Defining needs, setting targets and looking at strategies
Reading

You have decided to improve your reading skills but you are not sure about which area to work on. Before you can set a target for your independent study plan you will need to take the following steps:

1. Think about why you want to improve your reading skills
2. Work out more precisely where your main problems are in reading
3. Find out what causes your problems and which skills and techniques you may need to work on

1.   Why do you want to improve your reading skills?

Think about the following reasons, tick the one(s) that most affect you and add your own if they do not match your situation.

- I need to read a lot in English for my course work.
- I have to take a test before graduating and it involves reading comprehension.
- I like to read articles / newspapers / books in English but it takes too long.
- I want to use reading as input for improving another skill (writing, speaking)
- I want to learn new vocabulary / grammar structures through reading.
- Add your own _____

2.   What are your problems in reading?

Look at the problems described below. They are all problems related to reading skills. Which of these problems do you have when reading?

I can't read fast enough	I can't get the main ideas	I can't find the information I need in the text
I'm not familiar with the topic of the text	There are too many new words	I can't understand the attitude of the writer

3.   Summarising your needs

*Write a short statement summarizing your **purpose** and **problems** in reading.*

4.   Techniques to use for your problems

Follow the chart below to help yourself work out what your reading needs are. Tick any of the boxes on the first level where you think you have a problem. Then look at the next level and mark the techniques that you would like to improve.

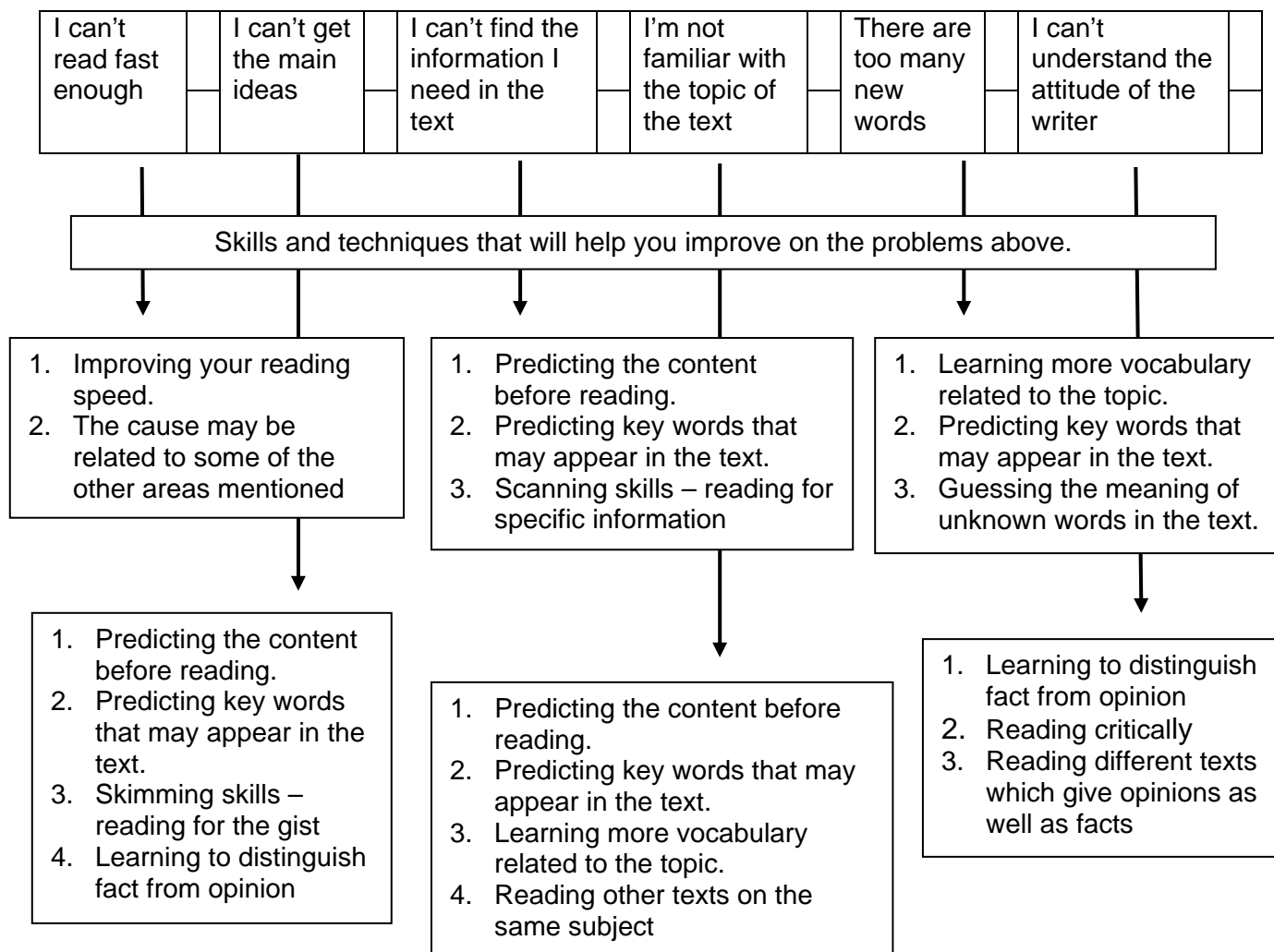| I can't read fast enough | | I can't get the main ideas | | I can't find the information I need in the text | I'm not familiar with the topic of the text | | There are too many new words | | I can't understand the attitude of the writer | |

Skills and techniques that will help you improve on the problems above.

1. Improving your reading speed.
2. The cause may be related to some of the other areas mentioned

1. Predicting the content before reading.
2. Predicting key words that may appear in the text.
3. Scanning skills – reading for specific information

1. Learning more vocabulary related to the topic.
2. Predicting key words that may appear in the text.
3. Guessing the meaning of unknown words in the text.

1. Predicting the content before reading.
2. Predicting key words that may appear in the text.
3. Skimming skills – reading for the gist
4. Learning to distinguish fact from opinion

1. Predicting the content before reading.
2. Predicting key words that may appear in the text.
3. Learning more vocabulary related to the topic.
4. Reading other texts on the same subject

1. Learning to distinguish fact from opinion
2. Reading critically
3. Reading different texts which give opinions as well as facts

5.   Writing a Target

Now write a target for your reading study plan. Remember that your target should be measurable and achievable, appropriate for your needs, and include a time-frame.