

SECTION

11

NASAL SOUNDS, READING TECHNIQUES AND TENSES



NASALS, READING COMPREHENSION and GRAMMAR USAGE

INTRODUCTION

In one of our previous sections, we looked at reading techniques such as skimming, scanning, and close reading and how they are applied in our reading. In Oral language we have learned about Plosives, Fricatives, voiced and voiceless sounds, manner of articulation and place of articulation as far as the English Consonant Speech Sounds are concerned. We have looked at how to form the present perfect and present perfect continuous tense and use them correctly to reflect intended meaning.

In this section we are going to focus on nasal consonant speech sounds and simple past tense.

In Ghana, we love to tell stories. Some of the most cherished moments are the times when the elderly would gather children or grandchildren and tell them stories. These stories are told in the past tense to teach the present generation some vital moral lessons. The simple past tense, therefore, is essential in the description of past events.

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to

- use nasal consonant sounds in connected speech.
- apply reading techniques effectively in reading a variety of texts for leisure
- use forms of verbs in everyday activities.

Key Ideas

- *Nasal consonant sounds*: Nasal Consonant Sounds are made by blocking air in the mouth and releasing sound through the nose. /m/ /n/ /ŋ/.
- *Nasal Occlusive*: They refer to a type of speech sound that is produced by blocking the airflow in the nasal cavity.
- *Reading techniques* are the different approaches to reading that can be used to help you become a better, more efficient, and more successful reader.
- *Skimming*: This refers to the process of reading the main ideas within a passage to get an overall impression of the content.
- *Scanning*: This refers to looking for ideas very quickly in a text to find specific details such as searching for a telephone number in a directory.
- *Close Reading*: This refers to the method of reading that focuses on the specific details of a passage or text in order to discern meaning.
- *Light Reading*: This is the reading that is not considered too demanding.
- *The Simple Past Tense*: It is used to talk about a completed activity in the past.

NASAL Consonant SOUNDS

Nearly all nasal consonants are nasal occlusive, in which air escapes through the nose but not through the mouth, as it is blocked (occluded) by the lips or tongue. The oral cavity still acts as a resonance chamber for the sound. Rarely, non-occlusive consonants may be nasalized. Most nasals are voiced, and in fact, the nasal sounds {n} and {m} are among the most common sounds cross-linguistically. In phonetics, nasal occlusive are a class of consonantal sounds that are made by:

1. Directing the air through the nose
2. Blocking the airflow with the tongue or lips
3. Releasing the blockage, allowing air to escape through the nose

Examples of nasal occlusive sounds include:

1. /m/ (as in 'mom')
2. /n/ (as in 'numb')
3. /ŋ/ (as in 'sing')
4. /N/ (a sound found in some languages, like Hindi)

Characteristics of nasal occlusive

1. They are consonantal sound
2. They are made by obstructing the airflow in the nasal cavity
3. They are typically voiced (meaning the vocal cords vibrate)
4. They can be bilabial (made with both lips), alveolar (made with the tongue and upper teeth), or velar (made with the tongue and soft palate)
5. Nasal occlusives play a crucial role in many languages, and their accurate pronunciation is essential for clear communication.

ACTIVITY 11.1

1. Listen and watch the Tongue Twisters on Nasals from the link below:
<https://youtu.be/GjOwcTKSxoQ?si=kKbzKOHmx0PIYiQT>
2. Practise with your friends how the nasal sounds are pronounced accurately.

ACTIVITY 11.2

Use the nasal sounds /m/n/ŋ/ in forming words on your own and use them in simple sentences.

ACTIVITY 11.3

Use the following nasal occlusive sounds in sentences such that every word in the sentences contain a nasal sound.

1. /m/ as in (“My mom made me move my mask.”)
2. /n/ as in (“numb”)
3. /ŋ/ as in (“sing”)

READING TECHNIQUES

Reading techniques: These are the different approaches to reading that can be used to become a better, more efficient, and more successful reader. When we are given texts to read, we do not just read them for their own sake. We do that for a variety of purposes. That is, either to get the general information of the text, to find a specific message, to be able to detect the meaning of the text, or just to gain pleasure or enjoy the content of the text. For us to be able to do these, we have to apply the reading techniques that are discussed below.

Skimming: This refers to the process of reading the main ideas within a passage to get an overall impression of the content. In applying/using this approach, one has the aim of getting the overall idea of the text. Here, the detail of the text is not so important to the reader. What is important is to get the main message of the text. Because the details of the text are not needed, one may quickly read through the passage. This would be enough for the reader to get the needed information. Your eyes can be trained to read groups of words rather than individual words. As readers, we usually do not need to sound out words in our minds; skimming is hindered by such ‘sub-vocalising’.

Scanning: This refers to looking for ideas very quickly in a text to find specific details such as searching for a telephone number in a directory. Scanning approach to reading is useful when the reader has the intent of finding the details that the text contains. At this stage of reading, one is not just looking at the main or the central message of the text, but specific pieces of information in the text. Using a scanning approach is quicker than using a skimming approach.

