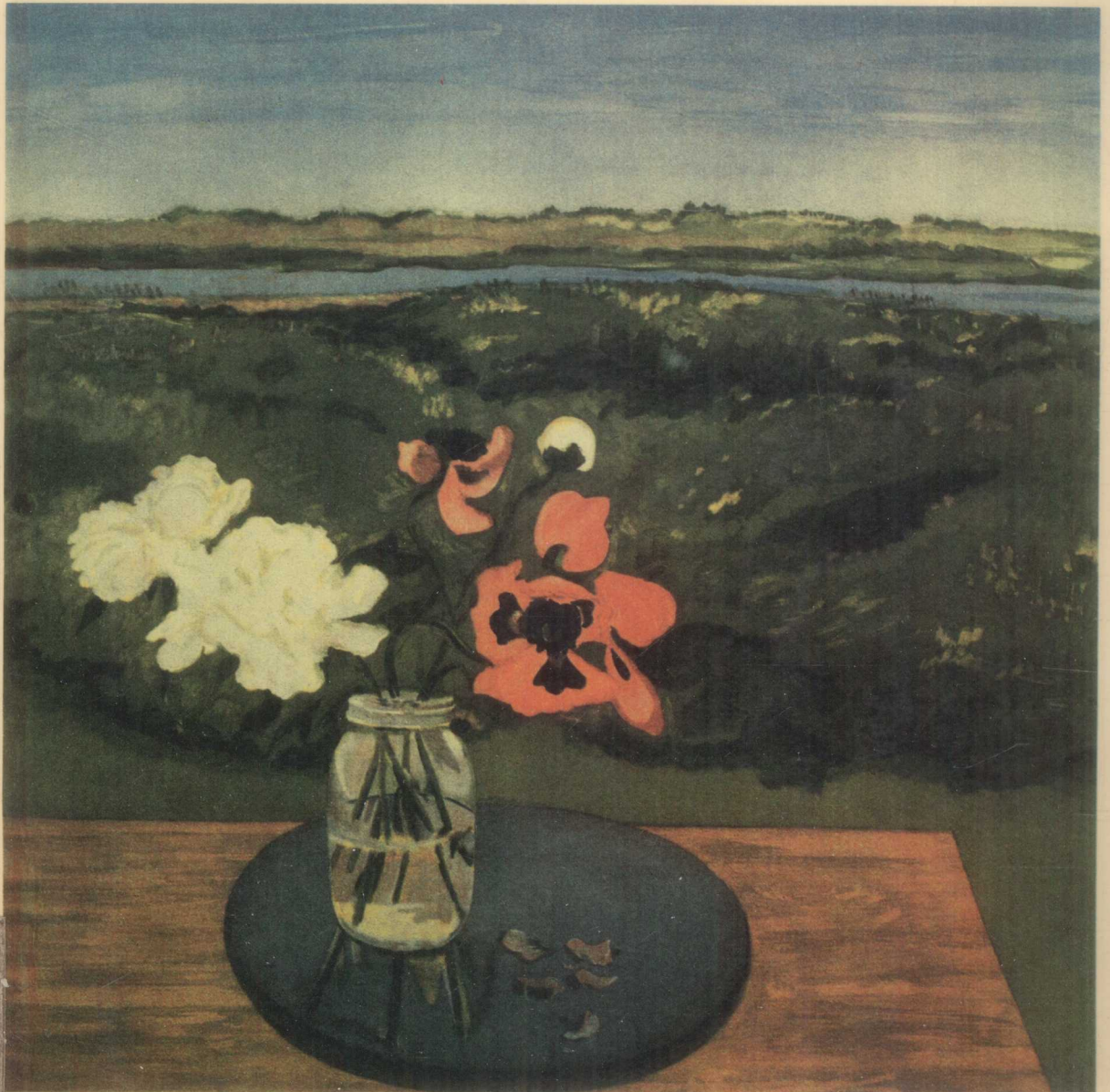


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# Reading and Study Skills

## A Rhetorical Approach



# **Reading and Study Skills: A Rhetorical Approach**

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Preface																																																											

*Reading and Study Skills: A Rhetorical Approach* is a comprehension, study skills, and vocabulary text for native students and foreign-born intermediate students of English as a second language. We believe that these students can work most effectively when they learn skills presented in a logical and sequentially-developed manner, first acquiring skills presented through short, easy material and then applying the skills in more difficult passages.

The text is divided into three major units—Comprehension, Study Skills, and Vocabulary—to allow for flexibility in use. Each skill is presented inductively through short, easy examples, guided questions, and boxed skill guidelines. Students can work on any skill with the guidance of an instructor or independently, either in a lab setting or at home. In addition, students can apply the skills to writing exercises in the Comprehension Unit and to writing assignments that follow the longer readings and role-play exercises.

This text departs from the traditional approach of teaching comprehension skills separately. Rather, the skills are grouped within the framework of a particular rhetorical mode—narrative, descriptive, analytical, and argumentative—and, as a result, students develop skills appropriate to these modes. The instructor is free to present the modes in any way.

