

Strengthening Reading Competence in English Using a Reading Comprehension Module

Fortalecimiento de la competencia lectora en inglés mediante la aplicación de un módulo de comprensión de lectura

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This article reports the results of a study carried out at a public high school in Colombia whose objective was to design and determine how a reading comprehension module contributed to strengthening English literacy competence in sixth graders. The methodological framework entailed a basic outline of the action-research cycle. The qualitative data analysis was designed descriptively, focusing on three research moments corresponding to each cycle's stages. The results show that the implementation of the material had a significant impact on the development of literacy competence, which suggests the material could be a tool for supporting English language learning.

Keywords: English language learning, materials design, instructional modules, reading competence

Este artículo de investigación reporta los resultados de un estudio realizado en un colegio público en Colombia cuyo objetivo fue diseñar y determinar el grado de contribución de un módulo de comprensión de lectura en inglés para el fortalecimiento de la competencia lecto-escritora en grado sexto. Desde el diseño metodológico se implementó un esquema básico del ciclo de investigación-acción. El análisis de datos cualitativos se realizó de manera descriptiva, centrándose en tres momentos diferentes de la investigación que corresponden a las fases de cada ciclo. Los resultados muestran que la implementación del material tuvo un impacto significativo en el desarrollo de la competencia lecto-escritora, lo que sugiere que puede ser utilizado como herramienta de apoyo en el aprendizaje del inglés.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje del inglés, competencia lectora, diseño de materiales, módulos

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Introduction

Reading comprehension constitutes a fundamental pillar of any educational endeavor. It establishes an interaction between the reader's prior knowledge and the information they find in a new text (Fontes-Guerrero et al., 2020). In order to determine the quality of education and define strategies for improving literacy in foreign language acquisition, citizenship skills, and numerical reasoning, the Colombian State established a series of policies based on two types of diagnoses: unified criteria and standardized tests. The first corresponds to an internal evaluation system proposed in Decree 1290 by the Ministry of National Education (2009), which establishes that the evaluation of students within schools is particular and autonomous since it responds to each institution's educational model. On the other hand, standardized tests are implemented within the compulsory education system to evidence the students' level of achievement regarding scientific, mathematical, and communicative skills (Sanabria-James et al., 2020).

Colombian laws guarantee universal access to education,¹ including learning a foreign language, and thus, reading comprehension in a foreign language has become a relevant issue. According to Grabe (1988), the reading process is not limited to extracting information from a text, for it constitutes a process in "which the reading activates a range of knowledge in the reader's mind that he or she uses, and that in turn, may be refined and extended by the new information supplied by the text" (p. 56). For Dechant (1991), efficient reading is the essential way to achieve effective learning because "reading is so interrelated with the total educational process that educational success requires successful reading" (p. 7). Consequently, good reading skills help students succeed in their learning process at school and in their lives.

Reading literacy is defined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as "understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society" (2010, p. 37). The OECD designs the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) test to determine to what extent students completing compulsory schooling have acquired the essential knowledge and skills for adequate participation in modern societies (OECD, 2017).

This study took place in a Colombian public school located in a rural setting. Although regional educational authorities have shown great interest in strengthening the learning processes in English, as attested by recent policies,² tests reveal that secondary students have a low reading comprehension level in English. Specifically, the students in the school where the study was carried out have consistently shown poor performance in the critical reading and English components of the Saber 11 test. Table 1 shows the results of these two components for 2020.

As we can see, this particular school needs to improve students' academic performance if it wants to respond to the policies of the regional development plan. Therefore, reading comprehension in English must be fostered through a didactic strategy tailor-made for this purpose. Thereupon, taking into account the students' low academic results obtained on the Saber 11 state test, their poor command of the English language, and their limited literacy competence, we propose a study to determine the contribution of a reading comprehension module in English as a didactic strategy to strengthen the literacy and communicative competences in sixth-grade students in a Colombian public school.

1 The interested reader may consult Articles 27 and 67 of the Constitution of Colombia and the General Education Act (1994).

2 For instance, the regional development plan for 2020-2024 includes a chapter that contemplates fostering students' competence in the English language (Gobernación de Cundinamarca, 2020).

