

# *Choice Readings*

## 英语精选读本

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## 关于《英语精选读本》

英语阅读教材 CHOICE READINGS 《英语精选读本》由美国密执安大学英语学院的教员编写，1996 年首版问世。

在此以前，密执安大学英语学院的教员曾编写过我国英语教学界所熟悉的 READER'S CHOICE 《读者的选择》一书，它曾于 1977 年，1988 年和 1994 年先后发行过 3 个版本。我国世界图书出版公司北京公司最早积极引进，向密执安大学购得在中国大陆发行该书第 2 版和第 3 版的重印权。该教材的对象是把英语作为第二语言或外语的学习者，因此适用于我国的英语学习者，现已为我国多所院校选为英语系高年级或研究生阅读教材或教学参考书。但考虑到全书用英语编写，课文内容又有一定深度，我曾指出它对已完成中级阶段的学习者更为理想。现在，《英语精选读本》的出版是为了满足那些已完成初级阶段学习的学习者，或使用《读者的选择》有一定困难的学习者。那些原先把《读者的选择》作为课堂教学的教师和单位来说，可以更系统地安排教学。

《英语精选读本》既然从《读者的选择》脱脂而出，必然继承了《读者的选择》的主要特征和优点，但在程度上要容易一些，有利于学习者循序渐进。

那么，本教材究竟有哪些特征或优点呢？这首先要看阅读教学应包括哪些功能？然后看有关教材是否能体现这些功能。

在传统上，我国外语教学工作者习于把阅读课看作精读课或分析性阅读课。对阅读课的真正功能却有所偏废。我们不时从国外的高等学府听到这样那样的反馈，其中一条是中国留学生的阅读速度太慢。今天，人们有了新的认识。阅读，首先是个理解课文内容的过程，是逐步解决阅读中在理解方面所碰到的难题的过程。把阅读课作为各种技能的综合训练课，未免舍本而求末。为了解决理解中的难点，学习者应学会综合运用各种阅读技巧，有时，应懂得如何根据阅读材料的不同内容选择不同的阅读方法和技巧。传统的教材和教学方法恰恰在这方面下工夫不深。在提高理解能力时，学习者应在阅读过程中对词语和段落作一些基本估计，并在读完全文后检查自己的预期假设是否正确。我国的教材却

喜欢在全文前附上新词表，以图省事，“方便”了学习者，又贻误了学习者。更重要的是，阅读是个读者和作者交往的过程，读者应一方面了解文章的内容和作者的观点，一方面又应根据自己的理解和掌握的知识形成自己的观点，与作者交流和讨论，在课堂教学中，又可与教师，与同学交流。这也是国内教材的不足之处。因此，《英语精选读本》可有效地帮助学习者提高阅读能力，也为我们改进阅读教学提供启示。

本教材共 8 个单元，分成两类。1,3,5,7 这四个奇数单元含有阅读技能训练的练习，其内容主要通过阅读非成块性文章，如工具书、说明书、图表、广告等，让学习者了解阅读目的不尽相同，掌握词语意义，识别、理解、复述句子并进行推理，掌握和复述段落的要点并进行推理和预测。总之，整个目的是培养读者能通过最低限度的线索从选文中获得最大限度信息的能力。2,4,6,8 这四个偶数单元则每单元提供 3~5 篇精选文章，让学习者接触不同语体，如各种形式的议论文、叙述文、应用文、新闻报道、散文、诗歌和其它文学作品等，让学习者利用所传授的技能去理解内容和评估其观点。

本教材的练习分成两大类。一类侧重于语言点，一类侧重于阅读理解。两者不是互不相关的，有关语言点的练习是为了提高学习者的阅读能力。而有关检查阅读理解的练习有助于提语言水平。

考虑到本教材的主要对象为自学英语者，本教材提供了可自行查阅的习题答案。经过这强化的中级程度的阅读训练，学习者便可满怀信心地进入高级阶段的阅读训练。

但是本教材也可供课堂教学使用。本教材在教师须知中对每周每天的教学安排都提出参考意见，特别是根据课堂教学的有利条件每周安排了写作练习，将从接受性的阅读技能所吸收的养分，及时转化为生产性的写作技能。就教材所附答案而言，参加班组学习的学生宜听从教师的统一安排，切忌未经本人充分思考而过早地自行翻阅答案，从而影响了学习效果。

