).

On the other hand, prior knowledge can be recognized in the eyes of Brody when it is stressed out as “*the accurate or inaccurate text-related knowledge*” that readers hold previously upon interpreting a text. The reader has developed this prior knowledge through experiences during their life. This knowledge is retrieved from long-term memory and allows the reader to have discussions about the new text prior to reading (Brody, 2001, p. 241).

In the second place, on setting deeper look at schemata, we can simply consider it as “*the knowledge of habits and beliefs from their own life experiences*” under the theory stated by Aebersold and Field (1997). Additionally, according to Ajideh, schema is a theoretical intellectual structure for characterizing common concepts stored in memory. He specified it as a sort of framework, or plan, or script. Schemata are created through experience with people, objects, and events in the world. When we encounter something repeatedly, such as a restaurant, we begin to generalize across our restaurant experiences to develop an abstracted, generic set of expectations about what we will encounter in a restaurant (Ajideh, 2003, p. 4)

As regards background knowledge, Nesrin ÖZTÜRK gave the conceptualization of Zhang which defined background knowledge in form of in-depth knowledge, world knowledge or one’s special knowledge on certain subjects in or out of school and an accumulation of a variety of experiences that one previously obtained (Nesrin ÖZTÜRK, 2010, as cited in Zhang, 2005, p. 112). In accordance with Zhang, from Brody’s perspective, background knowledge associated with “*concepts, experiences, information, and text structures*” that closely connected to a text under study (Brody, 2001, p. 241)

From the above definitions, we may conclude that these concepts all require the readers to engage in metacognitive thought on the basis of concepts, experiences, information and structures that are attained through life experiences and reading activities. While prior knowledge and background knowledge prominently involve in both life experiences and reading activities, schemata spring majorly from life experiences.

### **3. Reading, and reading comprehension**

Reading is often recognized as the most remarkable skill out of the four language skills for EFL learners when it allows students to access and expose to the target language and achieve precious linguistic engagement to build up language competence (Erten & Razi, 2003). Actually, throughout our study at school, reading

is a skill providing us with enormous knowledge. However, in what ways the nature of reading has been fully explained?

This question draws great attention and a number of researchers have defined reading in various ways and offered some definitions in a fairly comprehensive way. According to Macmillan Dictionary, reading is the course of identifying written or printed words and grasping their meaning (Macmillan Dictionary, 2009). Apart from this, Anderson noted that reading is the process of generating meaning from written texts and an intricate skill requiring the combination of several interconnected sources of information (Anderson et al., 1985). Or it can be noticed that reading is the dynamic interaction among three elements: “*readers’ existing knowledge, the information of the text being read, the context of the reading situation*” in a bid to build up meaning (Wixson, Peters, Weber, & Roeber, 1987, as cited in the new definition of reading for Michigan). We learn reading English not just to know how to read, to master the symbols, the sound, the language, the grammar used in the text but more than that understand the ideas, the information expressed in that text and develop the ability of constructing meaning actively.

Subsequently, we observed another idea with reference to the definition of reading offered by Grabe and Stoller (2002). Through this view, they gave reading a more active role and made the issue clearer and more detailed when stressing out that reading was an interaction between the writer and the reader through the text not merely as a response to a text. More importantly, they explained with clarity about reading - a process which readers construct purposes, employ necessary reading strategies, make inferences from the background knowledge with a view to “*monitoring comprehension and evaluating the information*” through a wide range of activities (Nesrin ÖZTÜRK, 2010, as cited in Grabe and Stoller, 2002).

Anderson also presented us another way to understand more about reading as a flowing development of readers when combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning for comprehension (Anderson, 2003, p. 68). As Anderson stated, comprehension was the purpose of reading and these two concepts joined together to make a completion. Therefore, how can we understand the term “*comprehension*”? The RAND Reading Study Group (2002)

stated that comprehension was believed to be a simultaneous process of meaning extraction and construction through interaction and involvement in written language.

Besides this explanation, two researchers Harris and Hodges considered comprehension as deliberate thinking through interactions between text and reader to build up meaning (Harris and Hodges, 1995).

With Pardo (2004), he helped us know more about comprehension not merely an interaction between readers and texts but accumulate and combine prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text and the standpoint the reader takes in relationship to the text.

In the same way with Pardo, Smith and Yazdanpanah also pointed out with further clarity for us that “constructing meaning” from what is known and not known or new information in the text versus preceding information from the reader’s brain is the characteristic of comprehension (Nesrin ÖZTÜRK (2010), as cited in Smith, 1982; Yazdanpanah, 2007). Thus, comprehension relates preceding knowledge of the text with the perception on reading the text in a bid to understand and perceive meaning of the text thoroughly.

As noted above, on the basis of two terms, what can we define “Reading comprehension?” In the first place, from Richard and Thomas’s viewpoint, they stressed out reading comprehension under the understanding between writer and reader. As following, they added more ideas to understand reading comprehension thoroughly. This point of view concentrates on the reader’s understanding of text message based on special individual’s ideas, knowledge and responses rather than simply read words and catch author’s intentions (Richard and Thomas, 1987). Similarly, Roe, Stood and Burns also pointed out that the application of life experience to understand, appraise and reconstruct the written content the author conveyed is the nature of reading comprehension (Roe, Stood and Burns, 1987)

Studying the nature of reading comprehension, Grellet indicated in a very simple way that reading comprehension is effective once one achieves the necessary information of the reading text (Grellet, 1981, p.3).

In short, in light of the above-mentioned theories, viewpoints and ideas on the subject of reading, comprehension and reading comprehension, researcher realizes that 3 concepts are all defined and interconnected in countless aspects. They are the concepts on a single area under discussion. On the whole, researcher is especially in favor of the concepts: *reading* as an active interaction for constructing meaning, evaluating the written content by using skills, previous knowledge and experiences; *comprehension* as the application and combination of preceding knowledge, experiences under intellectual process to interact and understand the text; *reading comprehension* as an application of life experience to understand, appraise and reconstruct the written content the author conveyed.

#### **4. Reading technique**

As a final point, it is necessary to take a closer look at the concept “*technique*” to facilitate further study. Initially, Collins dictionary gave a general explanation for “*technique*” as a practical method, skill or art applied to a particular task or proficiency in a practical or mechanical skill. More comprehensively and closely related to education, Anthony perceived it as a realization within classroom context. It is a particular trick, strategy, or ways used to accomplish an immediate objective. Technique encompasses the personal style of the teacher in carrying out specific steps of the teaching process. Through technique, teachers enable to develop, create and implement, using her distinctive way, the procedures of teaching (Anthony, 1963).

In brief, from what have been conversed, we can come up with the idea of technique for educational purpose as a utilization of particular trick, strategy, or ways to accomplish an immediate objective in learning and teaching and teachers play an active and indispensable role in language teaching.

❖ ***Teacher’s role in improving reading comprehension.***

In line with teachers and their roles in reading comprehension, Nell K. Duke et al, (2012), the teachers are like a tour guides giving a guarantee that students stay on course, pausing to make sure students value “landscape of understanding” on “a journey toward ever-increasing ability” to comprehend texts. According to these researchers, there are 10 essential elements of effective reading comprehension instruction that research suggests every teacher should engage in to foster and teach reading comprehension:

1. *Build disciplinary and world knowledge.*
2. *Provide exposure to a volume and range of texts.*
3. *Provide motivating texts and contexts for reading.*
4. *Teach strategies for comprehending.*
5. *Teach text structures.*
6. *Engage students in discussion.*
7. *Build vocabulary and language knowledge.*
8. *Integrate reading and writing.*
9. *Observe and assess.*
10. *Differentiate instruction*

Apart from that, Pressley and Afflerback (1995) believed the following techniques teachers could do to support readers before reading:

- ✚ *Introduceandteachkeyvocabulary*
- ✚ *Activatepriorknowledge*
- ✚ *Buildcriticalbackgroundinformation*

In addition, thank to Samuel A. Perez, the researcher was able to recognize several effective techniques for improving reading comprehension as listed:

1. *Use pictures or photos*
2. *Introduce unfamiliar vocabulary*
3. *Develop visual imagery*
4. *Use retelling technique*
5. *Use the request procedure*
6. *Use listening comprehension*

7. *Use repeated readings*
8. *Provide factual reading materials*

## **5. Effects of prior knowledge and interest on reading comprehension**

For a long time, researchers have been sought out for a full explanation for the influence of interest and prior knowledge on reading comprehension with numerous studies for this issue from all over the world. In this part, I would like to propose some prominent researches to have an overview of this matter for further investigation in my study.

First of all, I would prefer to address the study “*The influence of topic interest, prior knowledge and cognitive capabilities on text comprehension.*” which was carried out by U. Schiefele-University of the Bundeswehr Munich, Federal Republic of Germany. Schiefele (1990) discussed on the influence of topic interest, prior knowledge and cognitive capabilities on text comprehension in his study. The study exclusively stressed the effect of topic interest together with prior knowledge and cognitive capabilities on reading comprehension. He figured out a prominent influence of topic interest embedded in reading accumulation. Alternatively, Schiefele aimed at finding the correlation among interest, prior knowledge and cognitive capabilities on this research. However, the results was not incredibly noticeable and required a further future studies for improving of the measurement of prior knowledge and evaluating topics with others with diverse range of prior knowledge. As a final point, the study merely revealed the degree of connection between interest and text comprehension in accordance with the extent of prior knowledge at a moderate scale. Therefore, further studies are still necessary to bring the whole matters to light.

In the second place, I would like to mention the study of John Eidswick at Kwansai Gakuin University on “*Interest and prior knowledge in second language reading comprehension.*” On the contrary to the study of Schiefele on the analogous topic, this study found down conspicuous effect of prior knowledge on reading comprehension rather than interest. John Eidswick conducted survey to get information of participants’ interest and prior knowledge on certain topics.

Subsequently, the participants took the tests on texts with level of interest and prior knowledge. The researcher worked out that there was a positive influence of prior knowledge over reading comprehension whereas there was not similar influence by interest. Furthermore, the study exposed a fact that there was an ambiguous correlation between interest and prior knowledge on reading capability calling for further explanations. Due to time constraints, estimations of participants' prior knowledge and question designs, this research still encompassed several limitations. This is the point that the researcher hopes for future investigation to have whole view of this issue.

Finally, I would like to acclaim Öztürk, Nesrin with a relatively successful research at Department of Educational Sciences about "*An examination of the relationship between content familiar texts derived from readers' interest and reading performance of English language learners at university level*"

Öztürk, Nesrin (2010) investigated background knowledge in relation to topic interest and reading performance of 75 English language learners studying at TOBB ETU Preparatory School. His subjects, 75 learners completed a reading interest questionnaire and three reading comprehension tests, which were accompanied with a 2-item background & interest questionnaire. By this way, the researcher had pointed out great perceptible results for the study. He attained the level of interest and background knowledge by three categories: high, moderate and low. In addition, the reading performance scores as well changed regarding the three different reading comprehension tests beyond the expectation for the purpose of the study. From all that, Nesrin had reached statistically significant conclusion for this matter which has been drawing enormous attention. He sorted out and highlighted the correlation among interest and background knowledge, interest and reading performance, background knowledge and reading performance. However, Nesrin have not stressed out which one is more important for reading between interest and prior knowledge-one point that I would like to make thorough look at.

All in all, these studies all addressed the matters in my field of interest that I would like to work out on this research. However, their researches all have their strong, weak or limited points which need further investigation. Although there can



be strong, weak and limited points in these studies, they provided me precious lessons, experience and good basis for me to prepare well for my future study and make a contribution to full theories on this issue.

## **6. Teaching English at high school**

### **6.1. Principles in teaching reading**

Learning reading in English has played an important role in educational goal all over the world. Owning high level of reading proficiency opens our world and opportunities and enables us to gain new knowledge, enjoy literature, and do everyday things that are part and parcel of modern life, such as, reading the newspapers, job listings, instruction manuals, maps and so on. Thus, education should act as a part in helping students enhancing, accumulating and practice their reading skills. Principles in teaching reading are proved to be especially prominent in conducting a successful English reading lesson apart from your lesson plan, your students' background knowledge and many other aspects in learning and teaching. According to Anderson (2003) and Hedge (2000), there are several reading principles in teaching reading as following:

#### *6.1.1. Exploit the students' background knowledge*

Background knowledge can affect reading comprehension. Students' background knowledge includes: life experiences, educational experiences, knowledge of rhetorical organization of texts, cultural knowledge and background, etc. The teachers can significantly enhance students' comprehension if he/she activates their background knowledge by setting goals, asking questions, making predictions, teaching text structure and so on (Anderson, 2003; Hedge, 2000).

#### *6.1.2. Build a strong vocabulary base*

Vocabulary can facilitate successful reading. The teacher should explicitly teach basic vocabulary and teach students how to use context to effectively guess the meaning of less frequent vocabulary (Anderson, 2003; Hedge, 2000).

#### *6.1.3. Teach for comprehension*

Besides testing comprehension it is necessary to teach students how to comprehend. A technique the teacher can employ to help students in the process of constructing meaning from a text is questioning the author. This activity should be done during the reading process. It requires the teacher to model the reading behavior of asking questions to make sense of what is being read. Students learn to interact with reading and develop ideas rather than retrieve information in the text. In the process of reading students should ask themselves some questions such as “What is the author trying to say here? What is the author’s message here? Does author explain this clearly?” (Beck et al., 1997, as cited in Anderson, 2003)

#### *6.1.4. Teach reading strategies*

To achieve success in reading, students should know how to use a range of strategies that match their purposes for reading. Teaching them how to do this should be a prime consideration in the reading classroom. A technique the teacher can use to help students identify reading strategies is to get them talk about their thought processes as they read. The students can listen to their own verbal report or listen to other students’ verbal reports to become aware of their reading strategies (Anderson, 2003; Hedge, 2000).

#### *6.1.5. Encourage students to transform strategies into skills*

Strategies are conscious actions that students use to achieve goals or objective; skills are strategies that have become automatic. When students consciously learn and practice specific reading strategies, the strategies move from conscious to unconscious, from strategy to skill. For instance, when students are taught how to guess the meaning of unknown vocabulary for the first time, they are using a strategy. As student’s ability to guess the meaning become automatic, they move from using conscious strategies to using an unconscious skill (Anderson, 2003; Hedge, 2000).

#### *6.1.6. Set criteria to select reading text*

Teachers should usually pay attention to two questions: “What kind of text do we use in the classroom?” and “How do we create reading purposes for these texts?” They may have little flexibility in addressing the first, but they will need to consider the second carefully because this may be the key to motivating students to read texts they find not interesting. Interest is the first criterion to select the reading text. Another factor that is variety of topic, of length of text, of rhetorical organization (for example, description, review, comparison), and of reading purpose (Anderson, 2003; Hedge, 2000).

## **6.2. Stages of a reading lesson**

It is a common practice that a reading lesson includes three stages: pre-, while-, and post-reading (William, 1984 as cited in Hedge, 2000; Dubin and Bycina, 1991). Each stage has its own aims and procedures.

The pre-reading stage serves three main goals: (1) to activate or build the students’ knowledge of the subject, (2) to get students become familiar with some of the language needed in copying with the text, and (3) to motivate the students to read. A number of techniques or activities can be employed at this stage: using pictures, predicting from the title, answering some questions, listing items of information they already know about the topic, guessing whether the statement are true or false, etc. (William, 1984 as cited in Hedge, 2000; Dubin and Bycina, 1991)

The while-reading stage aims at helping the students to understand the specific content and to become aware of the rhetorical structure of the text. There are many techniques that teachers can use: providing students with some questions, asking them to decide whether the statement are true or false, asking the students to guess new words in context, etc. (William, 1984 as cited in Hedge, 2000; Dubin and Bycina, 1991)

The aims of the final stage are to review the content, work on bottom-up concerns such as grammar, vocabulary, and discourse features, and consolidate what has been read relating the information from the text to the students’ knowledge,

interests and opinions. Some techniques used at this stage are: discussing the main points, retelling the story, rewriting the story, etc. (William, 1984, as cited in Hedge, 2000; Dubin and Bycina, 1991)

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

In the preceding chapter, the literature on the research topic was reviewed for the theoretical basis of the study. In order to lay a practical background for the study, the research was carried out with methods of data collection and analysis. This chapter serves as a report on those procedures.

#### **1. Participants**

The process of data collection involved the participation of ten English teachers, 50 students at My Loc high school and 50 students at Phan Dinh Phung high school. Therefore, every information and personal information would be kept confidential entirely.

##### **1.1. The teachers of English**

My major research target are learners' interest and prior knowledge, yet it is undeniable to mention the indispensable role of teachers. On part of my research, the roles of teachers in sharing and assessing the techniques made a enormous contribution for my study. Ten teachers at My Loc and Phan Dinh Phung high school were invited to share their precious experiences to find out the best

techniques to implement further. As being stated, they are all experienced teachers with the majority having more than eight years' experience. Additionally, the researcher also would like to point the reason why questionnaire on techniques to enhance prior knowledge involved the participation of teachers at both two school. At My Loc high school, by reason of the small scale of the school, therefore there are just five teachers. For more reliable, the researcher decided to invite five more teachers of Phan Dinh Phung high school in line with the convenience of inquiring for support when the researcher had teaching practice at Phan Dinh Phung high school.

### **1.2. The 12<sup>th</sup> form students at My Loc high school**

In view of the fact that the study focuses on the level of students' interest and prior knowledge in reading comprehension, the participation of students in the study is very important. In my research, there were fifty 12<sup>th</sup> form students at My Loc high school involving in two main parts of my study. Firstly, they helped identify the general information on level of interest and prior knowledge and then took part in the reading test. For the reason of convenience, the researcher contacted and got permission to carry out among these fifty 12<sup>th</sup> form students. They are recorded with reference to teachers' information to be fair students and study the subject with a good perception from the starting point for English for seven years at lower secondary school. In the second part for data collection of the research, a reading test was handled amongst these students to check the influence of interest and prior knowledge. Therefore, the reading test score would be reliable and consistent if students made efforts to complete it instead relying on luck or doing without perception of the weak students. Besides, as for the good and excellent students, because of high levels of background and competence, these students are not hurdled by these influences. As a result, the fair student is the most appropriate subjects for testing with the support of this 12<sup>th</sup> form class.

### **1.3. The students at Phan Dinh Phung high school**

In the first questionnaire of data collection, my questionnaire aimed at locating general interest and prior knowledge among students. Subsequently, in order to avoid hasty generalization just around fifty students at My Loc high school.

For the reason of convenience during the teaching practice, fifty students at Phan Dinh Phung were invited to join the survey to get more trustworthy information. They just need to be qualified as 12<sup>th</sup> form students and have preference for a wide range of levels in response to research questions which are used in forms of multiple choices and preference sharing to identify and structure general ideas of interest and level of prior knowledge.

## **2. Data collection instruments**

For a collection of sufficient reliable and valid data for the study, questionnaires were utilized throughout the research as methods of the quantitative approach.

### **2.1. Reading topics of interest and prior knowledge questionnaire from students' viewpoint**

*(Appendix A: Questionnaire on general information of interest and prior knowledge)*

With reference to the first form of questionnaire on attaining general understanding of the students' topic interest and prior knowledge, researcher would like to address the questions on personal information for example their favorite skills in English, their reading proficiency and so on in the first place. In the next step, the topic lists closely followed the core curriculum of the 12<sup>th</sup> form students at high school in association with diverse topics researcher exploited as reference from the Internet, books and documents were examined and utilized for the survey. Those topics were valued and placed under five criteria of level of interest and prior knowledge: low, fairly low, neutral, fairly high and high. Subsequently, the draft paper of questionnaire was shaped and showed to the instructors for appraisal. Major researcher's instructors will be the supervisor teacher, Mrs. Thai Ha Lam Thuy and one high school teacher at My Loc high school, Mrs. Nguyen Van Anh. Finally, the questionnaire was officially used for data collection after necessary alterations was done to make it user-friendly and comprehensible through a small pilot within five students.

2.2. **Reading comprehension test** (*A full development of the reading comprehension test is on Appendix B*)

**Topics for testing:** Study over the first questionnaire data exposed a large amount of information on high, average and low level of topic interest and prior knowledge as illustrated below:

<b>High level of both interest and prior knowledge</b>	<b>Average level of both interest and prior knowledge</b>	<b>Low level of both interest and prior knowledge</b>
<i>Music (Famous bands and songs)</i>	<i>Natural disaster (Flood and drought)</i>	<i>Economy (Depression)</i>

*Table 1: Topic classification after first questionnaire*

**Standard:** 12<sup>th</sup> form students are B1 level and more detailed description as regards of the test design in *Appendix B: Development of the reading test*.

**Format and task types:** Students were inquired to complete 3 texts with a total of 18 multiple choice questions with four options around 350 words for each on 3 topics belonging to 3 major categories: high interest and high prior knowledge, low interest and low prior knowledge, average level for both interest and prior knowledge. According to Winerip (2006), forty-two percent of students are now taking state reading and math tests that are entirely multiple-choice. As teachers already know, students need to be aware that multiple-choice items often require higher-level thinking. The multiple-choice format does not always require simple factual recall. Students need to be aware that multiple-choice answers may not always be obvious. They need to reflect upon the question, the text, and the offered answer choices before selecting a response. Since 2008, our country has shifted from written test to multiple-choice exams in variety of subjects especially English. Thus, this is a familiar format for the 12<sup>th</sup> form students to avoid distorting the results. For each passage, researcher will develop suitable multiple choice questions for comprehension purposes. Subsequently, these multiple-choice tests would be evaluated, commented and judged thoroughly under the help of my supervisor, my high school teachers and the pilot study among 10 students.

**Authenticity:** The texts would be sorted out from authentic, academic and reliable sources.

**Reliability and validity of the reading test**

Reliability and validity of the measures are key elements of the quality of a measuring instrument. Reliability estimates evaluate the stability of measures, internal consistency of measurement instruments, and interpreter reliability of instrument scores. Validity is the extent to which the interpretations of the results of a test are warranted, which depends on the particular use the test is intended to serve. In the research, these two elements were shown as followed. Firstly, in accordance with reliability on Heaton's viewpoints of writing English language test, reliability closely goes with these elements:

<b>Elements with reliability</b>	<b>Theory of Heaton</b>	<b>Practice: Reading test</b>
<b>Size</b>	-Test items within a test  -Pilot with right subjects.	-Multiple choice test items with four options so it did not rely on luck.  -The reading test was designed for B1 level and is pilot among B1 students.
<b>Test item level of difficulty</b>	-Between one and two third of the students have the correct answer on the reading test. (33% - 66%)  -Pilot study also illustrates the level of difficulty among test items and item discrimination index.	Candidates' average final scores were 50.625 on the range of reliability.  - The level of difficulty among test items and item discrimination index were figured out under the pilot. For detailed view of this, take a look at Appendix F
<b>Marking</b>	The way the test is marked	The reading test was designed in form of multiple choice questions so the test is marked objectively and precisely.
<b>Syllabus</b>	How much the test is based on the passages and questions from the textbook? (test writer should avoid over-emphasis on "quoting")	The test was shaped on text from various authentic sources and questions is planned by test writer



	the textbook)	
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*Table 2: Elements of reliability*

Secondly, concerning validity, it can be observed in the following elements:

<b>Types of validity</b>	<b>Heaton's theory</b>	<b>Reading text</b>
<b>Face validity</b>	-A test should appear superficially to test what it is supposed to test (the test is what students and parents want, and look familiar to them)	-The test examined reading comprehension skill with multiple choice questions for guessing meaning, telling the main ideas, making inferences
<b>Content Validity</b>	-Concerned with assessing current performance rather than predicting future performance. Language items tested are the right level and approach for their students	-Before the test development, researcher defined students' level according to CEFR level and focused on B1 level for 12 form students
<b>Response Validity</b>	The test layout and instructions are clear so students' wrong answer are because of their lack of ability in English	Multiple choice question so it was easy to circle the correct answer
<b>Statistical Validity</b>	The same students who got high, average, and low marks on this test will get high, average and low marks on another test.	Before researcher conducted the reading test, researcher gave out questionnaire on general interest and prior knowledge with a question to ask students reveal

		their qualifications included. The test results exposed a consistent in their score.
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Table 3: Validity of the reading test

### **Pilot study**

Before accumulating data, a pilot study was conducted to check face, content validity and reliability of all instruments in the research. Researcher would like to examine the well-matched and user-friendly of the test and questionnaire toward test taker and participants of the study to avoid distorting or obtaining inaccurate and unreliable result as well as revising the questionnaire and test.

<b><i>Findings of the pilot</i></b>	<b><i>Specific illustration</i></b>
Questions and task types in use work well with the population the test targeting although there still have some errors hurdling test takers	-The general information of interest and prior knowledge questionnaire, in question six part two, the use of words “things” in the answer “things related to the topics” is ambiguous to understand and call for a clearer correction. -The question seven with a list of topics to label interest and prior knowledge initially just have general topic with sub-types and researcher merely required students stated their opinions for the whole. In this way, it will be difficult to sort out reliable and suitable types for testing. -In reading test, one questions have unclear expression and cause the misunderstanding of the students (question two-reading text one) -In questionnaire three with the teacher, pilot helped revise some grammar points and repeated techniques.
Items and tasks test the skill area	-Students had no confusion in the format of the test and reported to make use of their comprehension skills by scanning, skimming, reading for main ideas, guessing meanings, drawing inferences and so on.
Raters are able to interpret and use the rating scales and assessment criteria as intended	Researcher did not have to change the reading test as well the questionnaire one too much. Therefore, the rating scales and assessment criteria are still utilize with a little

	bit modification.
Items and tasks engage test taker's mental process as intended.	A reading test with three texts and over 300 words per text in forms of multiple choice questions aiming at comprehension skill was launched
A test being revised is a comparability study	The test was revised for more detailed view of it in the Appendix B

*Table 4: Pilot findings*

### **2.3. Questionnaire on techniques to enhance prior knowledge from teachers' perspective** (*Appendix C: Questionnaire on techniques to enhance prior knowledge from teachers' perspective*)

Regarding the closing part of the study, after figuring out the influence of interest and prior knowledge in reading comprehension, researcher was assumed to have a comprehensive view of the issue and motivated to seek out techniques to improve students' reading capacities. As a result, researcher commenced exposing top promising useful techniques by making attempt from different useful sources with reference to questionnaire with teachers at high school for precious viewpoint to deeply understand and implement constructive techniques in reading comprehension for students. Specifically, investigator proposed help from five English teachers at My Loc high school and five English teachers Phan Dinh Phung high school. The questionnaire aimed at deeply exploring techniques which teachers employ to enhance prior knowledge for students with general information about the frequency, awareness and techniques to enhance prior knowledge through learning activities. Subsequently, teacher proposed to give out their evaluation and appraisal for the listed techniques in the questionnaire. Like other questionnaires in previous parts, my supervisor, my high school teachers and the pilot study were inquired to examine the questionnaire, offer comments and suggestions for compatible content and arrangement of the test before officially presenting to the targeted teachers

### **3. Data collection procedure**

Basically, the data were gathered by administering three main instruments, reading interest and prior knowledge questionnaire and reading comprehension tests and teachers' perspectives on techniques to enhance reading comprehension. Before employing these instruments, necessary permission to carry out was got from

teachers teaching the class and head teachers at My Loc high school. The procedure of data collection could be put into four phases as follows:

- *Initially, proper class was sorted out for the study. Then the first instrument-questionnaire one on general information of reading interest and prior knowledge was piloted and utilized.*
- *After this step, through collected data, any necessary analysis was done to find out three different levels of interest and prior knowledge.*
- *Having three topics at different level of interest and prior knowledge enabled researcher to develop a reading test for the study.*
- *Subsequently, piloting to check the reliability and validity of the test was made before coming up with the official one. When piloting and essential modifications for the test were applied, official test was administered among 50 students in My Loc high school.*
- *Data analysis on the test was followed straight away. Finally, researcher worked out from different sources and with aids of the teachers' questionnaire to assign effective techniques for reading and implement solutions to the problems.*

#### **4. Data analysis methods and procedures**

The collected data was first classified according to the research questions. In succession, the researcher analyzed collected data with the starting point concerning students' viewpoints on interest, prior knowledge and the influence of these two elements. Right after that, general information about students' reading interest and level of prior knowledge on a list of specific topics was explored to define topics for the reading test aiming at investigating the influence. Questionnaire on techniques served to solidify the conclusion.

The questionnaires had already been divided into and arranged orderly basing on the research questions. Therefore, it was convenient to classify the information

gathered. Data collected from the questionnaires was then combined and illustrated by diagrams or tables according to each research question. The above method and procedures of data analysis were useful and necessary. They helped the researcher obtain comprehensive and rich data. From such data, constructive and interesting results were found out and will be presented in the next chapter – RESULTS AND FINDINGS

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

While the previous chapter elaborates on the methodology of the research and outlines framework to collect data. In this chapter, data collected is described and analyzed. Separate findings come after the discussion of each question in combination with the whole previous content to find down any mismatch as well as noteworthy results to answer to the research matter.

**1. *Research question 1:*** What are students' viewpoints on interest and prior knowledge as well as the influence of these two?