Table 1. Results of the Critical Reading and English Components on the Saber 11 Test, 2020

Component: Critical reading			
Level	Rank	Number of students	%
1	0–35	4 out of 101	3.9
2	36–50	39 out of 101	38.6
3	51–65	66 out of 101	55.6
4	66–100	2 out of 101	1.9
Institutional Average Rating: 51.6, which corresponds to Level 3			
Component: English			
Level	Rank	Number of Students	%
A-	0–47	61 out of 101	60.4
A1	48–57	34 out of 101	33.6
A2	58–67	5 out of 101	5.1
B1	68–78	1 out of 101	0.9
B2	79–100	0 out of 101	0
Institutional Average Rating: 45.11, which corresponds to A-			

Note. The reading component's levels are arranged in descending order (1 = highest, 4 = lowest). The levels in the English component correspond to those in the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001), and, in this case, the levels are in ascending order (A- = lowest, B2 = highest).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical bases that guided the research are found in two fundamental areas: the role of communicative competence in English learning and using a reading comprehension module as a didactic strategy.

Communicative Competence

The concept of communicative competence in language teaching and acquisition studies is directly related to the notion of linguistic competence, whose consolidation is based on the distinction made by Chomsky (1965) between competence and performance. For Chomsky, competence is the prior knowledge of the speaker-listener's language, while performance is the actual use of the language in specific situations (as cited in Sánchez-Lobato & Santos-Gargallo, 2004). On the other hand, from the study of language as a system, the interest does not lie in the use of language or the acquisition and teaching of languages but in the

development of a linguistic theory focused mainly on grammatical rules (Sánchez-Lobato & Santos-Gargallo, 2004); that is, competence, rather than performance, is the primary subject matter.

For Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence comprises grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discursive competence, and strategic competence. This model has significantly influenced foreign language teaching, mainly in understanding those four competencies.

Reading Competence

For PISA, based on the DeSeCo project (Definition and Selection of Key Competencies), there is another competence framed within communicative competence: reading (Díez-Mediavilla & Egío, 2017). Reading competence moves toward the pragmatics field, meaning that reading has a purpose. As Solé argues (2012, as cited in Díez-Mediavilla & Egío, 2017), it is related to a

personal project that implies development, growth, and social insertion. It gives an efficient sense to reading; reading competence means reading certain information within a specific context. Because of this, the PISA model for evaluating reading competence focuses on three dimensions: aspects discussed, texts read, and situations in which the reading act is established (Díez-Mediavilla & Egío, 2017).

The first dimension—*aspects*—refers to mental strategies, approaches, or purposes that readers use to approach the texts (Ministerio de Educación, 2010). PISA synthesizes those strategies into three categories: obtaining information, interpreting texts, and reflecting and assessing (Díez-Mediavilla & Egío, 2017). As for *texts*, the second dimension, the information here is classified according to four characteristics: media (print and digital); environment (author and message-based); format (continuous, discontinuous, mixed, and multiple); and type, which includes description, narration, exposition, argumentation, instruction, and transaction (Saulés, 2012, as cited in Díez-Mediavilla & Egío, 2017). Finally, *situations*, the third dimension, can be understood as a classification of reading tasks based on the use for which the texts are intended, on the relationships with other texts—which are implicit or explicit in the task—and on the textual content in general (OECD, 2000).

To close this section, we would like to highlight the notion of reading competence held by Jiménez-Pérez (2015) because it aligns with our study's objectives. For this author, reading competence comprises two elements: reading ability and comprehension. The former is defined as the individual's capability to apply the information obtained in a written text practically and in everyday contexts. The latter refers to the possibility of evoking the information of a text mentally without leading to a practical manifestation.

Reading Comprehension Module

Both PISA and Saber 11 tests use the same kind of exercise for reading comprehension, which is included

in the English as a foreign language component of the latter, for they constitute the most frequent types of questions in standardized tests (Sanabria-James et al., 2020). These questions include textual questions, in which literal information about a given text is asked; single-answer multiple-choice questions, where several options are given, and only one of them is correct; true or false questions with justification, in which students must argue whether a statement is correct or not; and matching questions, which consist of matching statements in different columns according to the text. Due to its structure, implementing a reading comprehension module seems pertinent to respond to the need of students to become familiar with these types of questions.