Close Reading: This refers to the method of reading that focuses on the specific details of a passage or text in order to discern meaning. The main purpose for applying this reading technique is to help the reader discern or detect the exact meaning of the text. Because the purpose of using this approach is to establish the meaning, much attention needs to be paid to the details of the text. Attention should be given to the use of language (headings/subheadings, bold prints, italics, illustrations). These text features aim to help you understand the text.

Light Reading: This is reading that is not considered too demanding. This is used when an individual reads for the purpose of leisure. When light reading is the focus, this ensures that readers find content that is interesting and relevant to them and the work at hand. This method is useful when one is trying above all to find entertainment, where the focus is pleasure rather than on stretching the mind.

Activity 11.4**Read the passage below and perform the activities that follow**

The importance of education is recognised by everyone. The government allows private participation in the establishment of schools since it cannot cater for all the children in the country.

To monitor and maintain academic excellence in schools, the Ghana Education Service was established. It sets out the guidelines and standards such as the type of infrastructure to be provided in schools and the compliance with the Ghana Education Service approved syllabus. Before any approval is given for the establishment of a school, the available facilities are inspected. The qualifications of the teaching personnel are also considered in order to safeguard the interests and development of children who may have their education in such schools.

It is thus a good sign that more schools are being opened these days. It shows how important education is to us; but the emphasis should be on the quality and not the quantity. As the number of the schools in the country increases, getting more qualified teachers has become more challenging. The common practice these days is to employ senior high graduates. The move should be commended because it solves the problem of lack of teachers and provides jobs for unemployed youth. However, there must be in-service training to prepare them for the work.

Most private school's proprietors consider the schools as their personal property and do what they wish; they are known in some cases to ignore government policies and directives. The owners' liberties may be in terms of the general administration of the school, fee regulation, the selection of staff and ownership of the premises. Nevertheless, they have to adhere to the standards and goals set by the government in educating our future leaders. The Ghana Education Service is the government body responsible for maintenance of standards in our schools, whether private or public. The Ghana Education Service has to be more vigilant.

In some private schools, teaching is done in isolation as the Ghana Education Service syllabuses are not used. Teachers select what their students should learn. Some of the teachers do not allow students to express their opinion or to take their own initiatives. They are made to learn what will enable them to pass their final examination with distinction in order to advertise their school. Their own talents and skills are left undeveloped.

Some parents send their children to school without knowing about what goes on there. They do more harm than good if they fail to monitor their development and performance. The owners of the schools should not concentrate solely on the business aspect of their schools. Their attention should be focused on the standard of teaching and learning that goes on in their schools else they will be amassing wealth at the expense of the children. The owners should take courses in school management and administration to be well equipped so as to monitor school activities more effectively.

The Ghanaian child in both private and public schools should be encouraged to develop their talents. They should be given instructions based on the same syllabus as they, in the long run, take the same examination.

1. Skim through the passage above in groups, predict and discuss the central idea of the text.
2. In mixed-ability/gender grouping, employ the reading strategies/techniques to read and summarise the main ideas of the passage.
3. Discuss with a colleague why you think reading is important.
4. Research and share with the whole class the misconceptions (wrong impressions people have) about reading.

The Simple Past Tense

The simple past tense, also called the past tense, is used to talk about a completed action that did not continue into the present:

1. John Cabot *sailed* to America in 1498.
2. My doctor *gave* me an injection last year.

It is also used to refer to a past habitual activity which no longer occurs:

1. The children *played* football regularly.
2. My family *went* to the theatre every fortnight.

The time of action can be in the recent past or the distant past, and the duration of the action is not important. For example:

1. He lived in Fijai in 1976.
2. We crossed the bridge yesterday.
3. The simple past is associated with certain *past-time expressions* such as:

a. Frequency: *often, sometimes, always:*

I *walked* home **sometimes** at lunchtime.

I **often** *brought* my lunch to school.

My PEH teacher **always** checked class attendance.

b. A definite point in time: *last week, when I was a child, yesterday, six weeks ago*

We *watched* an educational film **last week**.

Yesterday, I arrived in Geneva.

I *played* in the sand **when I was a child**.

c. An indefinite point in time: *the other day, ages ago, a long time ago*

People *lived* in caves **a long time ago**.

She *played* the piano **ages ago**.

Formation of the Simple Past Tense

1. In forming the simple past tense of regular verbs, just add **-ed** to the base of the verb. For example:

Play + ed = played

Walk + ed = walked

Stop + ed = stopped

Climb + ed = climbed

Absorb + ed = absorbed

2. The affirmative of the simple past tense is simple. In affirmative use, **-ed** is added to the base of regular verbs to have the structure, **Affirmative = Subject + Verb + ed**:

I *skipped* with the rope.

We *laughed* at his jokes.

My parents *visited* me in school even though it was raining.

3. The negative is formed by using the auxiliary *did* and adding *not* (or its contracted form *n't*). In negative use, the formation looks like this –

Negative = Subject + did not + infinitive (without to):

The police *did not* stop the bus.

They *didn't* climb the wall.