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# Acknowledgments

The three of us began working together in the fall of 1973. As we near the millennium, we find we are still on speaking terms with each other, still listing our names alphabetically, and increasingly aware that the debt we owe colleagues, friends, family, and students has kept pace with inflation. We cannot possibly hope to repay all the people who have contributed to this work over the past four years, but civility demands that we acknowledge their efforts on our behalf. We want to thank the following individuals for continuing friendship, interest, critiques, and time.

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And, of course, very sincere thanks and belated apologies to spouses and children, who undoubtedly wondered if we would ever get off the phone.

Ann Arbor, Denver, Seattle, January 1996

# To Students: Read This First

*Choice Readings* is an intermediate-level reading textbook for students of English as a second or foreign language. The authors believe that reading is an active, problem-solving process. Effective readers must use a number of skills. To decide how to solve reading problems, readers must decide which skills or strategies to use.

Here is an example of active problem solving. Below are several sentences using the word *choice*. Next to them, is a list of dictionary definitions for *choice*. Take a few minutes to match the sentences with the correct definition.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| — 1. The authors of <i>Choice Readings</i> believe that reading is an active, problem-solving process.  | a. <i>adj.</i> of high quality, preferred             |
| — 2. In this textbook, you will have many <i>choices</i> in the types of reading you will do, the order in which you will read things, and the skills you will use to solve reading problems. | b. <i>n.</i> the name of a wonderful ESL/EFL textbook |
| — 3. We have tried to choose the best reading passages we could find; we hope you enjoy these <i>choice</i> readings.   | c. <i>n.</i> options, decisions, selections           |

You probably did not have trouble finding the correct answers: 1-b, 2-c, 3-a. To do this task, you probably used several skills. You could use the context of each sentence and your knowledge of the world to get a general understanding of the word *choice*. The dictionary definitions gave you additional information.

Good readers decide why they are reading a particular selection before they read it, and they decide which strategies and skills they will use to reach their goals. They develop expectations about the kinds of information they will find, and they read to see if their expectations are correct. The exercises and readings in *Choice Readings* will help you become an independent, efficient reader.

When you look at the Contents page, you will notice that there are two kinds of units in *Choice Readings*. The odd-numbered units (1–7) contain skills exercises. These exercises give students focused practice in getting information from texts. The even-numbered units (2–8) give you the opportunity to interact with and form opinions about the ideas in longer texts.

Skills and strategies are introduced in early units and practiced throughout the book. The large number of exercises gives students repeated practice. Many teachers and students choose to move between skills and reading selection units; feel free to jump around in the book. You should not worry if you do not finish each exercise, if you do not understand everything in a reading selection, or if you have trouble answering a question. In fact, there may be more than one correct response to a question. The process of trying to answer a question is often as important as the answer itself. That process will help you improve your problem-solving skills and encourage you and your classmates to think about, talk about, and respond to our choice readings.

# To the Teacher

It is impossible to outline one best way to use a textbook; there are as many ways to use *Choice Readings* as there are creative teachers. However, based on the experiences of teachers and students who have worked with *Choice Readings*, we provide the following suggestions to facilitate classroom use. First, we outline general guidelines for the teaching of reading; second, we provide hints for teaching specific exercises and readings in the book; and finally, we suggest a sample lesson plan.

## General Guidelines

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The ultimate goal of *Choice Readings* is to encourage independent readers who are able to determine their own goals for a reading task, then use the appropriate skills and strategies to reach those goals. For this reason, we believe the best learning environment is one in which all individuals—students and teachers—participate in the process of setting and achieving goals. A certain portion of class time is therefore profitably spent in discussing reading tasks before they are begun. If the topic is a new one for the students, teachers are encouraged to provide and/or help access background information for the students, adapting the activities under Before You Begin to specific teaching contexts. When confronted with a specific passage, students should become accustomed to the practice of skimming it quickly, taking note of titles and subheadings, pictures, graphs, etc., in an attempt to determine the most efficient approach to the task. In the process, they should develop expectations about the content of the passage and the amount of time and effort needed to accomplish their goals. In this type of setting, students are encouraged to offer their opinions and ask for advice, to teach each other and to learn from their errors.