A learning or instructional module is “a compilation or synthesis of different theories and pedagogical approaches which guide teachers in developing study programs and in systematizing the teaching and learning process” (Flores-Piñas, 2015, p. 22). According to Yukavetsky (2003), the instructional module constitutes a didactic material that contains all the elements necessary for learning concepts and skills at the student's own pace, without the instructor's continuous presence. For his part, Kaplún (1995) assures that the module is a didactically prepared text to facilitate the acquisition of certain knowledge or the satisfaction of a specific learning need autonomously, without requiring the permanent intervention of a teacher or a tutor.

A learning module for reading comprehension consists of an organized proposal of the instructional elements or components necessary for the student to develop specific learning around a theme. For this reason, every module must include learning objectives, contents, activities, and evaluation (Flores-Piñas, 2015). In addition, the module has to be developed through learning sessions with their respective evaluation instruments to measure the achievement of students' literal and inferential reading comprehension levels (Flores-Piñas, 2015).

Method

For this study, we developed a basic outline of the action-research cycle. According to Lewin (1946, 1948, as cited in Kemmis, 1980), this model involves a spiral of cycles. The basic cycle of activities consists of the following steps: (a) *planning*, which constitutes the creation of specific action steps to solve a given problem; (b) *acting*, which encompasses the development and implementation of the action steps; (c) *observing*, which involves amending the plan through a revision of each action step based on the monitoring of the implementation; and (d) *reflecting*, which embodies the explanation of any possible failure and its effects, as well as the recognition of new problems. From this primary cycle, we then developed a second action step, which included implementation and evaluation, leading to a new revision of the general plan and, if necessary, to the development of a third action step, with its respective implementation and evaluation, and so on (Elliott, 1991).

Population and Sample

In 2021, the school where the study took place had a population of 92 sixth graders from low-income families and ages between 10 and 14 years old. After a process of intentional or convenience sampling, we took a representative sample of 25 students (21.17% of the whole sixth-grade population) divided into four groups: 601, 602, 603, and 604 (see Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of the Participating Students ($N = 25$)

Group	<i>n</i>	%
601	6	24
602	5	20
603	6	24
604	8	32

We used intentional or convenience sampling to ensure a homogeneous population throughout the research. Purposeful sampling is how the researcher

non-randomly selects individuals with a value of information about the social phenomenon intended to be studied (Izcara-Palacios, 2007). The selection of the interviewees is based on their knowledge and ability to report on a specific topic (Anduiza-Perea et al., 1999). It should be noted that these types of samples are considerably small compared to the standards used in quantitative research (Castro-Nogueira, 2002). This sampling also allowed us to have a similar number of participants from each group (see Table 2).

Instruments for Data Collection

We resorted to two qualitative tests (pre-test and post-test) and objective tests (reading comprehension modules). In the following sections, we will describe how these instruments were applied.

Data Analysis

Due to the nature of qualitative research, we decided to analyze the information descriptively since it is through description that this type of research intends to account for the results obtained (Mejía-Gamboa, 2014). Consequently, we followed the contrast analysis method to respond to the research objectives, which consisted of contrasting the information collected to specify the effectiveness of the implemented didactic strategy (Martínez, 2000). In the case of the current research, the results obtained from the pre-test and post-test instruments were juxtaposed to determine the impact of the implementation of the reading comprehension module in strengthening the participants' reading competence in English.

The analysis develops around four moments of the study, which correspond to the four stages of the action-research cycle. The results from each stage allowed us to move forward into the next stage. For *planning*, we focused on the results from the diagnostic pre-test, which, in turn, were the starting point for the *acting* stage, where we implemented three reading comprehension modules. Then, we

applied the post-test to *observe* any variations in the participants' reading comprehension, and by contrasting the results between the pre- and post-test, we finally were able to *reflect* on the impact of the modules and, thus, answer the research question and propose an action plan.

