Here are some suggested answers. Please note that for some of these strategies, opinions differ, so it is possible to disagree. Do you disagree with any of the suggested answers?

- Pre-teach some difficult vocabulary from the text.
    - This is a common strategy, and it can help a lot in some situations. Sometimes a single unknown word can interfere with the student's ability to complete the task. Important things to keep in mind, however.--Only pre-teach a small amount of unknown vocabulary (5 words maximum). Teach only the words that will impact the reading comprehension tasks.
- Pre-teach all the difficult vocabulary from the text
    - This is not a good idea. It takes too long, and will distract from the main aim of a reading lesson. Also, students need to develop their own strategies for dealing with unknown words from context.
- Make sure the students are familiar with the situation before reading the text
    - This helps a lot. Not understanding the situation is a common reason why students cannot comprehend the text
- Have students predict what they are going to read beforehand
    - This helps. If students can successfully guess what will be in the text, it will make it easier to comprehend. Even if their guesses are wrong, thinking about the text ahead of time will prepare them for the content of the text.
- Tell students to note parts of the text that they could not make sense of. (They can later ask the teacher or another student to explain it to them.)
    - This is recommended by some teaching websites. It needs to be used with caution, however, because often our goal is not for the students to understand everything in the text, but for the students to understand just enough to complete the reading comprehension task. However, if the students are unable to complete the task, this could be a useful way for the teacher to find out what is going wrong, and decide how to support the students.
- Read the text out loud yourself, and have the students follow along
    - This will not help their comprehension of the meaning of the text
- Ask the students to read the text out loud
    - This is not helpful as it may increase student nervousness and confuse their skills in pronunciation with their skills in reading
- Read a portion of the text out loud, and do a think-aloud while reading to show what kinds of things the reader should be thinking about while reading.
    - This is recommended by several literacy experts. It may not be useful to do this all the time, but it is useful to demonstrate this technique once or twice to the students.
- Break the text into smaller units, and have a stop-and-check activity to ensure that students have understood the reading up until then. (e.g. comprehension questions, asking students to summarize the reading). If the students have not understood, they must re-read the section before moving on to the next.

    - This could be useful for longer texts
- Paraphrase the text yourself by explaining the text to the students using simpler words
    - This is sometimes necessary as a last resort for students, but it should be used with caution. It's better to ask guiding questions to help the students' arrive at the meaning if possible.
- Highlight the key sentences in the text that contain the answer
    - This is a useful support if students are struggling.
- If the students are having difficulty comprehending the assigned reading texts for their level, then disregard the assigned reading and for the rest of the term give them simpler reading texts instead. Focus on building up their reading fluency with easier texts for the rest of the term
    - Possibly. Building up confidence with easier reading texts is important, but it may be better to supplement the assigned reading texts rather than replace them. We want to challenge the students sometimes too.
- Keep the assigned texts, but change the comprehension questions to make them easier
    - If you have the flexibility to do this, this is a good strategy. Don't be afraid to challenge the students a little bit, but remember the challenging questions should come last. First give the students an easy set of comprehension questions, then after those have been completed, you can increase the level of difficulty. A gist question should always be one that the students can complete easily.
- For complex sentences, ask students to identify the main subject and main verb in each sentence. Check that the students have identified correctly. Clarify any sentences if needed
    - This can be a useful exercise occasionally. Students will get bored with it if it is overused.
- Check that the students understand the meaning of all the reference words (e.g. *he*, *she*, *it*, *which*) in the text. Clarify if needed.
    - As above, this is also something that is useful occasionally, but it can also be overused. Most reference words are obvious from context, even for lower level students. But difficulties arise in some cases when the reference is ambiguous, when the reference is an abstract concept, when the reference is referring to more than one thing, and when the reference word is not close to the word it is referring to.

Sources

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