*Choice Readings* was written to encourage maximum flexibility in classroom use. Because of the large variety of exercises and reading selections, the teacher can plan several tasks for each class and hold in reserve a number of appropriate exercises to use as the situation demands. In addition, the exercises have been developed to create variety in classroom dynamics. The teacher can encourage independence in students by providing opportunities for work in small groups or pairs, or by individuals. We recommend small-group work in which students self-correct homework assignments.

Exercises do not have to be done in the order in which they are presented. In fact, we suggest interspersing skills work with reading selections. One way to vary reading tasks is to plan lessons around pairs of units, alternating skills exercises with the reading selections. In the process, the teacher can show students how focused skills work transfers to the reading of longer passages. For example, Sentence Study exercises provide intensive practice in analyzing complex grammatical structures; this same skill should be used by students in working through reading selections. The teacher can pull problematic sentences from readings for intensive classroom analysis, thereby encouraging students to do the same on their own when difficult syntax impedes comprehension.

It is important to *teach, then test*. Tasks should be thoroughly introduced, modeled, and practiced before students are expected to perform on their own. Although we advocate rapid-paced, demanding class sessions, we believe it is extremely important to provide students with a thorough introduction to each new exercise. At least for the first example of each type of exercise, some oral work is necessary. The teacher can demonstrate the skill using the example item and work through the first few items with the class as a whole. Students can then work individually or in small groups.

## Specific Suggestions

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*Choice Readings* has been organized so that specific skills can be practiced before students need those skills for full reading selections. Although exercises and readings are generally graded according to difficulty, it is not necessary to use the material in the order in which it is presented. Teachers are encouraged:

- a) to intersperse skills work with reading selections,
- b) to skip exercises that are too easy or irrelevant to students' interests,
- c) to do several exercises of a specific type at one time if students require intensive practice in that skill, and
- d) to jump from unit to unit, selecting reading passages that satisfy students' interests and needs.

## Skills Exercises

### Nonprose Reading

Throughout *Choice Readings* students are presented with nonprose selections (such as maps, tables, forms) so that they can practice using their skills to read material that is not arranged in sentences and paragraphs. For students who expect to read only prose material, teachers can point out that nonprose reading provides more than an enjoyable change of pace. These exercises provide legitimate reading practice. The same problem-solving skills can be used for both prose and nonprose material. Just as one can skim a textbook for general ideas, it is possible to skim a graphic for the kind of information presented and for the main ideas. Students may feel that they can't skim or scan; working with nonprose items shows them that they can.

Nonprose exercises are good for breaking the ice with new students, for beginning or ending class sessions, for role playing, or for those Monday blues and Friday blahs. Because they are short, rapid-paced activities, they can be kept in reserve to provide variety, or to fill a time gap at the end of class.

The maps, tables, and other graphics exercises present students with realistic language problems they might encounter in an English-speaking environment. The teacher can set up simulations to achieve a realistic atmosphere. The application exercise is intended to provide practice in filling out forms.

With poetry, students' problem-solving skills are challenged by the economy of poetic writing. Poetry is especially good for reinforcing vocabulary from context skills, for comprehending through syntax clues, and for drawing inferences.

### Word Study

Upon encountering an unfamiliar vocabulary item in a passage, there are several strategies readers can use to determine the message of the author. First, they can continue reading, realizing that often a single word will not prevent understanding of the general meaning of a selection. If further reading does not solve the problem, readers can use one or more of three basic skills to arrive at an understanding of the unfamiliar word. They can use context clues to see if surrounding words and grammatical structures provide information about the unknown word. They can use word analysis to see if understanding the parts of the word leads to an understanding of the word. Or, they can use a dictionary to find an appropriate definition. *Choice Readings* contains numerous exercises that provide practice in these three skills. These exercises can be profitably done in class either in rapid-paced group work or by alternating individual work with class discussion. Like nonprose work, Word Study exercises can be used to fill unexpected time gaps.