Results

First Stage (Planning): Results of the Pre-Test

The first part of the analysis evaluated the pre-test results used as a diagnosis to determine the degree of reading competence in English of the 25 participating students. The reading selected for said pre-test is titled

The Symbols of My School, prepared exclusively for the participants based on historical information about their school. The exercise involved a reading comprehension module with the three main types of questions that make up the critical reading section in the PISA and ICFES Saber 11 tests: textual, inferential, and reflective.

The reading consisted of four short paragraphs in which the school's symbols are described with information related to their creators, composers, and year of incorporation into the school. Then, the reading comprehension exercise presented 16 questions referring to what is narrated in the text, distributed in three categories: five textual questions, six inferential questions, and five reflective questions. The results of the pre-test are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the Reading Competence Diagnostic Test ($N = 25$)

	Type of question		
	Textual	Inferential	Reflective
Students who responded correctly	9 (36%)	6 (24%)	2 (8%)
Students who responded incorrectly	16 (64%)	19 (76%)	23 (92%)
Students who passed: 8 (32%)			
Students who failed: 17 (68%)			

The results determined that 64% of the students needed reinforcement on the textual-type questions, 76% on the inferential-type questions, and 92% on the reflective-type questions. In addition, it was found that students were more comfortable with single-answer multiple-choice questions. On the other hand, they had great difficulties with open-ended questions and filling in the missing information.

Second Stage (Acting): Results of Implementing Reading Modules

For this stage, we proposed a series of activities interconnected through a thematic line that involved cultural and historical aspects of the local community, which included exercises commonly used in standar-

dized tests. Each activity makes up for one of the three reading comprehension modules, which were designed by translating Spanish texts taken from the website of the local culture agency. The three reading comprehension modules were implemented in three weekly lessons of one hour each. At the end of each module, we gathered to assess its implementation.

We also designed each module following the stages of the action-research cycle at the micro-level. Taking into account the pre-test results, we *planned* the modules around the aspects that needed improvement, implemented them (*acting*), and *observed* how the participants responded. We finally *reflected* on the things that needed adjustments. From the beginning, we intended to make the material as appropriate as possible to meet the needs

of the participating population. As the materials were designed taking into account the cultural background of the municipality where the students resided and their familiarity with it, the modules constituted a series of activities that, in the end, provided constant support and assistance for the student's learning processes throughout the intervention (see Appendix).

Analysis of Results of the First Reading Module

During the first stage of the analysis, planning, and taking into account the pre-test results, we determined that the paramount need of the participants was to acquire the ability to answer textual questions based on literal information in the text. From this, the second stage of action or implementation took place. The most frequent types of questions from standardized tests were incorporated into the reading comprehension module to strengthen the students' recognition of the statements and the identification of the specific information requested. During the module implementation, in the observation stage, we identified the students' main difficulties when solving the exercises and their strengths and weaknesses in fulfilling the task. In general, the students could find the requested information and relate it to the questions; however, there was a noticeable problem with justifying their choices for true or false questions. Finally, in the reflection stage, we proposed possible solutions to counteract the material's shortcomings, especially in the justification section, and determined to what extent they could positively affect the participants' learning process.

The reading prepared for this module was *The Headquarters of My School*, which focused exclusively on textual questions. The text consists of seven short paragraphs that describe the creation, location, and characteristics of each regional branch of the school. The module has 15 textual questions: five single-answer multiple-choice, five true or false with justification, and five matching questions.

Of the 25 participants, 20 students gave correct answers to the multiple-choice questions, 14 to the true or false questions, and 17 to the matching questions, which resulted in 19 students scoring high enough to pass the activity, representing 76% of the population. Furthermore, justification exercises are more difficult for sixth-grade students than determining whether an idea is true or false.

Based on the above, we found that 24% of the students ($n = 6$) needed to improve their ability to answer questions based on literal information extracted from the text and that 40% of the students ($n = 10$) required some support to justify their answers, even though they were right at first. In addition, a considerable improvement was noted concerning the pre-test results, going from 36% approval of textual questions to 76%.

Analysis of Results of the Second Reading Module

Because of the results of the previous module and the pre-test, we decided that the second module would be focused on inferential questions and justified answers. The reading designed for this purpose, titled *Hills and Mountains of Tenjo*, is a short text comprised of four paragraphs of medium length and focused on the topography of Tenjo (the town where the school is located). The text includes historical data about the most representative mountains of the municipality, their height, location, and relevance to the traditions of Tenjo's population. Similar to the previous module, the material has 15 questions: five true or false with justification, five single-answer multiple-choice, and five chronological order questions.