### **1.1. *Personal information of the students***

Concerning the general understanding of interest and prior knowledge in reading comprehension among 12<sup>th</sup> form students at upper secondary school, a set of

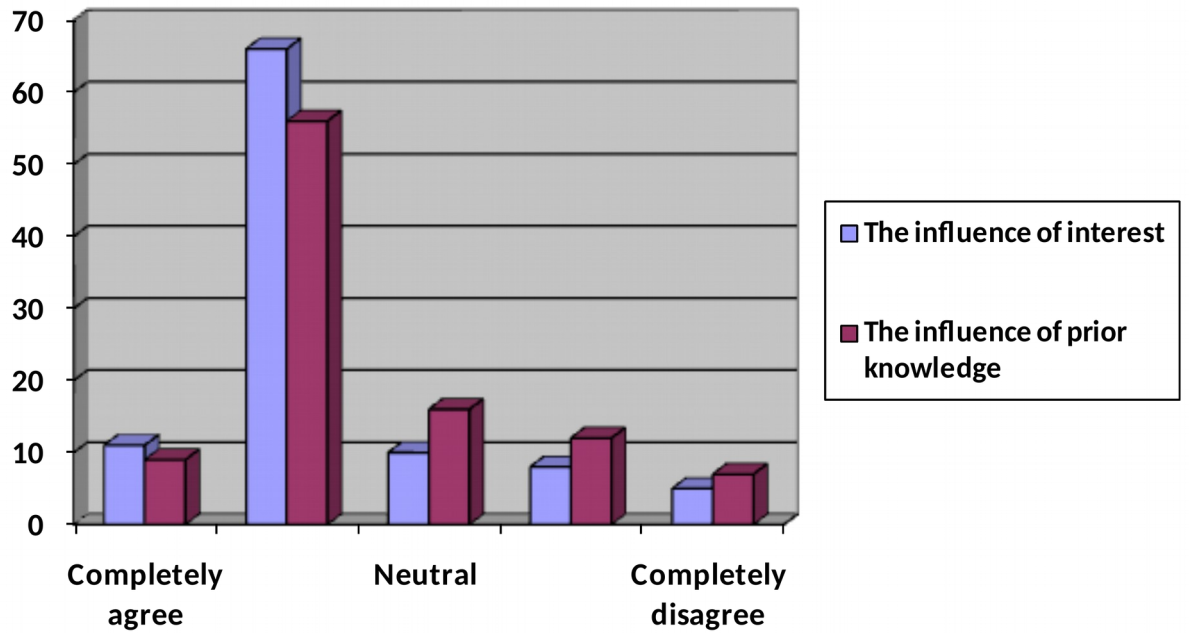
questionnaire had been delivered to 100 students at My Loc high school and Phan Dinh Phung high school to have a more comprehensive look at this issue with massive prominent useful findings for the research. From personal information at the beginning of the questionnaire one1, it could be noticeable to acquire that most of the 12<sup>th</sup> form students are subjects with enormous exposure to English. A vast number of the students around 58 percent specified that they had been learning English for 9 years since they had just been at primary school. The rest at 42 percent indicated a shorter period of time for experiencing English within 7 years when they started their lower secondary school. No students have been gaining English for 5 years or fewer. Additionally, thank to the second question, a common knowledge on students' current English level was revealed. In general, they are fair student with 89 percent and merely a proportion of 11 percent of students regarded themselves at average level. On the following parts, by attaching the matter of recognizing the skills they love most and practice the most, researcher able to perceive that there is little disparity among four skills they love but a clearer difference their application of the skills in their study. With more clarity, 31 percent of students is keen on reading, 27 percent has passion for listening and 21 percent each for speaking and writing. On the other hand, regarding of the most-practiced skills, reading makes up the 45 percent to become the most-practiced skill while speaking just accounts for 11 percent as the least-practiced. Apart from that, the other two - listening and writing are at 18 and 26 percent respectively. Although great attempts have been made to improve and promote evenly four skills in English language teaching, reading and grammar still claim their dominant role.

### **Discussion:**

In short, the study subjects all experienced more than 7 years of English learning with a fair learning capacity. More interestingly, reading is still considered as the most preferable skill among students although there has been a shift of preference for listening and speaking. Aside from that, the practice for reading is still prominent in education whereas the concentration and notice of listening, especially speaking is attached little attention to.

## ***1.2. Students' viewpoints on interest and prior knowledge in reading comprehension among students***

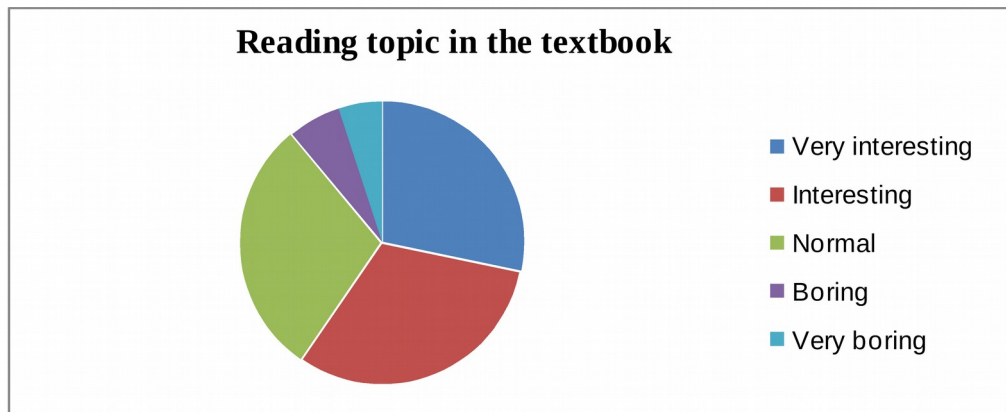
Researcher had chances to achieve deeper and valuable information in accordance with addressing some background questions corresponding to subjected-matter. Initially, through the questions about the degree of influence of interest on reading performance from students' perspectives, it is interesting to note that students highly appreciate the influence of interest rather than prior knowledge. Distinctively, 76 percent of students agrees or completely agrees and be aware of the interest's influence in comparison with 61 percent of students in favor of prior knowledge's influence partially or completely. Furthermore, large proportion of students commonly indicates their partial agreement for both interest's influence and prior knowledge's influence. In contrast with a strong favor of the influence, there were a small number at 8 percent and 12 percent respectively for interest and prior knowledge who partly disagree. Similarly, it is 5 percent and 7 percent respectively for interest and prior knowledge who completely disagree. In brief, it is fascinating to perceive that the majority has been conscious of the influence of interest and prior knowledge to some extent.



*Chart 1: Students' viewpoints of the influence of interest and prior knowledge.*

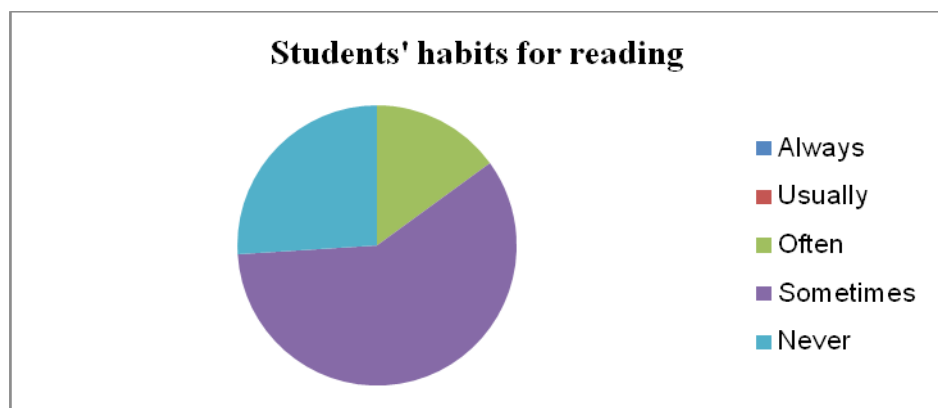
Followed by the above-mentioned questions, regarding issue whether reading topic in the textbook is interesting or not, investigator found down that 28 percent of students found reading topic exceptionally interesting whereas 5 percent more student considered it to be fairly interesting by 31 percent. Conversely, merely a small fraction at 11 percent of students felt bored with the available topic in the textbook and 30 more percent kept neutral.





*Chart 2: Students' opinions of the reading topic in the textbook.*

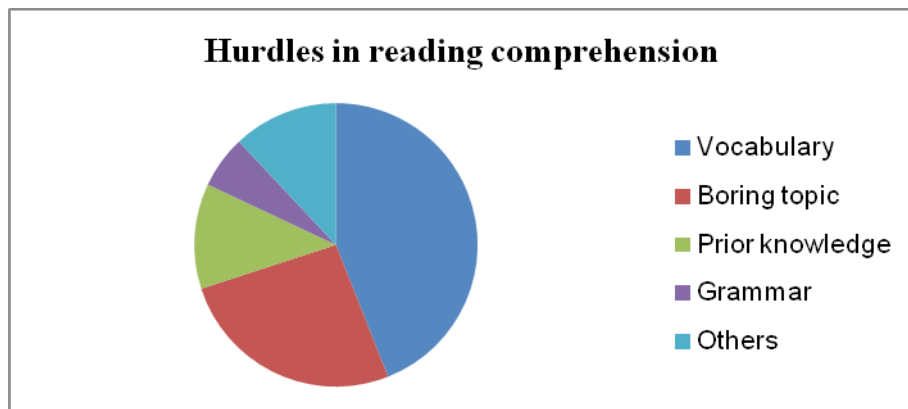
In the following part, further information about students' habits for reading were revealed with the majority at 59 percent of students who occasionally and another 38 percent never study other reading materials before a reading lesson. Among them barely 3 percent indicated a frequent reading in line with not a single percent for students who all the time or habitually read something before class.



*Chart 3: Students' habits for reading*

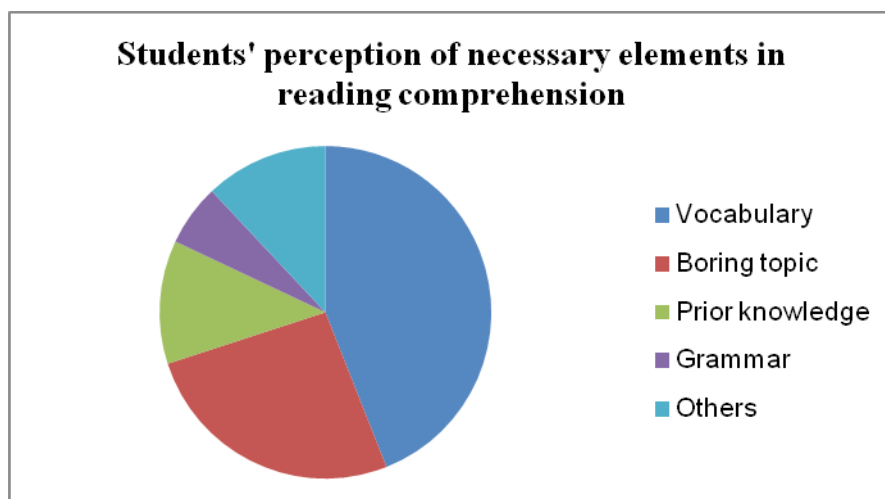
Furthermore, from the survey, some problems and elements of reading has been fully awarded by the students. Firstly, when being asked about the hurdles in reading comprehension, students find vocabulary is the most biggest troubles of all with nearly one half of the students (44%). Besides, about one third (26%) of learners had problems with uninteresting topics while 12 percent of the students had little knowledge on topics. Another 12 percent of students presented other opinions with an admission of vocabulary, interest and prior knowledge as reading

difficulties. The rest at 6 percent stated grammar as a single difficulty. For more detailed information, see the below pie chart.



*Chart 4: Hurdles in reading comprehension*

Secondly, concerning necessary elements for reading, students still considered vocabulary as the most important factor with 41 percent of the students. The following elements are interest for the intended topic by 23 percent; prior knowledge around 18 percent; grammar and structure with 12 percent and 6 percent for other elements. It is fully illustrated in the chart below:



*Chart 5: Students' perception of necessary elements in reading comprehension*

**Discussion:**

In this part, on the whole, we can notice that students somehow figured the influence of interest and prior knowledge on reading comprehension when some students stated their difficulties with boring topic and prior knowledge. However, the biggest hurdle as well as desirable element for them was still vocabulary. Furthermore, it was interesting to see that topics provided in the textbook favored among students. Lastly, more fascinatingly, the habit for reading before class was little outstanding when students merely sometimes read before class and a large number have not formed this habits.

**2. Research question 2 and 3:**

- *What are reading topic of interests among 12<sup>th</sup> form students?*
- *Which topics students possess a great deal of prior knowledge from their own perspective?*

**❖ Level of interest and prior knowledge on some specific topics in reading comprehension**

With a view to having a more comprehensive glance at interest and prior knowledge on some specific topics in reading comprehension in line with some common knowledge on the above questionnaires, a list of topics in reading was examined to define which topics students love most or least as well as own the most or least prior knowledge. Noticeable information was discovered as followed in the below table in Appendix D (*Raw data on Level of interest and prior knowledge on some specific topics in reading comprehension*). From the presented information in the table in appendix 3, several interesting facts of the most, average or least popular with highest, average or lowest topics have been posed. We were able to classify and make a note briefly of the five prominent topics as the following table with reference to level of interest and knowledge in original data table:

<b>Level</b>	<b>Highest level</b>	<b>Average level</b>	<b>Lowest</b>
<b>Criteria</b>			

<p><b>o Interest</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Famous songs or bands (90%)</li> <li>- Roles of movies and cinema (87%)</li> <li>- Types of movies and cinema (79%)</li> <li>- Famous place (90%)</li> <li>- Importance of friendship (79%),</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication (39%),</li> <li>- Kinds of jobs (39%),</li> <li>-Criminals (39%)</li> <li>- Flood (42%)</li> <li>- Drought (41%)</li> <li>-Roles of tourism (40%)</li> <li>-Materials of clothes (24%)</li> <li>- Clothes (19%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Roles in economy (50%)</li> <li>- Depression (57%)</li> <li>- Internal politics (53%)</li> <li>-Global political situations (50%)</li> <li>-Deforestation (50%)</li> </ul>
<p><b>o Prior knowledge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roles of music (76%)</li> <li>-Types of music (86%)</li> <li>- Famous bands or songs (85%),</li> <li>-Roles of movies and cinema (76%)</li> <li>- Types of movies and cinema (76%)</li> <li>- Specific movies (76%)</li> <li>-Importance of health (60%),</li> <li>-Famous place (58%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Marriage (57%)</li> <li>-Typical features of holidays and festivals (58%)</li> <li>-Materials of clothes (60%)</li> <li>- Clothes (65%)</li> <li>-Flood (58%)</li> <li>- Drought (58%)</li> <li>- Volcanoes (60%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Roles of economy (50%)</li> <li>- Depression (63%)</li> <li>-Economic growth (53%)</li> <li>- Roles of history (59%)</li> <li>- Internal politics (54%)</li> <li>- Global political situations (50%)</li> </ul>

*Table 5: Prominent topics with reference to level of interest and knowledge*

As noted in above table, the topic enjoyed highest level for both interest and prior knowledge is topic related to music about famous bands and songs (approximately an average of over 85 percent for both), other topics possessed a high level of percentage but not as high one as famous bands and songs of music. In

the second place, as regards of average level of interest and prior knowledge, it was noticeable to see that many topics enjoyed average level of interest and prior knowledge and existed just few disparities on account of percentage among various topics. Concerning the highest percentage for average level of interest and prior knowledge, flood and drought were identified. Finally, among lowest level for both interest and prior knowledge, depression of the economy was least favored and accumulated when around 60 percent of students addressed a poor level of interest and prior knowledge.