Guessing the meaning of an unfamiliar word from context clues involves using the following kinds of information:



- a) knowledge of the topic about which you are reading,
- b) knowledge of the meanings of the other words in the sentence (or paragraph) in which the word occurs, and
- c) knowledge of the grammatical structure of the sentence in which the word occurs, and
- d) knowledge of discourse-level clues that can aid comprehension.

Context Clues exercises appear frequently throughout the book, both in skills units and with reading selections. Students should learn to be content with a general meaning of a word and to recognize situations in which it is not necessary to know a word's meaning. In skills units, these exercises should be done in class to ensure that students do not look for exact definitions in the dictionary. When Vocabulary from Context exercises appear with reading selections, they are intended as tools for learning new vocabulary items and often for introducing ideas to be encountered in the reading. In this case they can be done at home as well as in class.

Stems and Affixes exercises appear in each skills unit and must be done in the order in which they are presented. The exercises are cumulative: each exercise makes use of word parts presented in previous units. All stems and affixes taught in *Choice Readings* are listed with their definitions in the Appendix. These exercises serve as an important foundation in vocabulary skills work for students whose native language does not contain a large number of words derived from Latin or Greek. Students should focus on improving their ability to analyze word parts as they work with the words presented in the exercises. During the introduction to each exercise, students should be encouraged to volunteer other examples of words containing the stems and affixes presented. Exercises 1 and 2 can be done as homework.

Sometimes the meaning of a single word is essential to an understanding of the total meaning of a selection. If context clues and word analysis do not provide enough information, it will be necessary to use a dictionary. We believe that intermediate students should use an English/English dictionary. The Word Study: Dictionary Use exercise in Unit 3 provides students with a review of the information available from dictionaries and practice in using a dictionary to obtain that information. Exercise 1 requires a substantial amount of class discussion to introduce information necessary for dictionary work. The Dictionary Study exercises that accompany some of the reading selections require students to use the context of an unfamiliar vocabulary item to find an appropriate definition of these items from the dictionary entries provided.

### ***Sentence Study***

Sometimes comprehension of an entire passage requires the understanding of a single sentence. Sentence Study exercises give students practice in analyzing the structure of sentences to determine the relationships of ideas within a sentence. Students are presented with a complicated sentence followed by tasks that require them to analyze the sentence for its meaning. Often the student is required to use the available information to draw inferences about the author's message. Students should not be overly concerned about unfamiliar vocabulary in these exercises; the focus is on grammatical clues. Student errors often indicate structures that they have trouble reading, thus providing the teacher with a diagnostic tool for grammar instruction.

### ***Paragraph Reading***

These exercises give students practice in understanding how the arrangement of ideas affects the overall meaning of a passage. Some of the paragraph exercises are designed to provide practice in discovering the general message. Students are required to determine the main idea of a passage. Other paragraph exercises provide practice in careful, detailed reading. Students are required not only to determine the main idea of a passage but also to guess meanings of words from context, to answer questions about specific details in the paragraph, and to draw conclusions based on their understanding of the passage.



If Main Idea paragraphs are read in class, they may be timed. If the exercises are done at home, students can be asked to come to class prepared to defend their answers in group discussion. One way to stimulate discussion is to ask students to identify incorrect responses as too broad, too narrow, or false.

Restatement and Inference and Reading for Full Understanding exercises are short enough to allow sentence-level analysis. These exercises provide intensive practice in syntax and vocabulary work as well as in drawing inferences. In the case of the latter, lines are numbered to facilitate discussion.