Out of the 25 participants, 18 students (72%) answered the true or false questions correctly with justification, 17 students (68%) answered the single-answer multiple-choice questions without difficulty, and 13 students (52%) adequately resolved the chronological order questions. Sixteen students (64%) completed

the module successfully, while the remaining nine (36%) failed to do so. We observed that the difficulties concerning the justification questions were reduced, although the chronological order questions represented an obstacle for many students.

Based on the results of the second reading module and during the planning stage, we observed that the participants had reached a competent level in answering textual questions. Our next priority was for the participants to practice answering inferential questions based on the information presented in the text. Therefore, the action stage on this occasion focused on designing inferential-type questions whose answers could be gleaned from the ideas in the text. The students would then organize their answers chronologically. The objective of this stage was to develop exercises that allowed students to see the relationships between paragraphs and their general connection with the topic of the text. After implementing the material and during the observation stage, we noted that many participants did not order the propositions chronologically despite having enough source information. On the other hand, there was a noticeable improvement in justifying their choices in true or false questions, which can be attributed to the experience gained in the previous reading module. In the reflective stage, we recognized the effectiveness of the reinforcement implemented for answering questions that required justification and potential changes for solving questions of a logical order that could benefit the participants' reading process.

Considering the above, we found that 36% of the population ($n = 9$) required some support to improve their ability to answer inferential questions based on the implicit relationships of the propositions in the text. Furthermore, 48% of the population ($n = 12$) needed to reinforce their ability to solve logical questions. After implementing this second reading module, we also observed a considerable increase in the number of participants who correctly answered inferential questions, compared to the pre-test (see Table 3), from 24% to 64%.

Analysis of Results of the Third Reading Module

Based on the previous results (pre-test and first and second reading modules), we determined that the third module should be designed to resolve reflective and logical questions. For this purpose, we prepared the reading entitled *Tenjo's Principal Park*, composed of five paragraphs of medium length and focused on the history of the colonial park of Tenjo. The information in the text deals with historical data about the park's creation and renovation and its impact on the local market and the urban growth around it. Following the same format as the previous modules, the material includes 11 questions aimed at reflection and critical thinking, five single-answer multiple-choice questions, one open-ended question, and five true or false questions.

Of the 25 participants, 16 students (64%) correctly answered the multiple-choice questions, 14 students (56%) correctly answered the open-ended question based on the information in the text, and 15 (60%) students answered true or false questions without difficulty. Fourteen students (56%) completed the module; the remaining 11 (44%), on the other hand, failed to answer the module questions correctly. There was a slight improvement in the logical questions, although the students generally had difficulty with the open-ended question.

Bearing in mind the results of the second module, we considered it pertinent to direct the planning stage toward reflective questions, having found significant advances in the participants' resolution of textual and inferential questions. Because of the above, the design of questions in the action stage focused on raising concerns that would allow students to reflect on the information in the text. The participants' ability to reason at a literal and inferential level was essential for completing the third reading module because they needed a basic grasp of textual and inferential questions to tackle reflective questions. After implementing the material (observation stage), we found that the students had problems answering open-ended questions. Moreover,

the ability to answer questions of a logical order increased compared to the previous reading module. During the reflective stage, we modified the module's structure to improve the students' capacity to answer open-ended questions, allowing us to determine the module's impact on the participants' reading competence.

Based on the above, 11 students (44%) had difficulties answering critical-thinking questions. In addition, the same number of participants needed some support to answer open-ended questions. Even so, there was a noticeable increase in the percentage of students who correctly answered reflective questions: from 8% in the pre-test (see Table 3) to 56% in the third reading module. Furthermore, there was a slight improvement regarding the difficulties related to the logical questions, going from 52% approval in the second module to 60% in the third one.