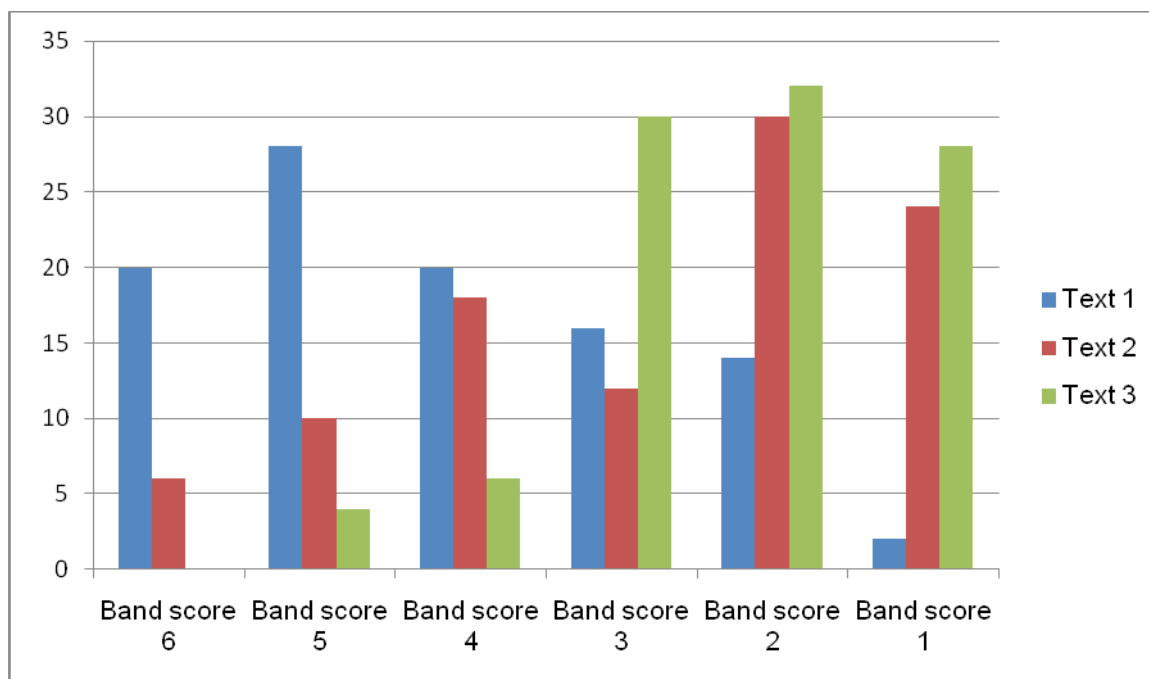
### **Discussion:**

To sum up, commencing from the detailed results illustrated above, we can take notice of the following truths. First and foremost, music, films and cinemas, famous place and friendship are common topics for the majority. Simultaneously, these topics were also mastered greatly among students. In addition, it was noteworthy to be aware that concerning several topics, students might be able to feel desired for reading. However, reading with this desire has not been an easy task yet because of your knowledge for this. Students are interested in some topics but their knowledge can be not high as their interest. With the exception of these things, as mentioned the last point, researcher would love to stress the common knowledge that some topics like politics, history, economy normally seem not to be interesting and as a result, people will not have much knowledge for these matters. Another point to note is that concerning topic at average level, as compared between interest and prior knowledge, the element of prior knowledge got larger proportion because of a moderate level of knowledge that we can measure while interest were open to our emotion and difficult to measure. Therefore, generally, our belief for interest will greatly open in comparison with our belief for knowledge.

### ***3. Research question 4: To what extent interest and prior knowledge affect students' understanding of the given reading test***

#### ***Reading test***

After obtaining three prominently different topics from questionnaire one and careful pilot to check the reliability and validity of the test, a reading test were conducted officially at 12<sup>th</sup> form class at My Loc high school. The results could be summarized briefly in the below table. (See a full raw statistics in appendix E.)



*Chart 6: Reading test scores among 50 students.*

On the basis of the evidence on the above chart, it is conspicuous to witness the classification and differences of reading performance among these three texts. The first reading text about Gangnam Style, a famous songs these days which was known as highest level for both interest and prior knowledge experienced highest percentage score whereas the test about “Vietnam’s economy in 2012” held the lowest percentage score. With maximum reading score, 20 percent of students attained all the correct answers in the first text while no student got the maximum score for economic topic. Additionally, more than two third of the students scored 4, 5 or 6 in the reading text one at a full amount of 68 percent. Conversely, reading text three simply got 10 percent for all three scores at 4, 5 or 6. For the score scale from 1 to 3, reading text three stood and kept a large proportion at 90 percent for all while there was merely 32 percent for reading text one. The reading text two did not show a sharp difference by figure with the two others. Generally, students

performed in score scale neither at low level as reading text three nor at high level as reading text one. Instead, the proportions were respectively 34 percent and 66 percent at the central point in reading text two for band score from 4 to 6 and from 1 to 3.

### **Discussion:**

In general, reading test has revealed satisfactory results when reading performances of topics “music” was the highest and created a clear difference with the other two texts. Moreover, in survey procedure, the researcher also had chances to converse with some students and attained some interesting information as followed. High levels of interest and prior knowledge helps to shorten test time because it takes less time. Conversely, it takes more time with lower level of interest and prior knowledge. Another pretty interesting information by recording from some students is that students may lose concentration when coping with boring and unfamiliar topics.

#### ***4. Research question 5: What techniques can be implemented to enhance reading proficiency from the researcher’s perspective?***

The answer for this question is mainly drawn from some valuable sources of knowledge in the literature review and from helpful experiences of 10 teachers at high school through questionnaire. It can be summarized with the following precious findings:

##### ***4.1. Techniques in enhancing prior knowledge***

###### ***4.1.1. The general information of the application of these techniques***

At the beginning of the questionnaire in this part was the general information of the application of these techniques and a large amount of interesting information was acknowledged. First of all, when being asked about the frequency of using these techniques, 100 percent of the teachers used techniques to enhance prior knowledge for reading in 5 minutes at the beginning of reading lesson for the purpose of providing students with background knowledge and vocabulary,

increasing their interest in the reading topics, enhancing or boosting reading capabilities. More interestingly, teachers highly valued the effectiveness of these techniques by aiding for the followings as the benefits of employing these techniques:

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Number of teachers agreed</b>
Faster reading	7
Better comprehension	6
More prior knowledge	8
More vocabulary	9

*Table 6: Benefits of interest and prior knowledge from teacher's perspective*

#### **4.1.2. Techniques teachers apply**

In the presence of perceptions and awareness of these techniques, the following table would illustrate more comprehensively the application of teachers:

<b>Techniques</b>	<b>Number of teachers favored</b>
Assigning wide reading information as a homework.	3
Providing more in-depth ideas regarding the topic	5
Guessing true or false statements; guessing about: content, author, reader; conducting suggestive questions	9
Asking free writing about the topics of the texts	3
Brainstorming and listing, drawing a word map	8
Use listening comprehension	1
Use pictures or photos, videos, visual aids	4
Engage students in discussion	7
Teach text structures and vocabulary	4

*Table 7: Techniques that teachers apply*

As can be seen from the table, an overview of the application of techniques to increase prior knowledge was revealed with a prevalence of some techniques. For instance, eight out of ten teachers usually brainstorm, list, and draw a word map about things related to the topics of the texts when nine teachers let students guess true, false statements, guess about: content, author, reader or conduct suggestive questions. Another popular technique applied frequently among seven teachers is the engagement in discussion. Other techniques are also exploited but lesser in comparison with preceding techniques. Specifically, use pictures or photos, videos, visual aids and teach text structures and vocabulary are supported by four teachers while five people stated providing more in-depth ideas regarding the topic as one of



their application. Asking for writing, assigning wide reading information about people, places, events and situations for the students as homework is favored by three teachers. As a final point, using listening comprehension seems to be less preferential among teachers because only one person stated this technique.

#### 4.2. Assessment of the effective of these techniques

The following table shows teachers' assessment of the effectiveness of these techniques

1                      →                      3                      →                      5  
*Not effective at all      Fairly effective                      Very effective*

<b>Techniques</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Assigning wide reading information as a homework.	1	3	3	2	1
Providing more in-depth ideas regarding the topic	0	0	3	4	3
Guessing true or false statements; guessing about: content, author, reader; conducting suggestive questions	0	0	0	5	5
Asking free writing about the topics of the texts	1	1	3	3	2
Brainstorming and listing, drawing a word map	0	0	1	4	5
Use listening comprehension	1	3	2	3	1
Use pictures or photos, videos, visual aids	0	0	3	4	3
Engage students in discussion	0	0	2	5	3
Teach text structures and vocabulary	0	3	3	3	1

*Table 8: Teachers' assessment of the effective of these techniques*

A quick look at the table, it was noticeable that there were three techniques teachers appraised for being useful namely *discussion; suggestive question, true or false statement; brainstorm, listing and drawing map*. More than 80 percent of the teacher being asked claimed these techniques to be effective or greatly effective. In comparison with high appreciation for these above three techniques, *teaching text structure and vocabulary; using listening comprehension; asking free writing; and assigning wide reading information as a homework* did not receive a high approval for effectiveness. There were four out of ten people did not considered using listening comprehension and assigning wide reading at home as an effective technique.

### **Discussion:**

All in all, from this survey among teachers, it is conspicuous to note that teachers at high school have been aware of the influence of interest and prior knowledge. Teachers have been making great effort to use variety of techniques to enhance reading comprehension. More interesting, from the data, the researcher recognizes that techniques which teachers frequently use normally are stated to be effective. Discussion; suggestive question, true or false statement; brainstorm, listing and drawing map are among the most effective and popular to teachers in boosting prior knowledge.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

In the previous chapters, the introduction, the literature, the implementation and the results with discussions have been reported in great detail. In this chapter, a summary of findings together with pedagogical implications, limitations and contributions of the research and suggestions for further studies will be put forward.

### **1. Major findings**

With extensive, in-depth questionnaires closely followed the research questions, the researcher collected fruitful valuable information and findings in answer to the research questions as follows:

Firstly, for the first research question, with a view to taking a look at students' viewpoint on two elements: interest, prior knowledge and their influence on reading. It can be seen that students have just been aware of these elements at a fairly low level. As a result, spending time to enhancing these elements is not common among them. Additionally, the element students pay attention greatly when reading comprehension is vocabulary.

Secondly, after the survey on interest and knowledge of wide range of topic, students normally have feeling for common things in their life like music, films and cinemas, friends, famous people, popular things. Perhaps they contact enormously with this. In addition, the more their love set on the topic, the more knowledge they hold. However, there are numerous topics that students hold average or low knowledge or passion for. Consequently, it reminds us of ongoing accumulation for this weakness or shortage.

In the third place, owing to the test, we found down the influence of between two elements. It can be note that the performance in reading greatly influenced by your interest and your knowledge on this topic.

As mentioned the final points, the techniques from teachers' perspective in order to enhance prior knowledge as perceived by the students, cover a wide range of activities and it has been applying under the present context of education and demonstrating the effectiveness for teaching and learning English.

## **2. Pedagogical implications**

After this research countless noteworthy findings has been realized. From researcher's perspective, it is strongly recommended that the following implications can be utilized to enhance the reading skill as well as English teaching reality in our education.

"People learn to read, and read better, by reading"

David Eskey (1986, p. 21)

Without any shred of doubt, teachers and students at high school will contribute for any further improvement of learning and teaching reading. On account of researcher's standpoint, the researcher holds a strong belief; teachers play an indispensable role for raising students' awareness of the role of interest and prior knowledge in reading comprehension as well as ceaselessly apply, and supervise students to ensure better reading performance. It can be reviewed of

effective and popular techniques in the literature review as well as a thorough investigation with experienced teachers as followed:

1. Brainstorming and listing things related to the reading topics
2. Drawing a word map related to the topics of the texts
3. Guessing whether the statements related to reading topics are true or false
4. Conducting suggestive questions about the topics of the texts
5. Engage students in discussion

*Tables 9. Techniques for enhancing prior knowledge*

### **3. Limitations of the study**

It is unavoidable that the study presented in this thesis still has its limitations due to the limited scope, the time constraint and other objective factors.

Firstly, the researcher is fully aware of the need for checking reliability using a more precise instrument for instance Cronbach alpha for the reason of limited ability and the researcher just stopped at checking the validity and reliability within researcher's limited ability.

Secondly, the limited number of teachers involved in the study is another limitation. Therefore, it must be admitted that some interesting techniques may be not fully investigated among just ten teachers.

Since the researcher was fully aware if these limitations, most of the findings were considered initial findings, offering the opportunities for further research in the future to further validate the findings.

### **4. Suggestion for further study**

With reference to these limitations mentioned above, it is strongly recommended that further study will be aware of these limitations. Firstly, for more

reliable method of validating, the use of Cronbach Alpha will benefit you a lot if you can handle it to increase the quality of testing – important part of our education.

Furthermore, the researcher also strongly proposes a larger survey with teachers to achieve more comprehensive look at the problems. Expectedly, the results of such studies would be extremely helpful in providing a complete picture about current situation of applying learner autonomy in Vietnam educational setting.

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**APPENDIX A: GENERAL INFORMATION ON INTEREST AND PRIOR  
KNOWLEDGE**

**Questionnaire 1**

**I. Personal information**

Your name: .....

School: .....

**II. Background information**

1. How long have you been learning English?  
A. 3 years    B. 5 years    C. 7 years    D. 9 years
2. Which skills in English do you love most?  
A. Reading    B. Listening    C. Speaking    D. Writing
3. Which skills do you practice the most at school?  
A. Reading    B. Listening    C. Speaking    D. Writing

**III. Reading comprehension question**

1. When doing reading comprehension, to what extent do you agree that interest influence your performance?

*Totally disagree* *Completely agree*

----->

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. To what extent do you agree that prior knowledge affects your performance?

*Totally disagree* *Completely agree*

----->

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. Do you find the text in your course book interesting to read?

*So boring*                      *Boring*                      *Neutral*                      *Quite interesting*                      *Very interesting*

----->

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. How often do you read before class at home?

