

Two Probe

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Probe Two

A Short Course in College Reading

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Preface

This short program is designed to provide an overview of important reading skills necessary for academic success, or even for survival in the adult world. These skills are mandatory for effective functioning in future vocational and professional work.

We have not intended that this program make a good reader out of a poor one in a few short easy lessons. The process of reading is far too complex to predict such a miracle. Rather, we have listed three attainable objectives, which are more fully discussed in our notes to the student. First, the program serves as a diagnostic instrument. Second, it provides a review for those with rusty skills. And third, it may impart new reading insights and techniques to individuals who already consider themselves to be good readers. For the person who is seriously interested in making a more substantial improvement in his or her reading skills, we suggest more extended work with an unabridged program, such as *Probe* which is published by Charles E. Merrill. However, *Probe Two* will serve as an important first step to a more extended program.

The self-teaching potential of *Probe Two* is unique. The techniques reflect the thorough research and care that went into the development of *Probe*. Sound psychological principles are adhered to. For example, we know that adequate concept development depends on presenting positive and negative instances of a concept. The reader is given an explanation as to why an answer is correct, but is also told why the other answers that might have been considered are inaccurate. Likewise, motivation is extremely important during independent instruction. Task development, we know, should be based on the fact that tasks which are too easy create boredom,

while those that are too difficult raise barriers of frustration. Passages in *Probe Two* should prove to be realistic challenges. They have been chosen because they provide substantial information on topics of high interest for the contemporary audience.

Like PROBE, PROBE TWO has a set of instructional tapes. Unlike PROBE, however, the PROBE TWO text is specifically designed to be used with or without them.

Special mention should be made of the authors' roles in developing this program. I was responsible for relating the new program to the objectives and research base established in the development of *Probe*. I assumed the responsibility for implementing the project from its inception to the editing of the final galley proofs.

David Bender was responsible for developing units 11 and 12, and was deeply involved in the research which resulted in the development of *Probe*. Valerie Faith wrote the final draft of the entire manuscript. She also wrote the introductions for each section in the book and composed units 1, 3, and 4 of the initial manuscript. The conversational tone of the discussions is largely the result of her extensive editing of all the sections which unified them into a coherent program. Throughout the production of *Probe Two*, her ideas and suggestions regarding the format, teaching methods, and exercises were invaluable in developing a program that is correct, substantive, and practical. Karen Tosi was most helpful in selecting materials that have proved to be self-motivating to the reader and informative as well. In addition, