

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Learning English means learning four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. The other two components are vocabulary and grammar. Reading is the process of understanding the meaning of written symbols, particularly through sight or touch. In the dictionary that reading words is the ability to test and understand the meaning of words in the text (Syakur et al., 2020). Reading is also a way to get information from something written. Reading is a complex activity that involves both perception and teaching. Reading is one way to study the English language; furthermore, it plays an important role in the learning process because students enlarge their information directly by reading passages.

Learning to read is essential for mental development. Similar to a muscle, the mind requires a workout. Smith et al (2021) state reading is the process of understanding and interpreting written text. It's a multifaceted task that calls for both perception and reasoning. Gaining an understanding of written language is one technique to improve one's skills. Books magazine and even the internet are great learning tools which require the ability to read and understand what is read. A learner with reading comprehension skills may educate oneself in any field of study they are interested in.

Reading allows students to have access to ideas communicated by people in different locations and allows them to develop or improve their knowledge of the world. Reading in a foreign language is essential not only for promoting personal and cognitive development but also for improving their study and job prospects in

society. In foreign language learning, reading is likewise a skill that teachers simply expect learner to acquire (Brown H. Douglas & Abeywickrama Priyanvada, 2020). For students who are learning English as a foreign language, they may have difficulties in acquisition because of the low frequency in using English for communication. Although, they have known English since they are in kinder garden but when they grow up and reach the higher level such as senior high school, we can discover how difficult they read written word in English.

More than that, they have to capture the idea of English texts by reading comprehension them carefully and to get the correct information regarding the written materials. This problem must be recognized by other people who are smart enough to find a solution to this problem. In this case, teaching reading comprehension is one of the most important things to learn because when students are involved in reading, they understand step-by-step English material through reading. Therefore, they need to improve reading comprehension capability because this capability demonstrates how well they understand English.

At SMP Widiatmika which is classified as a junior high school, researcher found that many seventh-grade students at SMP Widiatmika still had difficulty reading and understanding English texts. Even though various techniques have been implemented, teachers still face challenges in effectively teaching reading comprehension skills in the classroom. This problem impacts students' reading scores, and they have not yet reached the standard of completion. The minimum standard was 80, but the students only achieved 75. According to teachers, students' reading comprehension abilities are still low. This also affects the Midterm Exam scores. Low midterm exam scores are caused by students not understanding the

reading given by the teacher so they cannot do well in the midterm exam. The students were lazy in reading the long sections contained in the questions, but to be able to answer the questions well.

Regarding the above problems, it is critical to implement the approaches or solutions that may resolve the problem. These approaches or strategies should be focused on improving students' reading comprehension while rescuing the class from a competitive and dull environment. There are various strategies to involve and engage students in reading activities. According to Chophel & Norbu (2021), cooperative learning is an instructional strategy where students work together in small groups to achieve a common goal. This approach emphasizes positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing. The goal is for students to actively engage in the learning process, share their knowledge and skills, and support each other's learning.

Realizing the benefits of cooperative learning for students, this study proposes to improve the reading comprehension of students using cooperative learning strategies. MURDER is an acronym for mood, understands, recalls, detects, elaborates, and reviews. Hayes (1981) state the MURDER (mood, understands, recalls, detects, elaborates, and reviews) then makes use of all of the learning strategies except instantiation. The M.U.R.D.E.R technique focuses on five aspects: Mood, Understand, Recall, Detect, Elaborate, and Review (Geta Ariani, Suparno, 2014). It helps students relax, understand, rehearse, detect errors, make information memorable, and review the entire passage. This technique encourages small-group work to share understanding and improve summary skills. Among

several cooperative learning strategies, MURDER is a technique developed for use in cooperative teaching where students are encouraged to read different material and take turns teaching the material to one another, or in cooperative learning groups where students read the same material and discuss what they have learned (Kollar et al., 2006). MURDER is chosen to be applied in the classroom to improve students' reading comprehension.

In conclusion, compared to traditional reading techniques which only consist of reading to understand and review the text, the MURDER technique is more developed. MURDER strengthens its strengths because students need to advance their understanding, explain, expand, and record the main ideas of the text orally. In this case, information processing skills take precedence. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research on the application of the MURDER model cooperative technique in English subjects to help improve the reading comprehension of seventh-grade students at SMP Widiatmika in academic year 2024/2025.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on what has been explained in the research background, students still experience difficulties in reading comprehension, especially in understanding the meaning of English words and even in retelling stories. Students are also reluctant to understand reading. Learning behavior needs to be changed by applying appropriate techniques, therefore the research question can be formulated as follows: "Can the reading comprehension of the seventh-grade students at SMP Widiatmika for the 2024-2025 academic year be improved through the MURDER technique?"

1.3 Objective of the Study

In order for the research to have a purpose, it is necessary to formulate the objectives to be achieved and answer the questions above. Therefore, the suggestion that can be made is that the reading comprehension of seventh-grade students of SMP Widiatmika can be improved because they still encounter obstacles during the reading comprehension process. Therefore, this objective is the focus of this study. In addition, this objective is intended to be achieved during the research to solve the problems being studied. Research is successful if the research objectives can be achieved and the research problems can be solved. Therefore, to answer the research problems that have been explained previously, the purpose of this study is to find out whether the reading comprehension of seventh-grade students of SMP Widiatmika in the 2024/2025 academic year can be improved using the MURDER technique.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

This study has a limited number of variables based on the main objective of the initial problem. So, this research requires limitations because each variable is substantial. Research limitations are significant to restrict and make the research problem specific. Research limitations are important to limit and make research problems specific. This study focuses on the application of the MURDER technique to help seventh-grade students at SMP Widiatmika to improve their reading comprehension. The complexity and breadth of the problems discussed in this study determine its limitations. Indeed, this study primarily focused on improving reading comprehension by utilizing the MURDER technique which is carried out on seventh-grade students in the 2024/2025 academic year.

Based on the structured and gradual Learning Objective for seventh-grade students of SMP Widiatmika which aim for students to be able to use oral, written and visual descriptive text about people, it is necessary to limit this research because the problems related to this research focus on improving reading comprehension of seventh-grade students of SMP Widiatmika in the 2024/2025 academic year using the MURDER technique. Therefore, the discussion is limited to the application of the MURDER technique using descriptive text about people for seventh-grade students of SMP Widiatmika in the 2024/2025 academic year.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is mainly concerned with the application of the MURDER Technique to improve reading comprehension, the technique of which is based on cooperative learning. Furthermore, the use of this research is to find out how it is applied in overcoming problems faced by English students and teachers in improving students' reading comprehension abilities. As well as this research, it is hoped that the MURDER technique can improve students' reading abilities. Therefore, the importance of applying the MURDER technique in reading comprehension is indicated in the theoretical and practical information shown as follows.

Theoretically, this research can be used to provide us with evidence of implementation theory based on the problems faced above in applying the MURDER technique to improve reading comprehension. Actively practicing MURDER techniques in class can increase student understanding. Employing students to read intensively without the pressure of working in pairs makes students aware of the reading process and creates challenging situations for students. It

employs students to read intensively without having pressure since they work in pairs makes students aware of the reading process and creates challenging situations for students. Both teacher and student are engaged in the process of learning.

Practically, the present study's findings are expected to offer educational feedback for students, teachers, and other researchers. To teachers, it is hoped that the presence of this research can help English teachers, especially in providing feedback, on how effective techniques are applied to seventh-grade students at SMP Widiatmika in improving their reading comprehension. For students, the learning outcomes are expected to be useful, this provides opportunities for students to improve their reading skills in understanding, developing, and explaining text information. This research aims to serve as a reference and empirical review for other researchers, specifically in the context of MURDER technique for improving students' reading comprehension. This study is anticipated to contribute to developing more effective research in this field.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

To avoid misunderstanding, the researcher would like to divide the following study into several key term, they are MURDER technique, and reading comprehension:

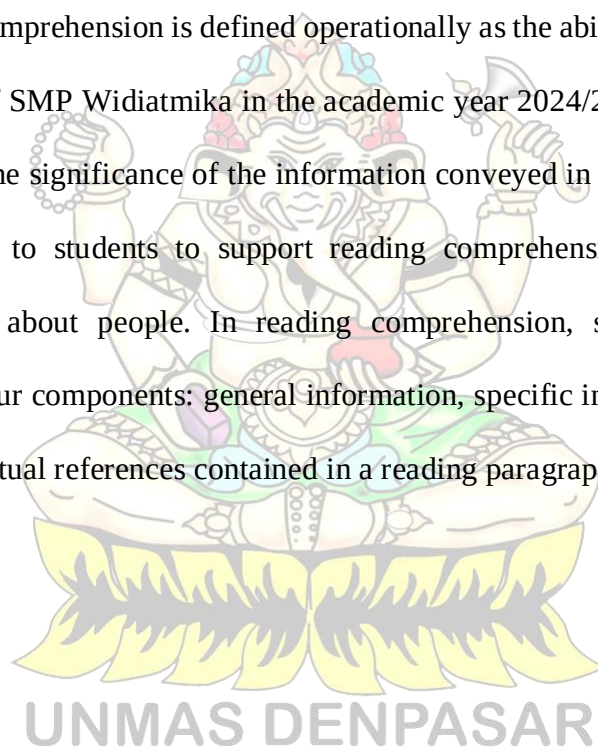
a. MURDER Technique

Murder technique is a teaching technique used by English teachers to improve seventh-grade students' reading comprehension which has a meaningful teaching and learning process that involves six steps: mood, understand, recall, detect, elaborate, and review. There are six steps in MURDER which started in word M (Mood), get into positive mood. Choose a good time and place to study and

approach the study session with an upbeat attitude. U (Understand) makes a note of any information that does not understand. R (Recall) after studying a chapter or an assignment, put what being learned into own word. D (detect), go back to what did not understand and reconsider the information. E (elaborate) suggests that the individual should return and attempt to answer questions about specific topics. R (Review) goes over the material once or twice, often it takes to master it.

b. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined operationally as the ability of the seventh-grade students of SMP Widiatmika in the academic year 2024/2025 to understand and fully grasp the significance of the information conveyed in a written text. The paragraph given to students to support reading comprehension in descriptive paragraphs was about people. In reading comprehension, students focus on understanding four components: general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual references contained in a reading paragraph.



CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

A scientific study should be undertaken on the basis of some relevant theoretical framework and empirical findings. For the purpose of this study some theoretical viewpoints and empirical evidence are reviewed in Chapter II. The present study was conducted on the following theoretical bases: (1) Reading Comprehension, (2) MURDER Technique, and (3) Reading Assessment.

2.1.1 Reading Comprehension

English is an international language, and most people in the world probably need to learn it or at least know about it. Most people learn it because they want to expand their business or just learn about another culture. Given that English is a universal language, the majority of people on this planet certainly need to learn it or at least realize it. Most individuals get it to develop their business or gain knowledge about different cultures. For this reason, to communicate, they must be able to speak English. This problem can be resolved effectively by using reading understanding, which also helps students' vocabulary grow. Therefore, reading is an important component of the teaching and learning process, especially when learning English.

This approach describes reading as an interactive process between the reader and the text. A reader brings a series of schemas, or frameworks of prior knowledge and experience, to the reading experience, which are used to understand the text being read. Bamford & Day (1998) states that reading is a process of negotiating

meaning; readers bring to the text a series of schemas to understand it, and intake is the product of those interactions. Meanwhile, understanding is the goal of reading and listening. Successful comprehension allows readers (or listeners) to gain information, and experience, and become aware of other worlds (including fictional worlds), communicate successfully, and achieve academic success.

Knowing how to read words and sentences ultimately be useless if students are unable to construct meaning from the text they read. Smith et al (2021) states that reading consists of the interaction between literal and proportional representations of a text and related schemas formed from background knowledge. In this case, direct understanding of the words and sentences contained in the text, while proportional representation involves recognition of patterns, relationships and broader concepts underlying the text. Ultimately reading is a highly complex, multicomponent process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (prior knowledge, use of strategies) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in the text, understanding of the type of text).

However, reading comprehension is also the ultimate goal of all reading, namely understanding obtained from the text. There are many levels in understanding text. Brown (2020) states that reading comprehension is proposed to measure extensive reading ability and which involves test takers in reading only short passages of one or two paragraphs can be considered an indirect measure of extensive reading. In this case, the test taker's ability to understand and extract information from a limited section is an indirect indicator of extensive reading ability. Readers can have a surface understanding or literary understanding of what they read, or they can gain a deeper understanding that involves inferring meaning

from what is not explicitly stated, analyzing information and meaning into new or deeper meanings.