### **Discourse Focus**

Effective reading requires the ability to select skills and strategies appropriate to a specific reading task. The reading process involves using information from the full text and one's own knowledge in order to interpret a passage. Readers use this information to make predictions about what they will find in a text and to decide how they will read. Sometimes one needs to read quickly to obtain only a general idea of a text; at other times one reads carefully, drawing inferences about the intent of the author. Discourse-level exercises introduce these various approaches to reading, which are then reinforced throughout the book.

*Skimming* is quick reading for the general idea(s) of a passage. This kind of rapid reading is appropriate when trying to decide if careful reading would be desirable or when there is not time to read something carefully.

Like skimming, *scanning* is also quick reading. However, in this case the search is more focused. To scan is to read quickly in order to locate specific information. When we read to find a particular date, name, or number, we are scanning.

*Reading for thorough comprehension* is careful reading in order to understand the total meaning of the passage. At this level of comprehension the reader has summarized the author's ideas but has not necessarily made a critical evaluation of those ideas.

*Critical reading* demands that readers make judgments about what they read. This kind of reading requires posing and answering questions such as *Does my own experience support that of the author? Do I share the author's point of view? Am I convinced by the author's arguments and evidence?*

Discourse Focus exercises provide practice in all of these approaches to reading. Skimming and scanning activities should be done quickly in order to demonstrate to students the utility of these approaches for some tasks. The short mysteries can be valuable for group work since students can use specific elements of the text to defend their inferences. Prediction activities are designed to have students focus on the discourse signals that allow them to predict and sample texts. During group work, the diversity of student responses that emerges can reinforce the notion that there is not a single correct answer, that all predictions are, by definition, only working hypotheses to be constantly revised.

### **Reading Selections**

Teachers have found it valuable to introduce readings in terms of ideas, vocabulary, and syntax before students are asked to work on their own. The section Before You Begin introduces the concepts and issues encountered in reading selections. After an introduction to the passage, several types of classroom dynamics have been successful with reading selections.

1. In class—the teacher reads the entire selection orally; or the teacher reads part, the students finish the selection individually; or the students read the selection individually (perhaps under time constraint).
2. In class and at home—part of the selection is read in class, followed by discussion; the students finish reading at home.
3. At home—students read the entire selection at home.

Comprehension questions are usually discussed in class with the class as a whole, in small groups, or in pairs. The paragraphs in the selections are numbered to facilitate discussion.

The teacher can pull out difficult vocabulary and/or sentences for intensive analysis and discussion *when they impede comprehension*.

Readings represent a variety of topics and styles. The exercises have been written to focus on the most obvious characteristics of each reading.

- a) Well-organized readings with many facts and figures are appropriate for scanning and skimming. This type of reading can also be used in composition work as a model of organizational techniques.
- b) If the reading is an editorial, essay, or other form of personal opinion, students should read critically to determine if they agree with the author. Students are encouraged to identify excerpts that reveal the author's bias or that can be used to challenge the validity of the author's argument.
- c) Fiction, poetry, and personal experience narratives lend themselves to an appreciation of language. Teachers often find it useful to read some of these aloud to heighten this appreciation.

### **Answer Key**

Because the exercises in *Choice Readings* are designed to provide students with the opportunity to practice and improve their reading skills, the processes involved in arriving at an answer are often more important than the answer itself. It is expected that students will not use the Answer Key until they have completed the exercises and are prepared to defend their answers. If a student's answer does not agree with the Key, it is important for the student to return to the exercise to discover the source of the disagreement. In a classroom setting, students should view the Answer Key as a last resort to be used only when they cannot agree on an answer. The Answer Key also makes it possible for students engaged in independent study to use *Choice Readings*.

## **Sample Lesson Plan**

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The following lesson plan is meant only as an example of how goals might be translated into practice. We do not imply that a particular presentation is the only one possible for a given reading activity nor that the activities presented here are the only activities possible for achieving our goals. The lesson plan demonstrates how skills work can be interspersed with reading selections. Notice also that we have tried to achieve a classroom atmosphere that encourages individual initiative and group interaction. By integrating focused skill work with reading selections and by using activities that encourage students to debate answers and defend their opinions, we hope to create an energetic, text-based conversation.

