

Strategies for understanding what you read

Here are some strategies for understanding what you read:

Does the image help?
The umbrella here suggests bad weather.

Skim through the headings and sub-headings to get the main points.



If you don't know a word, read on - SAD is explained here.

SAD
Dr Rob Hicks

SAD, or seasonal affective disorder, is a specific type of depression that affects people at the same time each year - autumn and winter. During spring and summer people with SAD feel well.

Look at the verbs that are used. Here the use of the present tense shows it is an explanation.

What causes SAD?

Experts believe SAD is related to a lack of exposure to daylight, which explains why people feel well during spring and summer and only start experiencing problems when the days get shorter.

Look out for lists - remember that they are separated by commas.

What are the symptoms?

Many people complain of feeling miserable, lacking in energy, being tired, having low spirits and feeling depressed. Some also find their sleep is disturbed, they eat less or more than usual and they have no sex drive. Symptoms usually start between September and November and almost always spontaneously disappear with the arrival of spring and the longer daylight hours.

Note the sub-headings are questions, so the text below will answer the question.

Who's affected?

Up to one in 20 people is believed to be affected by SAD, with women being three times more likely to be affected than men. Younger people, particularly those between the ages of 18 and 40, are more likely to suffer. Because days get shorter the further north you go, SAD is more common in northern countries. Worrying about work, relationships or money make SAD more likely.

Sometimes you can ignore difficult words: 'spontaneous' is hard, but you can still understand the sentence if you

What's the treatment?

Ensure exposure to plenty of daylight. Light boxes provide a regular dose of artificial light each day and help many people. Counselling, exercising and spending time outdoors can help. Boost mood with rest, relaxation, regular exercise and a healthy diet. Treatment with antidepressants may help to relieve symptoms.

At times you may see technical words - you can look them up in a dictionary.

At the end the text moves from explanation to instruction. See how some sentences begin with command verbs.