Meanwhile, Mikulecky (2017) stated that reading comprehension depends on understanding the words you read. When understand the literal meaning of each word, they can form a literal representation of the text. However, deep understanding also involves the ability to associate those words with larger, more complex concepts, and relate them to knowledge already present in their mental schema. This is a complex process that requires the activation of various cognitive skills. There are also different depths of understanding. At the most basic level, reading comprehension may involve the images that come to mind when reading the word cat.

These factors determine how much cognitive effort the reader must make to understand the text. According to Duke et al (2021), Reading comprehension is greatly influenced by what a person reads and its purpose. Deep understanding also involves connecting the words to larger and more complex concepts and relating them to existing knowledge in the mental schema. This process requires the activation of various cognitive skills. In addition, analytical skills are needed to decipher the structure of the text and understand the relationship between the different parts of the text. This level of understanding includes the ability to understand the literal meaning of words and integrate them into a broader context.

In addition, reading comprehension is greatly influenced by what a person reads and the purpose of reading it (Banditvilai, 2020). For example, when reading to learn new information or prepare for an exam, the reader must be more active and critical in understanding the contents of the text. So, in this case, to achieve a

deeper understanding, a person must be able to process information critically, identify relationships between ideas, and apply previously acquired knowledge to construct a more comprehensive understanding. Skilled readers also need to be able to evaluate the information provided, distinguish between facts and opinions, and assess the credibility of the source of information. Thus, reading comprehension is not just about interpreting words, but also involves complex cognitive processes to form a deep and meaningful understanding.

So, in conclusion, reading comprehension is a complex activity where readers can gain knowledge from texts, either information or messages and new vocabulary; Furthermore, to understand the text, readers need to find meaning or relationships between sentences built into the whole text. In addition, reading can also improve our critical thinking skills and imagination. They can retell the information they have read depending on their knowledge, culture, and background. Finally, there are many benefits that readers can get from reading. If we read a lot of books, magazines, articles, and many other things, we can get a lot of knowledge and information from them.

2.1.2 MURDER Technique

The MURDER technique is one part of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning can be broadly defined as a learning situation in any classroom in which students of all performance levels work together in structured groups toward a common or shared goal. Therefore, to create a fun and meaningful teaching and learning process, teachers must play their role by varying teaching techniques or creating strategies that can attract students' interest to give their best attention to the teaching and learning process. MURDER is an abbreviation for Mood, Understand,

Recall, Detect, Elaborate, and Review. The MURDER technique is one part of cooperative learning. Actively practicing MURDER techniques in class can increase students' understanding. This requires students to read intensively without pressure because working in pairs makes students aware of the reading process, and creates challenging situations for students.

According to Kagan & Kagan (2009) state cooperative learning is an instructional strategy where students work together in small groups to achieve a common goal. This approach emphasizes positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing. The goal is for students to actively engage in the learning process, share their knowledge and skills, and support each other's learning. In classrooms where collaboration is practiced, students pursue learning in groups of varying size: negotiating, initiating, planning and evaluating together. Rather than working as individuals in competition with every other individual in the classroom, students are given the responsibility of creating a learning community where all students participate in significant and meaningful ways. Cooperative learning requires that students work together to achieve goals which they could not achieve individually. The MURDER technique can be used or can be collaborated into all the skill, they are reading, listening, speaking and writing.

MURDER is a cooperative learning technique that aims to build student activity in searching, processing and reporting information from various sources that be presented in class (Krismayani, 2015). The MURDER approach was created for use in cooperative learning groups, where students read the same material and discuss what they have learned, or in individual reading assignments where students

are encouraged to study various materials and alternately educate one other about those materials. This method promotes cooperative learning since it improves first learning and may be applied to both kinds of groups. Better transfer to individual learning is another benefit of cooperative learning. The MURDER technique focuses on five aspects: Mood, Understand, Recall, Detect, Elaborate, and Review (Geta Ariani, Suparno, 2014). MURDER aims to decide how information is shared among team members, promote the sharing of effective replies in the classroom, and reinforce learning. Additionally, it develops kids into self-reliant, accountable, and cooperative learners all at once.

The MURDER procedure involves four steps: "Mood" (mood), "U" (understand), "R" (recall), "D" (digest/detect), "E" (expand/elaborate), and "R" (review). The first step involves finding a positive mood to enhance learning. The "U" step involves identifying and highlighting information that is unclear, while the "R" step involves paraphrasing and recording everything learned. The "D" step suggests revisiting previously highlighted topics to improve understanding. The "E" step encourages asking and answering questions about topics that are still unclear. The "R" step involves reviewing all material to refresh the individual's mind. By following these steps, individuals can improve their reading and learning experience. The MURDER procedure is a valuable tool for individuals seeking to enhance their learning experience.

The MURDER technique can be used or combined with all skills, namely reading, listening, speaking and writing. This technique is suitable for middle-high school. This technique is carried out in pairs or groups. MURDER is an acronym for each process step used in MURDER studies (Sahib & Saleh, 2023). The use of

the MURDER technique has a significant impact on students' learning progress and helps them improve their reading skills. This technique is carried out in pairs or groups. MURDER is an acronym for each process step used in MURDER studies. MURDER learning asks students to work together to carry out thinking tasks or summarize and elaborate on reading material. MURDER aims to reinforce learning, encourage the sharing of successful responses across the class and decide how information is shared among team members. Apart from that, it creates students who become independent, responsible and cooperative learners.

In conclusion, the MURDER technique integrates seamlessly with all language skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing. However, its application in reading comprehension deserves special attention. By breaking down the process, students absorb new information effectively and understand important lesson content. Researchers confirmed that the MURDER Technique significantly improved students' reading comprehension abilities. In essence, the MURDER technique, when applied to reading instruction, fosters active engagement, peer interaction, and deeper understanding. It empowers students to dissect complex texts, extract key concepts, and construct coherent summaries collaboratively.

2.1.3 Reading Assessment

Assessment is very important to know the ability of students and also to measure their potential study. According to Brown (2020) In educational practice, assessment is an Ongoing process that encompasses a wide range of methodological techniques. Assessment is really needed and can be done by giving a series of test. The purpose of the test is to measure the students' reading comprehension. Besides that, it also used to enable a teacher to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching

program in the method delivery and resources. But the most important thing is to know the information on student progress.

Assessment in education not only functions to evaluate students but also as a tool to improve the learning process. By conducting regular assessments, teachers can identify the weaknesses and strengths of their teaching methods, and determine whether the materials used are effective. For example, if assessment results show that many students are having difficulty with a particular topic, the teacher may consider changing the teaching approach or looking for additional materials that can help students understand the material better. In addition, assessment results can provide an overview of student learning progress over time.

With the use of assessments, educators may measure the success of their curricula and adjust their delivery strategies, lesson plans, or instructional materials as needed. McKay (2008) defines that assessment plays an effective role in children's English language development and academic success. Sometimes classroom assessment results are used to report to others who are interested in the children's results. Furthermore, the primary purpose of evaluation is to pinpoint pupils who want extra assistance because they are unable to understand the information being taught. Finally, we owe it to the parents to demonstrate the knowledge that their child has acquired.

In addition, assessments also help in making decisions regarding individual student needs. Each student has different needs and abilities, so assessments can provide a clearer picture of each student's progress. This information is very useful for teachers to design learning programs that are more personalized and appropriate to student needs. For example, students who show difficulty in comprehending

reading can be given additional guidance or learning resources that are more easily accessible. In this way, teachers can provide more targeted and effective attention. Assessments also allow teachers to identify students who need more intensive intervention earlier.

There are two different opinions regarding the first assessment, Secolsky (2018), says that assessment is often taken as a truism, one reinforced by assessment efforts that emphasize accountability and accreditation over teaching and learning. Therefore, assessment can be carried out using tests, interviews, questionnaires, observations, etc. Students may be tested at the beginning and end of the course to assess the quality of teaching in the course. Students may be tested at the beginning and end of the course to assess the quality of teaching in the course. This approach allows educators to identify areas that need improvement and design more effective strategies. In this way, assessment not only measures learning outcomes, but also functions as a tool to improve the overall quality of education.

However, Palomba (2015) explains that assessment is the systematic collection, review and use of information about educational programs carried out to improve student learning and development. The primary purpose of assessment is to understand how an educational program works and to determine whether the program contributes to student growth and development. Both forms of assessment are necessary for effective reading instruction. In early reading, assessment is usually done by listening to students read aloud. Teachers assess word recognition and fluency in this way. Beyond this stage, assessment should focus primarily on understanding the text.