The lessons described here would be appropriate for a class that had worked together for several weeks. This is important for three reasons. First, we hope that a nonthreatening atmosphere has been established in which people feel free to volunteer opinions and make guesses. Second, we assume that the students have come to recognize the importance of a problem-solving approach to reading and that they are working to improve skills and strategies using a variety of readings and exercises. We also assume that the class uses workshop formats and small-group activities for reading and writing instruction.

Although these lessons are planned for 50-minute, daily classes, slight modification would make them appropriate for a number of other situations. Approximate times for each activity are indicated. The exercises and readings are taken from Units 5 and 6.

### **Monday**

Nonprose Reading: College Application and Tuition Chart (20 minutes)

- a) The teacher asks how many students have applied to schools and gets students to discuss the kinds of information they are usually required to provide.

- b) The students skim the college application and answer the Getting Oriented questions.
- c) Taking into account the responses to Getting Oriented question 2, the teacher tells the students to work on the application. The goal is to have students work on the application as if they were actually applying to Washtenaw Community College. Pair and group work is encouraged.
- d) The teacher moves around the room as the students work, talking with students, answering questions, encouraging an informal, information-seeking atmosphere in the classroom.
- e) When the majority of the students has finished, the teacher asks individuals to read items and give their answers. Discussion and differences of opinion are encouraged.
- f) The class goes next to the Tuition Chart. The teacher reads the directions aloud as students follow along. The students are then given time to work on answers to the questions.
- g) Students give their answers and discuss their opinions about Bellevue Community College tuition rates.

Reading Selection 1: Advice Column (30 minutes)

- a) The teacher asks students if they are familiar with newspaper advice columnists and if they have ever read Ann Landers or Dear Abby. S/he then continues in a conversational tone with questions 1–3 in the Before You Begin section.
- b) Vocabulary work: The students have three minutes to do Vocabulary from Context exercise 1.
- c) After they have supplied answers to the items, students take turns reading the sentences aloud and discussing the meanings of the italicized words. The teacher helps students with their guesses but does not provide definitions; the goal of the activity is as much improvement of the students' guessing abilities as it is mastery of vocabulary.
- d) The teacher then reads the letter to Ann Landers and leads a discussion about the problem: What is the problem? Whose problem is it? What answer would the students give to the letter writer?
- e) The teacher asks for a volunteer to read Landers's response aloud as s/he and the other students follow along in their books.
- f) Students then have approximately ten minutes to work on the Comprehension questions. As the students work, the teacher circulates among them giving encouragement, answering questions, monitoring progress.
- g) When most of the students have finished, the teacher leads a discussion of the questions. Students read items aloud and give answers, and the teacher moderates differences of opinion.
- h) The teacher then directs students' attention to Vocabulary from Context exercise 2. This exercise is conducted as a whole-class activity, with one student reading each item aloud and other students calling out the answers; students flip back and forth from the exercise to the letters as disagreements are negotiated and answers arrived at.
- i) The teacher reads through the guidelines for the Composition: Letter Writing exercise.

Homework: Write a draft of a letter to Ann Landers to bring to class on Tuesday.

**Tuesday**

Writer's Workshop: Letter to Ann Landers (40 minutes)

- a) The teacher puts the students in groups of three or four, having decided ahead of time which students would be together. The most important criteria for grouping students would be general language proficiency and writing ability; each group is characterized by a range of student abilities.
- b) Students read drafts of each others' letters and help each other improve them. Principles of cooperative learning have been used as the basis for these activities before, but the teacher reminds students that they are to (1) point to things they like in the letters, (2) ask for clarification of ideas, and (3) indicate possible grammar and spelling errors. The teacher moves among the groups as they work, encouraging them in their efforts at helping each other, modeling peer feedback techniques, discussing the contents of the letters. The effort here is to

create a “workshop” atmosphere in which everyone—teacher and students—collaborates on improving each other’s writing.