Third Stage (Observation): Results of the Post-Test

The post-test was administered to the 25 sixth-grade students who participated in the research. The reading selected for that opportunity was *Chitasugá*

Artisan House, based on the municipality's historical and cultural information and the results obtained from the pre-test and the three reading comprehension modules. The post-test included exercises based on the questions used in the pre-test and the three reading modules: textual, inferential, and reflective, allowing us to compare the results.

The reading is composed of five paragraphs of medium length. It describes the history of the Chitasugá Artisan House, information associated with its founder, representative cultural events, and its impact on the economy of artisans in the municipality. The reading comprehension exercise comprised 16 questions: five textual, five inferential, and six reflective. Additionally, the exercise included single-answer multiple-choice, true or false with justification, and open-ended questions.

Of the 25 participating students, 21 (84%) gave correct answers to the textual questions, 17 (68%) to the inferential questions, and 14 (56%) to the reflective questions. Unlike the pre-test, where only eight of the 25 students obtained a passing score, 20 passed the post-test, going from 32% to 80% of the total population (see Table 4).

Table 4. Reading Comprehension Final Exam Results (*N* = 25)

	Type of question		
	Textual	Inferential	Reflective
Students who responded correctly	21 (84%)	17 (68%)	14 (56%)
Students who responded incorrectly	4 (16%)	8 (32%)	11 (44%)
Students who passed: 20 (80%)			
Students who failed: 5 (20%)			

Considering the results obtained from the pre-test and the post-test and their corresponding analysis and contrast, a significant improvement in the student's reading comprehension level is evident. As shown in Table 3, the pre-test results show that 68% of the students did not have a high enough level of reading competence in English to pass a standardized exam

such as the PISA and ICFES Saber tests. However, after the intervention and use of the designed material, this figure decreased to 20% of the population (see Table 4). There was also a considerable increase in the participants' ability to respond adequately to open-ended questions, going from 56% in the third module to 76% in the post-test.

Fourth Stage: Action Plan Reflection

We started by identifying the main difficulties students had when understanding texts written in English. Then, based on the shortcomings, we proposed and implemented a didactic sequence that met students' needs and helped them improve their reading comprehension skills. We also sought to provide students with a pedagogical tool and a series of reading strategies to reinforce their cognitive processes while tackling complex texts.

Monitoring and supervision strategies, for instance, helped foster the students' written production capacity and their reading and argumentative skills in English. Although the modules were designed for sixth graders, we believe that they can easily be used with other grades to achieve a higher level of performance in English reading proficiency.

The sequence of activities established for the modules turned out to be quite beneficial, as well as the students' familiarity with the topics of the reading exercises. The first module is directly related to the students since it alludes to the headquarters of the school in which they study; the second has a more general theme, connecting the known geography of Tenjo with monuments and places of interest; the third covers more general issues, highlighting the importance of the central park as the axis of the municipality's urban development.

Conclusions

The results show that the use of reading comprehension modules significantly contributed to promoting the learning of English through activities focused on developing reading competence. Beyond this, the proposed activities constitute valuable material not only for sixth graders but for the school in general due to the ease of linking students' interests with the topics presented there.

We found that, at the beginning of the process, the students had low literacy and communicative competence in English, significant difficulty in answering inferential and reflective questions, and a limited ability

to answer open-ended questions and argue. Additionally, the pre-test instrument effectively specified the level of reading competence the students had at the beginning of the research and determined the most efficient strategy when designing the action plan.

The participants' role was a fundamental part of the research process since their learning experience and constant involvement made it possible to design materials that met the needs of both the school and the students. Likewise, the reading comprehension modules allowed sixth-grade students to better understand standardized tests and their most frequently asked questions, as they constitute a standardized assessment tool with clearly defined parameters and purposes.

The materials used throughout the action plan worked properly because, based on the evidence, the students responded to the proposed exercises adequately and without significant difficulties. Similarly, the post-test results improved over those obtained by the students in the initial diagnosis, considering that most participants answered the textual, inferential, and reflective questions correctly.

We recommend contextualizing and orienting the students about the material(s), clarifying the types of questions to solve, and the proposed exercises. It is also necessary to consider implementing new strategies that involve more communicative skills in the classroom, different from reading skills, and can comprehensively promote English learning. Although the study focused on the development of reading competence as a complement to grammatical, sociolinguistic, discursive, and strategic competencies, the use of activities focused on other skills and aptitudes can significantly contribute to the development of communicative competence and language learning in general.

