

What is Extensive Reading? Students are reading extensively when they read texts which are slightly below their language level, so that they know almost all of the words on the page and they do not need a dictionary. They understand the text and enjoy what they are reading. Graded readers are fiction and non-fiction books which have been carefully devised for extensive reading. In a library, they provide students with a choice of story or topic and language difficulty.

Intensive and Extensive Reading: what's the difference?

	INTENSIVE READING	EXTENSIVE READING
CLASS GOAL	Accuracy in target language	Fluency and automaticity in target language.
PURPOSE	Translation Full comprehension	Information Enjoyment
FOCUS	Words and structures	Overall meaning
MATERIAL	Teacher selected Perceived as boring or irrelevant Often difficult	Student selected Entertaining, relevant to students Easy – well within linguistic capabilities
AMOUNT	Short targeted selections	Many whole texts – ideally, a million words over a year (2 to 2.5 readers per week for 40 weeks).
TIME	Within class and homework time	Any time - for a minimum of 20 minutes a day.
SPEED	Slow	Fast
METHOD	Compulsory Must finish Use dictionary Verify and gloss unknown words.	Voluntary Exchange book if not liked or difficult. No dictionary Infer meaning of any unknown words or skip.
ASSESSMENT	Regular compulsory testing Formal written book reports Formally assessed comprehension End of year examinations Closed questions	No regular testing Brief informal oral discussion Voluntary response in any media Informal evaluation via library activities Open questions
TEACHER ROLE	Authority and ultimate arbiter	Facilitator, motivator, fellow reader and learner.
STUDENT ROLE	Passive, compliant, subordinate	Active, questioning, creative, problem solving, equal to everyone in class including the teacher

Table adapted from: Day, R.R. and Bamford, J. (1998) *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 123