- c) Author’s Chair: The teacher asks if there are volunteers to read their letters. Desks are arranged in a semicircle facing the “author’s chair.” Volunteers come to the author’s chair and read their piece, following a set routine: 1) The author briefly introduces the piece, asking for feedback on particular aspects of the letter. 2) The author reads the letter. 3) The author calls on students who have comments, questions, or suggestions, taking notes on what they say.
- d) There follows a brief discussion of the letters, and students debate whether they will send them to Ann Landers. The teacher collects the letters, promising to look at them before the next day’s class.

Word Study: Stems and Affixes (10 minutes)

- a) The teacher works through the chart of stems and affixes, definitions, and examples by reading aloud, answering questions and eliciting additional examples from the students as s/he goes.
- b) Students are given the remaining time to work on the exercises.

Homework: Stems and Affixes exercises 1 and 2.

### **Wednesday**

Word Study: Stems and Affixes (15 minutes)

- a) Students work in pairs and small groups to check answers to exercises 1 and 2. The teacher circulates to monitor conversations, check comprehension, moderate disagreements, etc.
- b) The teacher asks if there are questions remaining about any of the items; a brief discussion of selected items follows.

Sentence Study: Restatement and Inference and Writing Conferences: Letters to Ann Landers (35 minutes)

- a) The teacher reads the directions and example for the Sentence Study: Restatement and Inference exercise, then gives students time to select their answers for the example sentence.
- b) The class compares their answers and the teacher leads the discussion.
- c) Students are given time to work on the items individually.
- d) Writing conferences: Students are given time to work on the Sentence Study: Restatement and Inference exercise and on the letters they are writing; the teacher holds brief writing conferences with students at their seats. S/he briefly goes over their letters with them, focusing on the ideas they are attempting to convey and the questions they are asking Ann Landers; discussions of grammar and vocabulary are conducted insofar as they contribute to a better understanding of the message.
- e) Students will continue to work on the letter, to be submitted on Thursday and sent to Ann Landers if they desire.
- f) Sentence Study: Restatement and Inference: The teacher reconvenes the class. Students read the cue sentences and the ones they have chosen as restatements and inferences. Differences of opinion are moderated by the teacher; when students are not able to convince each other through reference to the cue sentence, the teacher asks one of the protagonists to check the Answer Key and explain the correct answer(s).
- g) After two or three items have been discussed, students discuss the remaining sentences in groups, and the teacher returns to conferences with students on their letters to Ann Landers.
- h) With 15 minutes remaining in the class, the teacher reconvenes the class to finish checking the Sentence Study: Restatement and Inference exercise.

Homework: Work on the Ann Landers letters; bring final letter to class on Thursday.

### **Thursday**

Composition: The teacher collects the Ann Landers letters; s/he will check them and return them on Friday.

Paragraph Reading: Main Idea (40 minutes)

- a) The teacher reads the directions and the Before You Begin fable ("The Child Who Cried Wolf"). S/he then leads the class in a discussion of the nature of fables and the moral of this fable. The teacher works to elicit guesses from the students, refraining from giving the answer.
- b) Students are grouped by threes, the teacher having organized the groups to assure diversity of native language and/or English proficiency as much as possible. They are given time to talk about fables from their own cultures. The teacher circulates to monitor conversations and aid in the discussions.
- c) Class discussion: Individuals tell fables and provide morals from their own cultures. The teacher encourages students to take notes and supports the person telling the fable by writing key words and phrases on the board.
- d) Small group work: The groups of three work on fables 1 through 9 together. Students take turns reading the fables aloud, followed by discussion; when they agree, they write the moral of the fable in the space provided.
- e) Class discussion: Each group gives its moral for each fable as the teacher writes the morals on the board. Discussion follows. After the merits of each moral are discussed, a student is asked to select one saying from Vocabulary Study: Idiomatic Expressions that fits the fable, if there is one.

Reading Selection (10 minutes)

- a) The teacher briefly describes two selections—Newspaper Article and Children's Literature—and asks for a vote on which one they should read first. The students vote for "Bugs Make Skin Crawl in Midwest."
- b) The teacher leads a prereading discussion as the students answer the two Skimming questions.
- c) The teacher reads the selection aloud as students follow in their books.