Assessment in Reading has a very crucial role in the teaching and learning process. With various assessment methods, teachers can identify students' weaknesses and strengths and adjust their teaching strategies to achieve better results. Additionally, assessments also provide important information about individual student progress, enabling more personalized and effective learning. The feedback provided through assessments helps students understand how far they have mastered the material and what they need to improve. Assessment not only benefits students but also helps teachers evaluate and improve their teaching methods. Furthermore, parental involvement in the assessment process strengthens support for student learning at home. With proper assessment, education can become more adaptive and responsive to student needs.

In this present study, the researcher uses short-answer tests to assess the student's reading comprehension. Short-Answer Tasks In some assessment tasks, the input is presented in the form of a question or questions following a reading passage or oral/ visual stimulus. The expected test-taker response can vary from a single word to a sentence or two. These short answers can be scored dichotomously (right or wrong) for a single criterion for correctness or with partial credit for multiple criteria for correctness. Let's take a look at some example tasks (Brown 2020). The researcher thinks that short-answer tests can be constructed to measure most educational objectives; it is less difficult to construct a test fitting the table of specifications by using multiple-choice questions than any other type of question. Furthermore, short-answer tests scoring is fast and can be done by someone not familiar with the subject area.

2.2 Empirical Review

In the field of language education, efforts to improve reading comprehension skills are still a major concern. The MURDER technique, an innovative approach rooted in cooperative learning, is emerging as a promising strategy to overcome these challenges. This empirical review investigates the efficacy of the MURDER technique in improving reading comprehension among students. By synthesizing existing research and insights, this review aims to explain the practical implications and theoretical foundations of the application of MURDER techniques in educational settings. Through an examination of empirical evidence and scholarly discourse, this review seeks to delineate the strengths, limitations, and future directions in using the MURDER technique as a pedagogical tool.

Research relevant to this study is research conducted by Siska Ria Pandiangan, Anna Stasya Prima Sari Sinaga (2021) in the journal entitled “Applying MURDER Technique to Improve Students’ Reading Comprehension of the Seventh Grade Students of SMP Santo Thomas 1 Medan in the Academic Year of 2020/2021”. Their study focused on the application of the MURDER (Mood, Understand, Recall, Detect, Elaborate, Review) technique to improve reading comprehension skills among middle school students. Using this method, they aim to overcome the common challenges students face in understanding and remembering reading material.

The study's findings about the classroom environment indicate that: (1) students were more engaged; (2) motivation and confidence increased; (3) students looked forward to reading class; (4) they were more willing to share their ideas with partners and work together; and (5) the use of the murder technique increased

communication and cooperation among the students. However, this study was unable to optimize the usage of step mood before students began to comprehend the text; hence, studying in a pleasant atmosphere or mood is more beneficial than studying in an unfavourable one. So, the update in research is to focus on improving reading comprehension through the MURDER technique (Mood, Understanding, Remembering, Detecting, Elaborating, Reviewing). Special emphasis can be given to optimizing each step of the MURDER technique to suit the specific needs of seventh-grade students.

Another research relevant of this study is research conducted by Rahman & Noni (2021) with journal entitled “The Effectiveness of Mood, Understand, Recall, Digest, Expand, and Review (MURDER) Strategy in Improving Students’ Reading Comprehension”. The study was conducted to the second-grade students of MIPA in SMAN 12 Bulukumba. Their research aims to evaluate the impact of the MURDER strategy on students' reading comprehension abilities. The results show that this strategy significantly improves students' ability to understand and remember reading material. This research supports the application of the MURDER technique as an effective learning method to improve reading comprehension in secondary school students, thereby strengthening similar research findings in different educational contexts.

Students become more engaged and excited as a result of more pleasurable activity learning. Furthermore, teaching reading with the MURDER approach may raise reading comprehension scores from the lowest to the top. The results also indicate a shift in learner behaviour from teacher-cantered to student-cantered. Pupils exhibit higher levels of enjoyment because the MURDER strategy's phases

help them read a passage in a positive frame of mind and let them to explain each exam question using personal experience. Although the text discusses a unique lifestyle, it is not appropriate for seventh-graders. So, in this study the update presented is to consider strategies to improve the learning environment and ensure that the MURDER technique is age-appropriate and interesting for seventh-graders.