The text follows a holistic approach to comprehension rather than a compartmentalized one. For example, students can develop literal and general comprehension of narrative writing by focusing on its unique features: the chronological development of ideas, the sequence in which facts occur, the author's selection of ideas for development and use of the flashback, and the presence of sequence signal words and phrases. Students can then develop inference and critical reading skills related to the narrative (and to other writing styles): recognizing the narrator, the point of view the narrator presents, the facts and/or opinions being presented, and the predictions that logically follow from facts stated in a chronological order. Finally, students can apply these skills in four long selections and can complete a short narrative-type writing assignment. The role-play that follows reinforces the students' abilities to follow a chronological sequence,



helps them to participate actively in class, and provides another reinforcement of writing narratively. Each Comprehension Unit follows this format and incorporates new skills.

The narrative, descriptive, argumentative, and analytical skill units contain brief writing assignments designed to help students develop comprehensions skills. The assignments are especially important in each of the sixteen long selections and four role-playing exercises. Students can reinforce their reading skills as they apply them to a specific writing assignment.

In the Study Skills Unit, students can follow a structured and sequential development of skills designed to strengthen their ability to recognize, record, and study the important ideas in expository writing. Students can identify and mark topics, main ideas, and details in single text paragraphs. After they develop their ability to preview text chapters and locate important facts, students can move to longer text passages, develop test-taking skills, answer objective test items, and write essay answers.

Some instructors may want to present the study skills material along with work in comprehension, since their students are actively involved in other subjects. Other instructors may want to focus on the comprehension skills before they present instruction in study techniques. However they wish to proceed, they can certainly present the last chapters on studying and taking tests at any time during the semester.

In the Vocabulary Unit, students can work with the dictionary and beginning context clue chapters in sequence. Once they begin to work with context clues, they can proceed in whatever order the instructor chooses. Some instructors may want to present the vocabulary skills along with work in comprehension and/or study skills. Others may want to focus on vocabulary skills as a specific unit during the semester. However they wish to proceed, they will have a sufficient number of exercises to allow for class and independent practice. Idioms have been defined so that students can apply their meanings in a variety of guided or independent practice exercises. Dictionary entries have been provided to allow uniform development and reinforcement of dictionary skills.

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# Comprehension Skills

Understanding what you read requires many skills that build one upon another. They range from simple to complex skills. At the base, or literal level, is the skill of reading and understanding ideas stated in the passage. Once you understand stated ideas, you can begin to recognize how they relate to one another and what the author perceived their relationships to be. Another level of understanding comes when you can infer ideas or sense unstated relationships that the author wanted you to know.

In the following units you will focus on developing comprehension skills. You will work with passages grouped according to the different styles of writing: narrative, descriptive, argumentative, and analytical. In the remaining units you will work with expository material to develop comprehension and study skills related to text and test situations.

It is important to remember that reading skills neither exist in isolation nor apply to only one type of passage. Rather, many reading skills are necessary to comprehend the types of passages you read in school, at home, and at work. Also, you gain a deeper understanding of passages when you recognize the special relationships central to specific writing styles or rhetorical modes.



# CHAPTER 1

## Understanding a Sequence of Ideas

### Recognizing Sequence in Narrative Writing

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Much of what you read can be described as narrative; narrative writing is characterized by its quality of telling the events in a story in the order in which they occurred, that is, their chronological sequence. Authors write stories, news articles, essays, and text passages in which understanding the chronological sequence of ideas is essential for good comprehension. Read the following example to understand how literal, or stated ideas serve as a base for the chronological order of ideas in a passage.

#### Example

He then spent the next week in bed. John first became ill at lunch and went home immediately. John finally learned that he had weakened his condition and had wasted many days by trying to return to school not fully recovered. At last, he was well enough to return to school. He was not fully recovered when he insisted on returning to school. He had to return home that same morning.

#### Questions

1. How long did John's illness last? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. When did John become ill? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. What lesson did John learn? \_\_\_\_\_
-



#### 4 Comprehension Skills

4. Are the facts presented in an order that helps you to understand the incident? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What words signal the chronological order that the paragraph should follow? \_\_\_\_\_

Clearly, you can answer questions one, two, and three with facts stated in the paragraph. However, you may have experienced difficulty reading the paragraph and answering those questions because the facts were not presented in a chronological order. The words “then,” “first,” “finally,” “not yet,” “same,” and “at last” are *signal words* that tell the chronological sequence of events in this incident, but they were not presented in the order in which the events occurred.

To make the incident more logical, rearrange the sentences in chronological order. Use the *signal words* and phrases and show your understanding of the literal or stated facts.

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### Recognizing Sequence Signals \_\_\_\_\_

Recognizing the **chronological sequence of events** in the development of incidents, stories, articles, and text passages helps you to comprehend narrative writing. You will understand the development of an idea when you note the sequence it follows and the **words that signal** that sequence.