4. In interrogative use, two formations are possible – positive and negative, as shown below.

a. Interrogative (Positive): Did + Subject + infinitive (without to):

Did they arrive early?

Did you accommodate them in your house?

b. Interrogative (negative): Did not + Subject + infinitive (without to):

Didn't you brush your teeth last night?

Didn't they cross the road at the zebra crossing?

5. The simple past tense can be formed from **to be, to have, to do**:

I *had* Waakye for breakfast.

We *were* his students.

They *did* the work well.

6. Some verbs are **irregular**. They do not form their past tense the same way as regular verbs. These irregular verbs include *to go*, *to give* and *to come*:

- a. He *went* to his family house last night.
- b. We *gave* the children toffees.
- c. Our friends *came* to the show last night.

Irregular verbs are formed in a number of ways:

1. Some verbs do not change form in the simple past tense. They include hurt, put, hit, split and shut:
 - I *hurt* myself yesterday.
 - The electrician *fell* down and split his head.
2. Some irregular verbs change a vowel in the base form. For example, *to drink* changes to *drank* (the **i** changes to **a**):
 - Maa Afia *drank* all the soup before I got home.
 - Kafui *wrote* an intriguing story.
 - In spite of the disappointment, Mr Teye never *gave* up on his dreams.

Other examples

Infinitive	Simple Past
To run	Ran
To sit	Sat
To write	wrote

3. Other irregular verbs change entirely from the base form:
 - Auntie Mansa *bought* some cassava and plantain from the farmer.
 - My family *was* home.
 - Mamunatu hardly *ate* the food.

Infinitive	Simple Past
To buy	bought
To be	Was/were
To eat	Ate

Activity 11.3

1. Gather your friends and tell them your favourite Kweku Ananse story. (You can even tell the story just to a friend or a relative)
2. Write down at least five of the sentences you used in the story?
 - a. Underline all the verbs.
 - b. Indicate the verbs with the simple past tense.
3. Join a friend to read the sentences below.
 - i. I played *ampe* with my cousins.
 - ii. We watched the football game at the Essipong Sports Stadium.
 - iii. Kweku Ananse told his family to bury him in the farm.
 - iv. Okonore Yaa did as she was told by her husband.
 - a. Underline the verbs and write out those in the simple past tense.
 - b. What do you observe about the past tense?
 - c. Explain your answer to other friends.
4. Tell your friend what you did the previous week before. Let your friend do the same.

References

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Review Questions

1. Examine five words containing nasal sounds and use them to form sentences (mouth, summer, moon, comb, mine)

Read the text below and answer the questions that follow.

Agriculture plays a significant role in the economic development of this country. The ruling government's efforts to develop the sector is a step in the right direction. However, there are certain setbacks inhibiting the growth of this important sector of the economy. The roads linking the various parts of the rural areas are in a bad state. Many farmers find it difficult to convey their farm produce to urban centres for sale. As a result, most of their produce gets rotten in the farms.

Also, the persistent rise and fall of the prices of agricultural produce both in domestic and world markets is a contributory factor. This instability affects not only the incomes of farmers but also the foreign exchange derived by the government for its developmental projects.

It is therefore imperative for the government to take a second look at some of these teething problems and find fundamental solutions to them in order to make the sector an engine of growth of the economy.

2. Identify the main ideas in each of the paragraphs.
3. Summarise the text.
4. State the reading approach/technique that is used when one is reading for leisure.

Choose the correct form of the simple past tense to complete the sentences below:

5. Amina (were /are /was) here.
6. Kofi and his mother ... (walked/ walks/ walking) to the market this morning.
7. I (have/ has/ had) a pen in my bag but can't find it again.
8. The people ... (question/ questions / questioned) the behaviour of their leader.
9. She (refused/refuse/refuses) to be interrogated by the police.
10. Use the following verbs to form a sentence each: *jumped, ate, wrote, sang* and *prayed*
11. Write a short story on either of these:
 - A. A terrible dream you have ever had.
 - B. My first day experience in school.

Answers to Review Questions

- a. I washed my mouth with soap and water. (/m/ sound)
 - b. The moon was full and bright in the night sky. (/m/ sound).
 - c. Summer is my favourite season of the year. (/m/ sound).
 - d. She used a comb to detangle her hair. (/m/ sound).
 - e. The mine was deep and dark, filled with precious gems. (/m/ and /n/ sounds).
- 2.** The roads linking the various parts of rural areas are in a bad state.
There is a persistent rise and fall of agricultural produce both in domestic and world markets.
Agriculture is important to the economic growth of our country.
- 3.** ***
- 4.** Light reading technique
- 5.** was
- 6.** walked
- 7.** have
- 8.** questioned
- 9.** refused
- 10.**
- a. The thief *jumped* over the wall but she was caught.
 - b. The visitors *ate* all the food in our kitchen.
 - c. My friend *wrote* me a long letter.
 - d. The choir *sang* beautifully but they didn't win the competition.
 - e. They *prayed* for the nation every day.
- 11.** ***

Acknowledgements



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