Homework: Reread the story and answer the Comprehension questions.

### **Friday**

Composition: The teacher returns the Ann Landers letters to the students; envelopes and the address are provided for those who want to send their letter to Ann Landers.

Reading Selection 2: Newspaper Article (25 minutes)

- a) The students' and teacher's chairs are arranged in a circle. With books open, the teacher facilitates a conversation about the cicada invasion of the Midwest. As questions arise, students consult the text to support their impressions of the article.
- b) Still in circle, the Comprehension questions are reviewed and final questions answered.

Discourse Focus: Careful Reading/Drawing Inferences (25 minutes)

- a) The teacher reads each mystery aloud.
- b) Students work in small groups to solve the mystery. If necessary, they answer the questions that follow to arrive at an answer. Class discussion follows.

Homework: None; have a nice weekend.

Several aspects of this lesson plan invite comment. You will have noticed a tendency toward informality and lightness in the way that the lessons were conducted. This reflects the temperament of the teacher and should not be construed as a necessary element of a successful reading lesson. We believe that each teacher has his or her own style, that techniques and activities must be selected and modified to accommodate that style, and that each class has its own personality.

The lesson plan represents an active, problem-solving approach to the teaching of ESL reading that emphasizes communicative activities and results in the integrated use of reading, writing, speaking, and

listening. Students are required to do more than merely read passages and answer questions. In most of the activities, we focus on “extending comprehension” through conversation and writing rather than merely “checking comprehension” through exercises. We work to create a classroom atmosphere that promotes risk taking in the use of language and in expressing one’s own opinions.

The task at hand determines, to a large extent, what students do and how the teacher participates in class activities. We plan for many activities so that each day contains variety in terms of lesson content and classroom dynamics. In each lesson, the tempo and tasks change several times. In the course of a week, virtually all language and reading skills are practiced in a variety of contexts and with a variety of materials. This has important implications for the nature of the class and for the role of students and teacher.

The classroom dynamics change to fit the task. The college application and the fables, for example, begin as class discussions then become small-group work. The Ann Landers lesson is conducted with individual, small-group, and whole-class work at appropriate times. Throughout the week, however, we have emphasized the importance of student initiative—although the students work together a great deal, we want individual students to take responsibility for their learning and to develop their own inner criteria for the answers to questions and contributions to class discussion. Note, for example, the way that comprehension exercises are conducted. Students are asked to select the answers that reflect their understanding of the passages and to use text to defend their choices. In the Stems and Affixes exercise on Tuesday and Wednesday, the teacher introduces the exercise, but the students do the exercises and check their answers. In this way, the teacher emphasizes the importance of students’ responsibility for and control over their work.

In this approach to teaching, the teacher’s role varies according to the activity. During the Stems and Affixes exercise just mentioned, the teacher functions as a facilitator, intervening only when necessary to keep the activity going, and as a teacher in clarifying linguistic points or giving examples. As the students work on their letters to Ann Landers, the teacher functions as facilitator, participant and teacher. As facilitator, s/he organizes the writing workshop and author’s chair, providing guidelines and orchestrating the conversations among students. As personal problems and solutions are discussed, s/he functions as a participant, exploring interesting issues with the students, expressing opinions just as the rest of the class does. And, finally, as teacher, s/he helps with questions of grammar, punctuation, and correspondence style.

Another important feature of the lesson plan is the opportunity provided to encourage students to exercise some choice in what they do and how they do it. As the teacher coaches them through vocabulary exercises and skimming and scanning work, comprehension discussions, and writing tasks, s/he constantly reminds students of a variety of ways that a task can be approached. Students come to establish expectations about texts and to select productive strategies to accomplish their goals. Just as the teacher provided a preview of reading selections and asked for student opinion on which to read first, s/he might introduce a text and ask the students how they plan to read it. A newspaper article will probably invite different reading strategies than a piece of children’s literature.

Throughout the term, students are encouraged to shift gears, to vary their approaches to language tasks. As they become more proficient users of the language, they take more responsibility for what they read and write and for the opinions they express in conversations.

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