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Appendix: Excerpt From the Second Reading Comprehension Module

Hills and Mountains of Tenjo

The geography of Tenjo is characterized by being mountainous and with a cold climate. Tenjo has several mountains that adjoin other municipalities in Cundinamarca, which are part of the cultural identity of the area. Among the many hills of the municipality, the most representative are the following.

Serranía del Majuy

This mountainous chain consists of more than 3,000 hectares that communicate the municipalities of Cota, Tabio, and Tenjo. Its name in the Chibcha language means “inside you,” and it was considered a place of worship for the goddess Chía by the Muisca people. Several local legends narrate that between the months of April and May, the Mohan used to come down from the mountains to meet his lover, Huaika. Together, they protected the valleys and hills of Tenjo, preventing the Spanish conquerors from stealing their treasures.

Peña de Juaica

It is a mountain located between the municipalities of Tenjo and Tabio. Its name in the Chibcha language means “territory of the lady,” a sacred place for the Muisca people in which they performed their religious rituals. It is said that the face of the Chibcha god, Bochica, is carved on the stone walls of the mountain and that, in the caverns, there are two large stones that were used to worship the sun and the moon. Other versions relate that many of the natives, seeing the proximity of the Spanish troops, preferred to jump into the void, from the top of the rock, rather than die at the hands of the conquerors. On numerous occasions there have been sightings of mysterious lights over the mountain, which is why many people think that there are UFOs in the zone.

Pan de Azúcar Hill

This hill is located in Chincé. It was used by the Muisca to perform their religious ceremonies dedicated to the sun and the moon. It was customary for the Muisca people to pay tribute through crops and cattle to receive the favor of the gods in times of need. Currently, the place is used for pilgrimages and catholic religious ceremonies. The cross that is located at the top of the hill is aligned with the cross erected on La Valvanera slope, located in the municipality of Chía.

Understanding the Text

1. Write “true” (T) or “false” (F) based on the information from the text. If the information is false, correct the statement.

Example:

Peña de Juaica is a mountain whose name is in the Chibcha language. (T)

Correct statement: _____

Pan de Azúcar hill is located in Chitasugá. (F)

Correct statement: Pan de Azúcar hill is located in Chincé.

- a. The Muisca people worshipped the sun and the moon. ()

Correct answer: _____

- b. Some people believe that there have been aliens in the Peña de Juaica. ()

Correct answer: _____

- c. The Muisca people spoke the Spanish language. ()

Correct answer: _____

- d. Pan de Azúcar hill has been used for catholic rituals only. ()

Correct answer: _____

- e. The indigenous people preferred dying than being conquered. ()

Correct answer: _____

2. Choose the word that is a synonym of the underlined word.

- a. Many natives preferred to jump into the void.

Conquerors () Inhabitants () Hunters ()

- b. On numerous occasions there have been sightings of mysterious lights over the mountain.

Few () Limited () Many ()

- c. Pan de Azúcar hill was used by the Muisca to perform their religious ceremonies.

Mountain () River () Cross ()

- d. The cross is located at the top of the Pan de Azúcar hill.

Lost () Situated () Heavy ()

- e. Tenjo has several mountains, which are part of the cultural identity of the area.

Region () Capital () Inhabitants ()

- f. Several local legends narrate that between the months of April and May, the Mohan used to come down from the mountains to meet his lover, Huaika.

Creatures () Magic () Tales ()

3. Organize the following statements according to the order in which they were presented in the text.
- Its name in the Chibcha language means “inside you,” and it was considered a place of worship for the goddess Chía by the Muisca people ()
 - On numerous occasions there have been sightings of mysterious lights over the mountain, which is why many people think that there are UFOs in the zone ()
 - Among the many hills of the municipality, the most representative are the following ()
 - The geography of Tenjo is characterized by being mountainous and with a cold climate ()
 - It was used by the Muisca to perform their religious ceremonies dedicated to the sun and the moon ()
 - Its name in the Chibcha language means “territory of the lady,” a sacred place for the Muisca people in which they performed their religious rituals ()