A. Never                      B. Sometimes                      C. Often                      D. Usually                      E. Always

5. What impedes your reading of an English text?

A. Grammar                      B. Vocabulary                      C. Unfamiliar topic                      D. Boring topic                      E. All

6. Which factors do you think is necessary for you to understand a text?

A. New vocabulary                      C. Knowledge related to the topics  
B. Grammar and structures                      D. Interesting topics

**7. State your level of interest in these topics in reading comprehension by putting a tick (✓) on suitable column of level.**

Topics	Level	Low	Fairly low	Neutral	Fairly high	High
<b>1. Family</b> ✓ Roles ✓ Types ✓ Marriage						
<b>2. Love</b> ✓ Importance ✓ Types ✓ Elements						
<b>3. Culture</b> ✓ Patterns ✓ Roles ✓ Specific one						
<b>4. Communication</b> ✓ Type ✓ Roles ✓ Element						
<b>5. Job</b> ✓ Kinds ✓ Roles ✓ Unemployment ✓ Employment						
<b>6. Economy</b> ✓ Roles ✓ Types ✓ Depression ✓ Growth						
<b>7. Sports</b> ✓ Benefits ✓ Types ✓ Major events						
<b>8. Friendship</b> ✓ Elements ✓ Types ✓ Importance						
<b>9. Holidays and festivals</b> ✓ Introduction of specific holidays ✓ The origins of these holidays)						
<b>10. Education</b> ✓ Types ✓ Roles						
<b>11. History</b> ✓ Specific events ✓ Roles						
<b>12. Music</b> ✓ Roles ✓ Types ✓ Famous songs or bands						
<b>13. Movies</b> ✓ Types ✓ Roles ✓ Specific films			52			
<b>14. Health</b> ✓ Importance ✓ Ways to be healthy						
<b>15. Animals</b>						

**8. State your level of prior knowledge on these topics in reading comprehension by putting a tick (✓) in suitable column of level.**

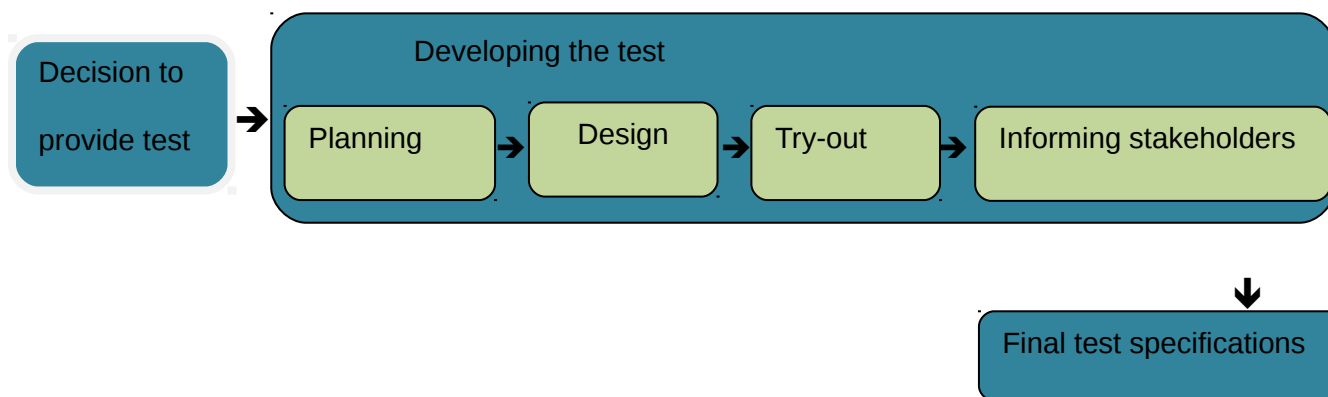


Topics	Level	Low	Fairly low	Neutral	Fairly high	High
<b>1. Family</b> ✓ Roles ✓ Types ✓ Marriage						
<b>2. Love</b> ✓ Importance ✓ Types ✓ Elements						
<b>3. Culture</b> ✓ Patterns ✓ Roles ✓ Specific one						
<b>4. Communication</b> ✓ Type ✓ Roles ✓ Element						
<b>5. Job</b> ✓ Kinds ✓ Roles ✓ Unemployment ✓ Employment						
<b>6. Economy</b> ✓ Roles ✓ Types ✓ Depression ✓ Growth						
<b>7. Sports</b> ✓ Benefits ✓ Types ✓ Major events						
<b>8. Friendship</b> ✓ Elements ✓ Types ✓ Importance						
<b>9. Holidays and festivals</b> ✓ Introduction of specific holidays ✓ The origins of these holidays)						
<b>10. Education</b> ✓ Types ✓ Roles						
<b>11. History</b> ✓ Specific events ✓ Roles						
<b>12. Music</b> ✓ Roles ✓ Types ✓ Famous songs or bands						
<b>13. Movies</b> ✓ Types ✓ Roles ✓ Specific films			54			
<b>14. Health</b> ✓ Importance ✓ Ways to be healthy						
<b>15. Animals</b>						



## APPENDIX B: Development of the reading test

The process of developing the test (*Manual Language Test-ALTE-2011*)



**1. Decision to provide test:** In my graduation thesis, I would like to investigate further the influence of interest and prior knowledge on reading comprehension. Therefore, on the very first step of the research, I carried out a survey among students to get general information and define interest and prior knowledge among students. After that, in order to draw a firm conclusion and work out the influence, I need to launch tests to examine and confirm the relationship between students' interest, prior knowledge and their performance in reading comprehension. For that reason, it is necessary to build up a collection of reading tests to study in details the influence of a range of level of interest and prior knowledge on reading capability.

**2. Planning:** Under the guide information of the manual language test – ALTE in 2011 and CEFR scale. Test developers are fully aware of the following:

**a. Characteristics of the test takers:**

- Age: 18-19 years old
- Gender: female and male
- Social situation: Students at secondary school.
- Educational situation: Grade 12 students, study English as the second language for 7 to 9 years.
- Mother tongue: Vietnamese.

**b. The purpose of the test:** formative function and research purpose (a bachelor's graduation thesis on English major in the field of English Language Teaching Methodology)

**c. Educational context:**

*Curriculum:* compulsory subject with 4 hours per week; textbook is called 7 year program textbook and designed under 4 integrated skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing ) in accordance with the teaching of pronunciation and grammar in language focus parts.

❖ **Methodological approach:** The widely accepted method is traditional which focuses on the teaching of grammar rules with a heavy load of grammar exercises and reading, rote learning of sentence patterns and vocabulary. The lessons are mainly teacher-dominated with grammar-centered content to meet the demand of the grammar-based exams.(Le Hung Tien, 2011)

**d. Learning objectives:** Focus mainly on checking language knowledge rather than language skills, the teaching and learning heavily emphasize on grammar, reading and writing. (Le Hung Tien, 2011)

**e. Standard:** Using CEFR to justify and select suitable test format and text for the reading test. According to Le Hung Tien in his thesis, in the recent years a series of conferences and seminars at various levels were organized with an aim to work out solutions for foreign language education in Vietnam. Under the issue of Decision 1400-QD-TTg by the Prime Minister approving the Project of foreign language teaching and learning in the national system for the 2008-2020 periods, the Ministry of Education and Training has issued the Common Framework of Levels of Foreign Language Proficiency, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEFR). This Framework includes 6 levels equivalent to those of

CEFR and the national foreign language education curriculum will be designed accordingly. The new curriculum defines that students at the completion of Primary education should reach Level 1 (A1 of CEFR), at the completion of Lower secondary education Level 2 (A2 CEFR) and General school leavers should reach Level 3 (B1 CEFR). My test takers are 12<sup>th</sup> form students-general school leaver and subjected to check the influence of interest and prior knowledge on reading comprehension. As a result, I utilized the CEFR for reading skills for B1 level.

***f. Test results:*** used to evaluate, support and come up with a conclusion for the study as well as utilize, facilitate the techniques to increase reading comprehension among students and equip them in the global context under the prominent development of English language.

***g. The number of expected test takers:*** 50 students

***h. When the test should be ready:*** After finishing the collection of data on general information of students' interest and prior knowledge.

***i. Test method:*** Multiple choice questions

### ***3. Design***

#### **a. Building the standard under the CEFR for reading skills as following:**

According to the new curriculum in our country, general school leavers should reach Level 3 (B1 CEFR). Therefore, the subjects of the test, 12<sup>th</sup> form-students are considered to be at B1 level of CEFR under these descriptions in reading skill:

- ***Overall reading comprehension:*** Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.
- ***Reading for information and argument:*** Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.
- ***Mental operations required for reading:*** Can read with a satisfactory level of comprehension. Can understand well enough to correspond regularly with a pen friend. Can recognize the line of argument though not necessarily in detail, can recognize

significant points, and can identify the main conclusions. Can scan in order to locate desired information and gather information in order to fulfill a specific task.

- **Text source:** Reads and understands short literary (fiction and poetry) and factual texts which refer to the experience of the students and are appropriate for them.
- **Topics and nature of content:** understands texts which refer to the students' personal and everyday experiences, their personal and social everyday experiences, their personal and social environment, with concrete and semi-abstract and/or technical content.
- **Organization of the text:** Understands texts that are reasonably well structured
- **Reading processes:** Reads and understands details and main ideas in adapted and semi- authentic texts, understands facts, most arguments, facts, attitudes and significant points of the text, understands differences between main and detailed information (facts and attitudes) in descriptive and narrative text, predict and infer about the meaning of the words/phrases from the context by using different strategies.
- **Vocabulary and Grammar:** Shows good control of elementary vocabulary, reads and understands texts with a reasonably wide range of vocabulary and in school pre wide range of vocabulary and in school pre-learnt grammatical structures and with individual idiomatic structures
- **Support:** can find relevant information, using a dictionary, in non-professional but reasonably complex texts to fill in information gaps; can understand the content and do the task if given time for the content and do the task if given time for more readings.
- **Literary texts:** understands shorter adapted literary texts s on different levels (events from the characters' perspective, theme/s, text structure, genre etc).

*(Retrieved and summarized from Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – Level estimation grid for teachers)*

#### **b. Design reading tests or test format.**

The reading text are designed by using multiple choice questions: According to Winerip (2006), forty-two percent of students are now taking state reading and math tests that are entirely multiple-choice. As teachers already know, students need to be aware that multiple-choice items often require higher-level thinking. The multiple-choice format does not always require simple factual recall.

Students need to be aware that multiple-choice answers may not always be obvious. They need to reflect upon the question, the text, and the offered answer choices before selecting a response, so it requires a indeed. Since 2008, our country has shifted from written test to multiple-choice exams in variety of subjects especially English. Thus, this is a familiar format for the 12<sup>th</sup> form students to avoid distorting the results. For each passage, researcher will develop suitable multiple choice questions for comprehension purposes under the supervision of the supervisor and secondary teachers.

**c. Test requirements with practical considerations**

**-Validity:**

**-Test development:**

<i>Test development</i>	<i>Generalization</i>	<i>Extrapolation</i>
<i>Evidence for</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The test is designed under a test format and specification of the CEFR standard.</li> <li>-There is a balance in testing among 4 target texts in examination in terms of level of difficulty, test items and so on.</li> <li>-Pilot study among 10 12<sup>th</sup> form students before handling for the target test takers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-A detailed description of the test takers at B1 level of CEFR standard are given to help us identify the subjects.</li> <li>-Previous records on the present qualification of test takers from the teacher's test takers.</li> </ul>

**-Test production:**

<i>Test production</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Generalization</i>	<i>Extrapolation</i>

<i>Evidence for</i>	-All markings keys are correct and prepared with great care and the supervision of the experienced teachers. -Grammar books, dictionaries and expert knowledge can be used to verify this.	-item in one test from represent the construct just as much as the items in another form. It is unlikely that exactly the same areas because we are testing comprehension among a wide range of topics.	-The researcher being the fourth year student for the degree of Bachelor at University of Languages and International Studies with the comments and appraisal of the supervisor and experienced teachers at high school.
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**-Test delivery:**

<i>Test delivery</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Generalization</i>
<i>Evidence for</i>	Procedures were followed during test administration. This will help to show that the test score is not influenced by other factors (such as to much or too little time)	Procedures have always been followed and will help to show that test forms are comparable.

**-Marking, grading and the reporting of results:**

<i>Marking, grading and reporting of results</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Generalization</i>



<i>Evidence for</i>	-Procedures were followed during marking. This will help to show that the test score is not influenced by other factors (such as use of the wrong key, scanning errors) -Marking was accurate and reliable because the test format is multiple choice questions which are broadly known for its objective value.	Evidence of score reliability (statistical evidence) can show that this test from measures test takers in a consistent way
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- **Reliability:** Measure the reliability of the test through item discrimination index, the difficulty level and results of students at the same level in the reading test on 10 pilot tests to define the reliability:

-Items or task type: multiple choice questions.

-Marking scheme: Marking was accurate and reliable because the test format is multiple choice questions which are broadly known for its objective value.

- **Authenticity:**

According to Nunan (1988), authentic material describes those that “reflect the outside world” and “have been produced for purposes other than to teach language”. Therefore authentic materials can be seen as print materials that occur naturally in the lives of learners outside their classroom (Purcell-Gates and colleagues, 2001). Authentic text is real writing that has been published in a magazine, a book or an online or print newspaper or journal. Students at B1 level are students who can understand texts referring to the students' personal and everyday experiences, their personal and social everyday experiences, their personal and social environment, with concrete and semi-abstract and/or technical content.

All of the reading texts are retrieved from short reading passage in a book or online, print newspaper or journal recognized as reliable source like [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), [www.yougov.co.uk](http://www.yougov.co.uk), [www.heartlight.org](http://www.heartlight.org), [travel.nytimes.com](http://travel.nytimes.com), [www.caregivingfoundation.org](http://www.caregivingfoundation.org), and etc.

Text	Sources
Reading passage 1	<a href="http://www.billboard.biz/bbbiz/industry/digital-and-mobile/psy-s-gangnam-style-video-hits-1-billion-1008059152.story#qyBSAiHlIsbzG1RZ.99.html">http://www.billboard.biz/bbbiz/industry/digital-and-mobile/psy-s-gangnam-style-video-hits-1-billion-1008059152.story#qyBSAiHlIsbzG1RZ.99.html</a> .
Reading passage 2	<a href="http://library.thinkquest.org/C003603/english/earthquakes/earthquakedamage.s.html">http://library.thinkquest.org/C003603/english/earthquakes/earthquakedamage.s.html</a> . and <a href="http://www.dhd10.org/assets/90/Flood.pdf.html">http://www.dhd10.org/assets/90/Flood.pdf.html</a> .
Reading passage 3	<a href="http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/12/26/vietnam-in-2012-lower-inflation-amidst-slower-growth.html">http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/12/26/vietnam-in-2012-lower-inflation-amidst-slower-growth.html</a> . and <a href="http://www.vietnam-briefing.com/news/vietnams-gdp-growth-slowest-decade.html">http://www.vietnam-briefing.com/news/vietnams-gdp-growth-slowest-decade.html</a> .

**- Readability:**

On the account of readability, researcher utilized both the Flesch Reading Ease formula and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level formula. These formulas are considered the standard by some federal government agencies and some private companies. It is generally the minimum reading grade level required to read the text as the following:

Flesch (1949, p.149), described his Reading Ease scale in this way:

<i>Reading Ease</i>	<i>Style Description</i>	<i>Average No. of</i>	<i>Average sentence</i>	<i>Estimated Reading</i>
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<i>Score</i>		<i>syllable</i>	<i>length in</i>	<i>Grade</i>
			<i>words</i>	
0 to 30	Very Difficult	192 or more	29 or more	College graduate
30 to 40	Difficult	167	25	13 <sup>th</sup> to 16 grade
50 to 60	Fairly difficult	155	21	10 to 12 grade
60 to 70	Standard	147	17	8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> grade
70 to 80	Fairly easy	139	14	7 <sup>th</sup> grade
80 to 90	Easy	131	11	6 <sup>th</sup> grade
90 to 100	Very easy	123 or less	8 or less	5 <sup>th</sup> grade

According to that readability formula, if the score is 100 or very close to 100, it indicates that it is an extremely simple document, while the score which is very close to 0 would describe a very complex document to read. The readability scores between 60 and 70 are considered acceptable because these texts are quite standard; they are not much difficult or not easy and suitable for the grade 12 students at pre-intermediate level to perceive the texts. As for grade level, it is the level based on the USA education system, therefore the level between our country and America education are not the same.

**- Reading passage 1:**

<i>Readability Formula</i>	<i>Score/ Grade</i>
<i>Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease</i>	70.1

<i>Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level</i>	7.6
<i>Gunning-Fog Score</i>	9.8
<i>Coleman-Liau Index</i>	9.7
<i>SMOG Index</i>	7.4
<i>Automated Readability Index</i>	6.5
<i>Average Grade Level</i>	8.0

Text Statistics:

<i>Character Count</i>	1,416
<i>Syllable Count</i>	471
<i>Word Count</i>	341
<i>Sentence Count</i>	22
<i>Characters per Word</i>	4.2
<i>Syllables per Word</i>	1.4
<i>Words per sentence</i>	15.5

**- Reading passage 2:**

<b><i>Readability Formula</i></b>	<b><i>Score/ Grade</i></b>
<i>Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease</i>	66

<i>Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level</i>	8.4
<i>Gunning-Fog Score</i>	11.4
<i>Coleman-Liau Index</i>	10.3
<i>SMOG Index</i>	8.3
<i>Automated Readability Index</i>	8.2
<i>Average Grade Level</i>	9.3

Text Statistics:

<i>Character Count</i>	1, 394
<i>Syllable Count</i>	457
<i>Word Count</i>	314
<i>Sentence Count</i>	18
<i>Characters per Word</i>	4.4
<i>Syllabloes per Word</i>	1.5
<i>Words per sentence</i>	17.4

**- Reading passage 3:**

<b>Readability Formula</b>	<b>Score/ Grade</b>
<i>Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease</i>	69.7

<i>Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level</i>	7
<i>Gunning-Fog Score</i>	9
<i>Coleman-Liau Index</i>	9.9
<i>SMOG Index</i>	7.1
<i>Automated Readability Index</i>	6
<i>Average Grade Level</i>	7.8

Text Statistics:

<i>Character Count</i>	1,505
<i>Syllable Count</i>	502
<i>Word Count</i>	345
<i>Sentence Count</i>	25
<i>Characters per Word</i>	4.4
<i>Syllables per Word</i>	1.5
<i>Words per sentence</i>	13.8

❖ **Test format**

- **Content and overview**

<b>Paper/ Timing</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>No. of questions</b>	<b>Test focus</b>
<i>Reading text 1</i> <i>(15 minutes)</i>	Multiple-choice questions with four options	6	2 questions on meaning of the words and 1 question on the main idea of the reading passage and 3 inference questions
<i>Reading text 2</i> <i>(15 minutes)</i>	Multiple-choice questions with four options	6	2 questions on meaning of the words, 1 question on the main idea of the reading passage and 3 inference questions
<i>Reading text 3</i> <i>(15 minutes)</i>	Multiple-choice questions with four options	6	2 questions on meaning of the words, 1 question on the main idea of the reading passage and 3 inference questions

**-General description**

<b>Descriptors</b>	
<b>Paper format</b>	The paper consists of 3 reading texts on a range of level of interest and prior knowledge and accompanied by tasks in forms of multiple-choice questions. A text includes several short sections with no more than 350 words.
<b>Timing</b>	15 minutes for each
<b>No. of questions</b>	18
<b>Task types</b>	4 option multiple choice
<b>Text types</b>	Informational texts, articles and reports

<b>Length of texts</b>	No more than 350 words per text
<b>Answer format</b>	Circle the correct answer
<b>Marks</b>	All questions carry one mark to make comparison among texts with a range of level of interest and prior knowledge

#### ***4. Try-out: (piloting data)***

Piloting data with the questionnaire on the general information of interest and prior knowledge on reading comprehension as well as the reading test helped define firmly the influence among these factors, test developer found out that:

<b><i>Findings of the pilot</i></b>	<b><i>Specific illustration</i></b>
Questions and task types in use work well with the population the test targeting although there still have some errors hurdling test takers	<p>-The general information of interest and prior knowledge questionnaire, in question six part two, the use of words “things” in the answer “things related to the topics” is ambiguous to understand and call for a clearer correction.</p> <p>-The question 7 with a list of topics to label interest and prior knowledge initially just have general topic with sub-types and researcher merely required students stated their opinions for the whole. In this way, it will be difficult to sort out reliable and suitable types for testing.</p> <p>-In reading test, one questions have unclear expression and cause the misunderstanding of the students (question 2-reading</p>





<b>Description of the test taker</b>	+Age 17 upwards; majority 17-18; majority are Vietnamese learners who study English as second language.			
<b>Test level</b>	B1			
<b>Text source</b>	+Examination materials, teaching materials or those specifically written for L2 learners and suitable for B1 learners such as articles, adverts, brochures, magazines. +Authenticity of text is noticeable	See more on the authenticity in the previous part	See more on the authenticity in the previous part	See more on the authenticity in the previous part
<b>Text types</b>	General interest, literary, non-literary <i>e.g. correspondence, news items, instructions, guidebooks etc.</i>	News item	News item	News item
<b>Discourse type</b>	Narrative, descriptive, argumentative, expository, persuasive	Descriptive	Descriptive	Descriptive
<b>Style</b>	Formal and informal; literary, non-literary	Formal and literary	Formal and literary	Formal and literary

<b>Nature of content</b>	Both abstract and concrete	Concrete	Concrete	Concrete
<b>Size of texts</b>	Texts are quite short and be composed of a few words ( <i>titles of articles, captions from photographs, announcements, etc.</i> ) or they are extended ( <i>e.g. a magazine article, an editorial, a personal letter, a story, a telephone exchange</i> ). Based on PET – at B1 level, the researcher take an average of 350 word in this test system.	332 words from an article in the online newspaper	312 words from an article in the online newspaper	332 words from an article in the online newspaper
<b>Number of texts</b>	3 texts			
<b>Test methods</b>	Multiple choices with major focus on comprehension skill.			
<b>Topic areas</b>	Sort out from the questionnaire of topic interest and prior knowledge:	Music ( <i>Topic which students are greatly engrossed and possess enormous amount of knowledge</i> )	Natural disaster ( <i>Topic students are largely interested in but hold modest amount of knowledge</i> )	Economy ( <i>Topic students principally detest and hold modest amount of knowledge.</i> )

<b>Number of items per text</b>	6 items per text with the following type: guessing the closest meaning of a word, main idea of a passage or a whole reading passage, the content of a specific sentence, the sentences which are true or false according to the content of the reading passage.
<b>Time for test</b>	15 minutes/ per text
<b>Overall reading comprehension</b>	Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension
<b>Reading correspondence</b>	Can read correspondence relating to his/ her field of interest and grasp the essential meaning.
<b>Reading for orientation</b>	+ Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, or from different texts in order to fulfill a specific task. + Can find and understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents.
<b>Reading for information and argument</b>	Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.
<b>Vocabulary control</b>	Shows good control of elementary vocabulary
<b>Vocabulary range</b>	Has a sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to his/her everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.
<b>Mental operations required for</b>	Can read with a satisfactory level of comprehension. Can understand well enough to correspond regularly with a pen friend. Can recognize the line of argument though not necessarily in detail, can recognize significant points, and can identify the main conclusions. Can scan in order to locate desired information

<i>reading</i>	and gather information in order to fulfill a specific task.
<i>Readability check for the text</i>	Use the Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level scales
<i>Reliability check for the multiple choice items in reading test.</i>	Use the item discrimination index, the difficulty level to check the multiple choice items. These assessments are fractional and separate on the basis of test items. They have not fully reflected the most reliability of the whole test. Nevertheless, for the reason of researcher's knowledge and experience deficiency, researcher are not able to handle a more effective methods to check reliability namely Cronbach's Alpha-a more effective check for reliability.

### Vocabulary check:

Vocabulary check under CEFR scale using "English Vocabulary Profile" retrieved from <http://vocabulary.englishprofile.org/staticfiles/about.html>.

Reading text	Level B1	Level B2	Level C1 or more.
<b>Text 1:</b> Checking possible 40 new words out of 332 words of the text.	31 words are at B1 level: <i>become, reach, pass, continue, popular, record, decrease, fall, likely, stay, position, success, difficult, discover, amazing, global, pleasing, main,</i>	4 words are at B2 level <i>-comparison, evidence, currently, statistics</i>	5 words from C1 level and more. <i>-debut, throne, equine</i>

	<i>chart, provide, local, track, hold, attraction, style, forecast, share, send, in close to, watched, listened.</i>		<i>Phenomenon, distribution milestone</i>
<b>Text 2:</b> Checking possible 38 new words out of 314 words of the text.	28 words are at B1 level: <i>Damage, depend, natural, flood, rainfall, effect, connect, neighborhood, common, produce, develop, dangerous, carry, result, similar, clear (as a verb), condition, normally, zone, change, seriously, cause, follow, demand, supply, severe, sign, local (as a noun).</i>	8 words are at B2 level: <i>disaster, remarkable, destructive, affect (textbook of grade 11), rapid (textbook of grade 11), threat (textbook of grade 11), feature, destruction (textbook of grade 10) shortage (textbook of grade 10)</i>	2 words are at C1 level <i>-Drought</i> <i>-Interfere (Textbook of grade 11) (These two words are two words at C1 level, however students are used to it as these words had been appeared previously in the curriculum)</i>
<b>Text 3:</b> Checking possible 34 new words out of 332 words of the text.	25 words are at B1 level: <i>Grow or growth, annual, fall down, average, improper, credit, lack, blame, promise, increase, control, manage, key goal, expect, open up, allow, support, trend, spending, earning, reach,</i>	8 words are at B2 level: <i>-Economic (textbook of grade 12), slowdown, inflation, financial, bonds, debt, import,</i>	1 words are at C2 level <i>-Recovery</i>

	<i>reduce, strongly, produce, value</i>	<i>slightly.</i>	
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From the mentioned details, we can notice that generally the text includes the majority of words at B1 level (average of more than 73 percent). The rest belong to B2 and a few at a higher level with about 30 percent, yet these words are not very challenging for students and some words are even parts in their curriculum among grade 10, grade 11 and grade 12.

### Language specification (Grammatical check)

#### Language specification

In accordance with language specification of PET-A compatible mode of B1 level in line with CEFR scale in terms of grammatical points as followed:

<b>Grammatical points</b>	<b>Specification (B1- CEFR)</b>	<b>Grammatical point in the 12<sup>th</sup> form curriculum</b>	<b>Reading text 1</b>	<b>Reading text 2</b>	<b>Reading text 3</b>
<b>Verb</b>	regular and irregular forms	regular and irregular forms	Both regular and irregular forms <i>(reached, continued, spent, held, said,</i>	Regular forms <i>(caused,related,affected)</i>	Both regular and irregular forms: <i>fell, made, promised, expected, had, was,</i>

			<i>offered)</i>		<i>reached, increased, and reached.</i>
<b>Modals</b>	All sub-types of modals: <i>can, could, would, will, shall, should, may, might, ought to, etc.</i>	All sub-types of modals	Modals are not used in this text.	Use some of the following modals: <i>can, could, may</i>	Modals are not used in this text.
<b>Tenses</b>	Present simple, present continuous, present perfect simple, past simple, past continuous, past perfect simple, future with going to, future with present simple and future with present continuous, future with will and shall to show “ <i>offers, promises, predictions, etc.</i> ”	All of these mentioned-tenses	In the text the following tenses are used: - present perfect simple ( <i>has just become</i> ) - present continuous ( <i>are now discovering and sharing</i> ) - present simple ( <i>is, stays</i> ) - past simple ( <i>spent, offered,</i>	In the text the following tenses are used: - Present simple: <i>are, breaks, produces, follows, change, place, develop</i>	In the text the following tenses are used: - present perfect ( <i>had made, has grown, has fell down, has promised</i> ) - past simple ( <i>reached, was, increased, meant</i> ) - present simple ( <i>is expected</i> )



<p><b>Verb forms</b></p>	<p>Affirmative, interrogative, negative, imperatives, Infinitives (<i>with and without to</i>) after verbs and adjectives), gerund after verbs and prepositions or as subjects and objects, passive forms (<i>present and past simple</i>), <i>so/nor</i> with auxiliaries.</p>	<p>As the specification for B1-CEFR scale but in terms of passive forms in our curriculum, passive forms have been introduced with all tenses forms not just in present and past simple.</p>	<p><i>said, etc</i>) In the text the following verb forms are used: - Affirmative - Infinitive with <i>to</i> (<i>continued to fall, likely to continue, "to reach and pass"</i>) in reducing relative clause with ordinal, <i>difficult to learn</i>) - Gerund after preposition. (<i>after passing, before debuting, from holding</i>) - Passive voice with past simple. (<i>was provided by Next Big Sound</i>)</p>	<p>In the text the following verb forms are used in affirmative form and passive form of the modal verbs with little use of the other verb forms: <i>Could be cause, affected, is known, related to etc.</i></p>	<p>In the text the following verb forms are used in affirmative form, infinitive and passive form of the modal verbs with little use of the other verb forms: <i>Have been blamed for, is expected, can be produced.</i> - Infinitive with "to" and without "to": <i>trend to save, allow them to lend money, expect to open up, promise to increase, made them cut down</i></p>
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<b>Compound verb patterns</b>	phrasal verbs/ verb with prepositions	phrasal verbs/ verb with prepositions	The text just uses little phrasal verbs like “ <i>offer up, go with</i> ”	The text just uses little phrasal verbs and verb with prepositions like: <i>dry up, clear away, result in, interfere with</i>	The text uses little phrasal verbs and verb with prepositions like <i>fall down, open up, cut down on, and made up.</i>
<b>Conditional sentences</b>	Type 0, type 1, type 2.	Type 0, type 1, type 2 and type 3.	Conditional sentences do not come into view in the text	Conditional sentence type 0 appears in the text	Conditional sentences do not emerge in the text
<b>Simple reported speech</b>	Use reported speech with statements, questions and commands: <i>say, ask, tell.</i>	Use reported speech with statements, questions and commands: <i>say, ask, tell.</i>	Reported speech is utilized in the text in form of directed speech ( <i>PSY's success is a great evidence to the worldwide attraction of pleasing music --</i>	Reported speech is not utilized in the text.	Reported speech is not employed in the text.

			<i>and great equine dance moves," YouTube said in a statement.)</i>		
<b>Relative clause</b>	No specific description	In full, omitted or reduced forms.	In full and reduced forms with to verb, V-ing and past participle <i>-Psy's mega-hit is the first one that reached this milestone  -Gangnam Style was the most listened to song on main chart such as Spotify, Rdio and Mog, holding the No. 1 position on the On-Demand Songs chart for 5</i>	In full and reduced forms with to verb, V-ing and past participle: <i>-A flood is a natural disaster caused by too much rain or water in a location  - Drought is a period or condition related to dry weather within a geographic area  - Drought usually results in a water shortage that seriously interferes with human activity</i>	Relative clause is not identified in the text

			<i>weeks</i>		
<b>Interrogative s</b>	<i>What, What (+noun), where, when, who, whose, which, how, how much, how many, how often, how long, why....</i> with forms of all tenses and modals listed	All of the mentioned-interrogative indicators with forms of all tenses and modals listed.	Interrogatives are not applied in this text.	Interrogatives are not applied in this text.	Interrogatives are not applied in this text.
<b>Nouns</b>	Singular and plural ( <i>regular and irregular forms</i> ), countable and uncountable nouns with some and any, abstract nouns, compound nouns, complex noun phrases, genitive, double genitive	Just be the same as B1 specification.	Almost all specifications of B1 with nouns appear in this text for instance: <i>milestone, decreasing view count, popular video, Psy's Gangnam Style, one billion view mark, the worldwide</i>	The use of nouns in this text is noticeable as following: <i>Water shortage, destructive overland, common threat, streams, effects, snow, ice, noisy water, water supply.</i>	The use of nouns in this text is noticeable as following: <i>Milk products, earnings, fruit, import values, recovery, inflation, economic slowdown, gross domestic product, etc.</i>

			<i>attraction of pleasing music, etc.</i>		
<b>Pronouns</b>	Personal subject, object and possessive, reflexive and emphatic, impersonal, demonstrative, quantitative, indefinite, relative.	Just be the same as B1 specification.	The following pronouns are used in the text: impersonal subject, object, quantitative, relative such as <i>YouTube, the company, people, etc.</i>	The following pronouns are used in the text: impersonal subject, object, quantitative, relative such as: <i>flood, drought, rainfall, effects, many of the poor</i>	The following pronouns are used in the text: impersonal subject, object, quantitative, relative such as: <i>Vietnam's economy, the central bank, the government, the difficulties, some of products.....</i>
<b>Determiners</b>	a + countable nouns, the countable/uncountable nouns	Just be the same as B1 specification.	Determiners are showed wholly in the text ( <i>the Internet, a forecast, a rate, the throne, artists, etc.</i> )	Determiners are showed wholly in the text ( <i>A flood, Some floods, the whole river basins, a dam, the water shortage, a dry spell</i> )	Determiners are showed wholly in the text ( <i>money, the central bank, an average, the total import values, the fruit, the whole,</i>

					<i>recovery, the economic slowdown)</i>
<b>Adjectives</b>	Color, size, shape, quality, nationality, predicative and attributive, cardinal and ordinal number, possessive, demonstrative, quantitative, comparative and superlative forms, order of adjectives, participles as adjectives, compound adjectives	Just be the same as B1 specification.	The following adjectives are in the text: quality, cardinal and ordinal, number, possessive, comparative and superlative forms, order of adjectives, participles as adjectives: <i>popular, great, popular, amazing, the most listened, the most watched, the first the second, its decreasing view etc.</i>	The following adjectives are in the text: quality, cardinal and ordinal, number, comparative, superlative forms, order of adjectives, participles as adjectives: <i>natural, the most common, small, local, noisy, remarkable, similar, poor, destructive overland flooding, more than 14 days .....</i>	The following adjectives are in the text: quality, cardinal and ordinal, number, comparative, superlative forms, order of adjectives, participles as adjectives: <i>the last same period, slowest annual growth, the first three months, key goal, bad debts, high, financial management.....</i>
<b>Adverbs</b>	Regular and irregular forms,	Just be the same	The following	The following adverbs	The following

	manners, frequency, definite time and indefinite time, degree ( <i>very too, rather, etc.</i> ), place, direction ( <i>left, right, along</i> ), sequence ( <i>first, next, etc.</i> ), sentences adverbs ( <i>too, either</i> ), pre-verbal, post-verbal, and end-position adverbs, comparative and superlative forms.	as B1 specification.	adverbs exist in the text: regular form ( <i>currently</i> ), definite time and indefinite time ( <i>for 5 weeks, in its 15<sup>th</sup> week, in the days, for a time</i> ) degree ( <i>mostly</i> ), place ( <i>on the main chart, on the Internet, from all over the world</i> ), comparative and superlative forms ( <i>the most watched video</i> )	exist in the text: regular form( <i>seriously, radically, slowly, seriously, normally</i> ), definite time and indefinite time ( <i>usually, over a period of days</i> ), comparative and superlative forms ( <i>the most common, more than</i> )	adverbs exist in the text: -Regular form ( <i>strongly, slightly</i> ) -Comparative and superlative forms (slowest)
<b>Prepositions</b>	locations, time, direction, instrument, miscellaneous (like, as, due to, owing to,	Just be the same as B1 specification.	The text use enormous prepositions for	The text use enormous prepositions for example: locations, time	The text use enormous prepositions for

	etc.), prepositional phrases (at the beginning of, by means of, etc), prepositions preceding nouns and adjectives, prepositions following (i) nouns and adjectives: advice on, afraid of, etc. (ii) laugh at, ask for, etc.		example: locations, time ( <i>on the Internet, in the days</i> ) prepositional phrases ( <i>in the history of, in comparison to</i> ) and preposition following a noun or verb: <i>hold from, evidence to, to go with</i>	( <i>over a period of days, in a long period of time, in its path, in all climatic zones, in many poor countries</i> ) prepositional phrases ( <i>in a long period of, from one region to another</i> ) and preposition following a noun or verb: <i>connect to, relate to, result in, depend on, similar to</i>	example: locations, time: <i>over the last same period, in the first eleven months of the year, from the last month, over the past year, during the last three months</i> Prepositional phrases: <i>in/ during the last/ first +time of the year</i> Preposition following a noun or verb: <i>Increase in, increase to</i>
<b>Connectives</b>	And, but, or, either....or, when, while, until, before, after, as soon as, where, because, since, as, for, so that, in order to, so, so .... that,	Most of these connectives	The text makes use of great many connectives like, <i>but, until, before,</i>	The text makes use of great many connectives like <i>but, if, during, however, whereas,</i>	The text makes use of great many connectives like: <i>according to, but, thus, for example,</i>



	such.....that, if, unless, although, whereas		after, according to.	when...	although, however, besides,
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## READING TEST

### 1. Reading passage 1

#### **PSY's 'Gangnam Style' Video Hits 1 Billion Views, Unprecedented Milestone.**

*By William Gruger, New York.*

PSY's "Gangnam Style" has just become the first video in the history of the Internet to reach and **pass** one billion views. This morning (December 21), Psy's hit is **the first one that reached this milestone** just 27 days after passing Justin Bieber's "Baby" as the most watched video on YouTube. In the days after its breaking of the 803 million YouTube views record, "Gangnam Style" continued to have over 6.5 million views per day - that's 76.4 view per second. PSY's "Gangnam Style" becomes Most-Watched YouTube Video in History. In comparison to the second most popular video on the Internet, **"Baby" likely won't cross the one billion view mark until late 2014**, according to forecast provided by Next Big Sound. **Its** decreasing view count currently stays just above 300,000 per day, or only 3 views per second - a rate that is likely to continue to fall.

"Gangnam Style" spent 5 weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard K-Pop Hot 100, reaching the No. 1 spot before even debuting on the Hot 100. The track is now in its 15th week on the U.S-based Hot 100, with 7 weeks spent in the No. 2 position, held from reaching the throne by Maroon 5's "One More Night". For a time Gangnam Style was the most listened to song on main chart such as Spotify, Rdio and Mog, holding the No. 1 position on the On-Demand Songs chart for 5 weeks. "PSY's success is a great evidence to the worldwide attraction of pleasing music" YouTube said in a statement. "In the past, music distribution was mostly local. It was more difficult to learn about great artists from around the world. But with a global platform at their hand, people are

now discovering and sharing amazing music from all over the planet." The company offered up other statistics to go with the "Psy-phenomenon"; "Gangnam Style" has been seen at least 1 million times in close to 75 countries.

(Adapted from: <http://www.billboard.biz/bbbiz/industry/digital-and-mobile/psy-s-gangnam-style-video-hits-1-billion-1008059152.story#qvBSAiHIIsbzG1RZ.99.html>.)

□□□□□

✓ **Answer the following questions with the best answer (A, B, C or D)**

1. The word "**pass**" can be explained to.....
  - A. decrease less than a particular number or amount
  - B. increase less than a particular number or amount
  - C. decrease more than a particular number or amount
  - D. increase more than a particular number or amount
2. The word "**this milestone**" in the sentence "**The first one that reached this milestone**" refers to .....
  - A. Gangnam Style's one billion views to become the most watched video on YouTube
  - B. Gangnam Style on the Internet.
  - C. The Gangnam Style's excess of Justin Bieber's "Baby"
  - D. Gangnamstyle's popularity.
3. What does the word "**its**" refer to?
  - A. Gangnam Style
  - B. Baby
  - C. Next Big Sound
  - D. YouTube
4. Which of the following sentence is not true according to the reading passage?
  - A. "Gangnam Style" spent 5 weeks at No. 1 on the U.S – based Hot 100.
  - B. Gangnam Style was the most listened to song on streaming platforms such as Spotify, Rdio and Mog.
  - C. "Gangnam Style" has been seen at least 1 million times in close to 75 countries.
  - D. "Gangnam Style" holds the No. 1 spot on the On-Demand Songs chart for 5 weeks
5. The sentence: "**Baby** likely won't cross the one billion view mark until late 2014" is in closest meaning with .....
  - A. Baby will cross the 1 billion view mark before late 2014
  - B. Baby will cross the 1 billion view mark in late 2014
  - C. Baby will cross the 1 billion view mark by 2014

- D. Baby will cross the 1 billion view mark at the very first of 2014
- 6. *What is the main content of the reading passage?*
  - A. “Gangnam Style” beat the record of “Baby”
  - B. The success of “Gangnam Style” on the Billboard K-Pop Hot 100.
  - C. The incredible record of “Gangnam Style” on YouTube
  - D. Big earnings of “Gangnam Style” on YouTube

## 2. Reading passage 2

### Drought and Flood

A flood is a natural disaster caused by too much rain or water in a location, and could be caused by rainfall in a long period of time from a storm, rapid melting of large amounts of snow or ice, or the breaking of dams. Floods are one of the most common threat in the US. Effects may be local, connecting to small streams and neighborhoods, or very large, affecting the whole river basins and many counties or states. Some floods develop slowly over a period of days. But flash floods can develop quickly, sometimes in just a few minutes and without any *remarkable* signs of clouds or rain. Flash floods may have a dangerous wall of noisy water that carries rocks, mud, and other that clears away most things in its path. Destructive overland flooding may happen outside a certain river or stream, such as when a dam breaks and produces results similar to a flash flood.

Drought is a period or condition related to dry weather within a geographic area where rainfall is not normally present. During a drought there is a lack of rain. Droughts occur in all climatic zones. However, its features change significantly from one region to another. Drought usually results in a water shortage that seriously *interferes* with human activity. Water-supply is empty, wells dry up, and crop damage follows. Its seriousness depends on the degree of the water shortage, size of area affected, and the time and warmth of the dry period. In many poor countries, such as India, people place a great demand on water supply. During a drought period there is a lack of water, and thus many of the poor die. If the drought period is short, it is known as a dry spell. A dry spell is usually more than 14 days without rain, whereas a severe drought may last for years.

*(Adapted from <http://library.thinkquest.org/C003603/english/earthquakes/earthquakedamage.s.html>. and from <http://www.dhd10.org/assets/90/Flood.pdf.html>.)*

□□□□□

✓ **Answer the following questions with the best answer (A, B, C or D)**

1. *What is the main idea of the reading passage?*
  - A. Damage of drought and flood.
  - B. Drought and flood with particular things and situations.
  - C. Understanding of drought and flood as well as its damage in life
  - D. Definitions of drought and flood.
2. *The word “**remarkable**” is in closest meaning with .....*
  - A. clear
  - B. complex
  - C. simple
  - D. plain
3. *Which of the following sentence is true according to the reading passage?*
  - A. A flood is a natural disaster caused by a shortage of rain or water
  - B. Floods are one of the most unusual threats in the US
  - C. flash floods can happen in a very short time
  - D. Effect of flood is local
4. *Drought is a period or condition related to .....*
  - A. rainfall
  - B. shortage of rainfall
  - C. amount of rainfall
  - D. plenty of rainfall
5. *The word “**interfere**” means .....*
  - A. greatly influence
  - B. greatly support
  - C. largely benefit
  - D. greatly provide
6. *The seriousness of a drought depends on .....*
  - A. three elements: degree, size and time
  - B. two elements: degree and size
  - C. three elements: degree, size and warmth
  - D. Other answer

3. **Reading passage 3**

**Vietnam’s economy in 2012.**

Vietnam's government has made a calculation that its gross domestic product (GDP) has grown by 4.89 percent year on year during the first three months of 2013. For comparison, Vietnam's GDP grew by 5.44 percent during the last three months of 2012. 2012 showed the slowest annual growth period in Vietnamese history since 1999 as its GDP only grew by 5.03 percent. Vietnam's economy fell down after an average of 7 percent growth from 2000-2010. **Improper** amount of credit and the lack of state-owned entities (SOEs) were blamed for the economic slowdown. The government promised to increase growth further and also control inflation and the central bank managed key goal rates seven times over the past year. The central bank was expected to open up a financial management firm to buy bad debts from banks in return for bonds that would allow them to lend more money to support the whole recovery. Besides a slow growth, it was interesting to note a fact of the economy of 2012. The difficulties in economy made people cut down on spending. It meant that people had trends to save money than the last years. However, the import earnings in milk, fruit, or pharmacy were still high.

According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, in November, the import earnings of milk and milk products, fruit, and pharmacy reached 1.38 billion dollar, slightly reduced from the last month, but increased to 12.5% over the last same period. In the first eleven months of the year, the total import values of this product group reached 13.1 billion dollar, increased to 11.7% over the last same period and it made up 12.6% of the total import values in Vietnam. Some of products strongly increased in import earnings although these can be produced in Vietnam, for example the fruit increased to 16.8%, candy, chocolate and cereals increased to 66.4% over the last same period. Thus, in 2012, the import activity of some products strongly increased.

(Adapted from: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/12/26/vietnam-in-2012-lower-inflation-amidst-slower-growth.html>. and <http://www.vietnam-briefing.com/news/vietnams-gdp-growth-slowest-decade.html>.)

□□□□□

✓ **Answer the following questions with the best answer (A, B, C or D)**

1. The word “**annual growth**” is in closest meaning with .....
- A. monthly growth B. daily growth C. weekly growth D. yearly growth
2. The slowest annual economic growth with **5.03 percent** was in .....
- A. 2012 B. 2010 C. 1999 D. 2000

3. The word “**Improper**” is in closest meaning with .....
- A. incorrect    B. acceptable    C. correct    D. exact
4. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
- A. Industry and trade in 2012  
B. Statistics on industry and trade in 2012  
C. High level of import with figures  
D. A strong decrease in import
5. The import earnings of milk and milk products, fruit, and pharmacy in the first eleven months of 2012 is ..... of the total country import values
- A. 11.7 %    B. 12.5 %    C. 12.6 %    D. 13.1 %
6. Which of the following sentences is true according to the reading passage?
- A. Generally, the economy in 2012 slowed down but the import rate increased strongly in particular.  
B. Generally, the economy in 2012 was slowed down and so did the import rate in particular.  
C. The government also tried to join hand but not increase growth and limit inflation  
D. In an economic slowdown, people have a trend to spend more

**APPENDIX C: TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE**

Your name: .....

School: .....

**Questionnaire 3 (From teachers' perspective)**

**A, Questionnaire to acquire general information of the teachers on some techniques to enhance prior knowledge and their opinions on these techniques**

**☐☐ Techniques to enhance prior knowledge.**

1.How often do you use activities at the beginning your English reading lesson to increase students' knowledge for further study? Please circle the option that best reflects your frequency.

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Seldom
- d. Never (If you choose this option, please move to question 7 without answering others)

2.In the following techniques, please put a tick on the box to indicate activities you often do before reading in reading session.

- Brainstorming and listing things related to the reading topics with the students.
- Drawing a word map related to the topics of the texts.
- Providing more in-depth ideas regarding the topic.
- Asking students for real-life experiences by doing assignment at home.
- Assigning wide reading information about people, places, events and situations
- Asking free writing about the topics of the texts.
- Dealing with new language for the students (vocabulary, structures, grammar....)
- Conducting suggestive questions about the topics of the texts.
- Letting students guess about: content, author, reader, etc.
- Introducing the text (using word card, video, pictures, etc.)
- Guessing whether the statements related to reading topics are true or false
- Others techniques that you apply: .....
- .....

3.After pre-reading, from your point of view, how much does it have effect on your students' performance on reading?

Not at all	A little	Average	Great
Noticeable			

--->

4.What do you think pre-reading activities can facilitate? (More than one answer)

- A. Faster reading      B. Better comprehension      C. More prior knowledge
- D. More vocabulary      E. Others (.....)      F. Nothing at all

5.What do you think is the purpose of activities in pre-reading?

- A. Provide students with background knowledge and vocabulary
- B. Increase their interest in the reading topics
- C. Enhance or boost reading capabilities
- D. All are the purposes

6.How much time do you spend on pre-reading activities in your reading lesson?

- A. None      B. 3 minutes      C. 5 minutes      D. More than 5 minutes

7.How do you think of the effects of these techniques on enhancing prior knowledge for better comprehension?

1	2	3	4	5
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Not effective at all	Not really effective	Fairly effective	Effectiv e	Very effective				

<b>ns</b>	<b>Opinio</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Activities</b>					
1. Brainstorming and listing things related to the reading topics you know.					
2. Drawing a word map about things related to the topics of the texts.					
3. Asking free writing about the topics of the texts.					
4. Dealing with new language (vocabulary, structures, grammar....)					
5. Conducting suggestive questions about the topics of the texts					
7. Guessing about: content, author, reader, etc					
8. Introducing the text (using work card, etc.)					
9. Guessing whether the statements related to reading topics are true or false					
10. Providing more in-depth ideas regarding the topic					
11. Asking students for real-life experiences to do as assignment.					
12. Assigning wide reading information about people, places, events and situations for the students.					



**APPENDIX D: DATA OF QUESTIONNAIRE 1: GENERAL INFORMATION ON INTEREST AND PRIOR KNOWLEDGE**

**1. The data on the level of interest in reading comprehension among 100 12<sup>th</sup> form students (%)**

	<b>Low</b>	<b>Fairly low</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Fairly high</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>1. Family</b>					
Roles	0	18	32	30	20
Types	5	16	35	30	14
Marriage	11	13	37	21	18
Rearing children	11	11	26	32	20
<b>2. Love</b>					
Importance	10	13	37	24	16
Types	8	11	29	29	23
Elements	5	16	24	26	29
<b>3. Culture</b>					
Patterns	8	13	29	20	30
Roles	8	13	22	25	32
Specific one	13	8	29	37	13
<b>4. Communication</b>					
Type	9	20	31	29	11
Roles	3	14	39	33	11
Element	5	14	39	21	21
<b>5. Job</b>					
Kinds	11	11	39	30	9
Roles	11	16	37	34	12
Unemployment	13	21	26	35	5

Employment	12	12	24	37	15
<b>6. Economy</b>					
Roles	24	26	34	16	0
Types	24	29	32	10	5
Depression	25	32	32	11	0
Growth	15	15	23	47	0
<b>7. Sports</b>					
Benefits	5	26	29	32	8
Types	8	32	26	32	2
Major events	11	27	32	32	0
<b>8. Friendship</b>					
Elements	0	3	24	42	31
Types	0	5	16	45	34
Importance	0	8	21	42	29
<b>9. Holidays and festivals</b>					
-General introduction	0	10	39	32	19
- Typical features	0	10	36	26	28
-Their origins	0	11	35	26	28
<b>10. Education</b>					
Types	24	24	28	24	0
Roles	24	13	39	21	3
<b>11. History</b>					
Specific events	20	32	32	16	0
Roles	18	34	37	11	0
<b>12. Music</b>					
Roles	0	5	16	45	34
Types	0	5	16	37	42
Famous songs or bands	0	5	5	40	50
<b>13. Movies and cinema</b>					
Types	0	0	21	37	42
Roles	0	0	13	45	42
Specific films	0	0	29	39	32
<b>14. Health</b>					
Importance	3	0	33	32	32
Ways to be healthy	3	0	32	32	33
<b>15. Animals</b>					
Kinds	3	20	32	24	24
Specific one	5	5	34	34	20
<b>16. Books</b>					
Types	5	16	34	19	26
Role	3	8	29	39	21
Specific one	3	13	39	19	26
<b>17. Fashion</b>					

Trends	3	8	24	26	39
Materials	3	3	24	34	36
Clothes	3	5	19	26	47
<b>18. Famous people</b>					
Their life	8	5	32	31	24
Their career	5	3	37	26	19
Their success	11	3	23	34	29
<b>19. Technology</b>					
New devices	5	21	21	37	16
Types	5	19	24	36	16
Roles	0	26	12	36	26
<b>20. Politics</b>					
Internal politics	21	32	26	15	6
Global political situations	20	30	31	15	4
<b>21. Social issues</b>					
Drugs	21	21	37	21	0
Deforestation	24	26	34	16	0
Criminals	24	24	32	20	0
Traffic	21	19	34	26	0
<b>22. Natural disasters</b>					
Earthquake	16	24	28	24	8
Flood	11	19	42	20	8
Drought	16	19	41	17	7
Storm	19	19	30	21	11
Volcanos	19	21	39	16	5
<b>23. Religions</b>					
Specific ritual	16	32	32	10	10
Customs	11	26	37	16	10
Traditions	15	31	35	16	3
<b>24. Tourism</b>					
Famous place	0	0	10	58	32
Types	0	5	29	47	19
Roles	0	5	40	37	16

2. The data on the level of prior knowledge in reading comprehension among 100 12<sup>th</sup> form students (%)

	Low	Fairly low	Neutral	Fairly high	High
<b>1. Family</b>					
Roles	8	24	47	21	0
Types	1	37	47	12	3
Marriage	11	24	57	8	0
Rearing children	19	24	44	13	0
<b>2. Love</b>					
Importance	8	26	53	13	0
Types	5	26	42	24	3
Elements	5	32	32	26	5
<b>3. Culture</b>					
Patterns	0	26	50	24	0
Roles	0	26	45	24	5
Specific one	0	26	55	19	0
<b>4. Communication</b>					
Type	8	16	42	29	5
Roles	1	18	47	30	5
Element	5	19	42	29	5
<b>5. Job</b>					
Kinds	11	24	41	19	5
Roles	5	24	50	21	0
Unemployment	11	34	47	16	3
Employment	8	39	42	8	3
<b>6. Economy</b>					
Roles	24	26	42	8	0
Types	21	26	42	11	0
Depression	21	42	34	3	0
Growth	21	32	37	8	2
<b>7. Sports</b>					
Benefits	3	26	42	29	0
Types	3	26	50	21	0

Major events	3	29	46	19	3
<b>8. Friendship</b>					
Elements	0	3	39	47	11
Types	0	5	37	53	5
Importance	0	5	45	42	8
<b>9. Holidays and festivals</b>					
-General introduction	11	19	52	13	5
- Typical features	8	21	58	13	0
-Their origins	8	26	58	8	0
<b>10. Education</b>					
Types	8	28	50	11	3
Roles	13	24	42	21	0
<b>11. History</b>					
Specific events	26	27	39	5	3
Roles	29	30	30	8	3
<b>12. Music</b>					
Roles	0	0	24	60	16
Types	0	3	11	62	24
Famous songs or bands	0	5	13	56	26
<b>13. Movies and cinema</b>					
Types	0	0	24	47	29
Roles	0	3	21	42	34
Specific films	0	3	21	55	21
<b>14. Health</b>					
Importance	0	3	37	52	8
Ways to be healthy	0	6	39	47	8
<b>15. Animals</b>					
Kinds	9	12	45	29	5
Specific one	11	8	41	29	11
<b>16. Books</b>					
Types	5	8	39	37	11
Role	5	16	47	21	11
Specific one	5	11	37	39	8
<b>17. Fashion</b>					
Trends	0	5	58	34	3
Materials	0	8	60	29	3
Clothes	0	3	65	24	8
<b>18. Famous people</b>					
Their life	0	10	58	16	16
Their career	5	13	50	16	11
Their success	5	0	53	23	19
<b>19. Technology</b>					

New devices	8	11	42	26	13
Types	3	19	46	21	11
Roles	3	21	47	21	8
<b>20. Politics</b>					
Internal politics	11	43	37	6	3
Global political situations	8	42	39	8	3
<b>21. Social issues</b>					
Drugs	13	37	37	13	0
Deforestation	13	39	38	10	0
Criminals	11	42	37	10	0
Traffic	8	42	31	19	0
<b>22. Natural disasters</b>					
Earthquake	8	24	56	12	0
Flood	5	33	52	10	0
Drought	5	29	58	8	0
Storm	5	24	58	13	0
Volcanos	8	24	60	8	0
<b>23. Religions</b>					
Specific ritual	5	32	50	8	5
Customs	5	26	58	11	0
Traditions	5	29	61	5	0
<b>24. Tourism</b>					
Famous place	0	8	34	39	19
Types	0	13	42	34	11
Roles	0	15	37	32	16

## APPENDIX E: READING TEST RESULTS

Students	Text 1's score	Text 2's score	Text 3's score
1	3	4	2

2	6	2	2
3	6	2	2
4	3	1	3
5	6	4	3
6	6	6	3
7	5	4	2
8	3	1	1
9	4	5	3
10	5	3	1
11	3	2	1
12	2	3	3
13	2	4	3
14	5	0	2
15	5	2	1
16	2	1	0
17	5	2	2
18	2	1	3
19	4	3	2
20	2	1	1
21	3	1	1
22	4	2	2
23	4	0	1
24	1	2	3
25	3	1	1
26	3	2	0
27	4	2	3
28	6	2	2
29	4	2	2
30	2	2	1
31	4	2	3
32	5	4	4
33	6	4	3
34	5	5	4

35	6	3	2
36	5	4	1
37	4	1	2
38	5	5	2
39	5	6	5
40	5	5	3
41	5	4	2
42	5	3	2
43	4	2	4
44	6	4	2
45	6	6	5
46	6	5	3
47	4	3	3
48	3	2	0
49	2	1	1
50	5	3	3

## APPENDIX F: PILOT FOR READING

**Pilot among 10 students** ((+) indicates the correct answer of the students,  
(-) signifies incorrect answer of the students)

TEXT 1

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
<b>Question 1</b>	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	+	-
<b>Question 2</b>	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+



<b>Question 3</b>	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Question 4</b>	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-
<b>Question 5</b>	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
<b>Question 6</b>	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-

TEXT 2

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
<b>Question 1</b>	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<b>Question 2</b>	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
<b>Question 3</b>	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	+	+
<b>Question 4</b>	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-
<b>Question 5</b>	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	+
<b>Question 6</b>	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-

TEXT 3

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
<b>Question 1</b>	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+
<b>Question 2</b>	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	+
<b>Question 3</b>	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+
<b>Question 4</b>	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+
<b>Question 5</b>	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-
<b>Question 6</b>	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-

### ***Analyze the difficulty level of the items***

*According to the study “Assess elements affecting to the quality of the Multiple-choice test in the Faculty of Information Technology at Thai Nguyen University”, the difficulties of items in a test are used to create the differences between multiple-choice test takers. Additionally, it directly affects the reliability and efficiency of the test and has a formula as followed:*

$P = \frac{\text{The number of people having correct answers}}{N}$  ( $P$  is the difficulty level;  $N$  is the number of people answering the test;  $P$  has values from 0.0 to 1.0; the closer  $P$ 's value toward 0.0 is, the more difficult the item is and vice versa; the most suitable difficulty level is around 0.5)

<b>Question</b>	<b>Difficulty level</b>
1	0.67
2	0.4
3	0
4	0
5	0.33
6	1
7	0.67
8	0.4
9	0.7
10	0.7
11	0.6
12	0.4
13	0.5
14	0.5
15	0.7
16	0.7
17	0.4
18	0.4

The pilot information helps us find down that the test difficulty levels vary from 0.3 to 0.7 around 0.5. Therefore, test items are considered to be suitable for

further targeted reading test in terms of difficulty. Moreover, there is a balance among 3 reading text when they are on average having two a little bit more difficult at 0.4 or 0.3 and other at an easier level beyond 0.5.

### ***The distinguished level of test items***

Similarly, in accordance with the study “Assess elements affecting to the quality of the Multiple-choice test in the Faculty of Information Technology at Thai Nguyen University”, a test success is also largely decided by distinguished level of test items. It is the disparity level in each test taker’s response. A fine disparity level means that on answering a test item with distinguished level, the majority of high score test takers answer correctly while low score ones answer incorrectly. This distinguished level is calculated by below formula:

$$D = \frac{\text{The number of people have the correct answers in high score groups}}{\text{the number of people have the correct answer in low score groups}} - \frac{\text{The number of people answers in high score groups}}{\text{The number of people answers in low score groups}}$$

(**D** is the distinguished level. If **D** approaches 1.0, it has an ideal distinguished level. On the contrary, if **D** approaches 0.0, the distinguished level doesn’t exist or exist with low level)

*Putting this formula into practice, researcher received the results presented in the table and distinguished levels were fairly equal among three texts. All of them have two test items (questions) at a perceptible level and the other items at a low level for slight disparity or no disparity. More specifically, text one question 4 and 6, this level is around 0.7 and the same case with the second text. Differently, text 3 had a question at ideal level and the other at 0.5.*

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Distinguished level</b>
1	0.42
2	0
3	0.33
4	0.67
5	0.33
6	0.75
7	0.67
8	0.67
9	0.17
10	0.5
11	0.25
12	0.08
13	0.17
14	0.42
15	0.5
16	1
17	0.08
18	0.17

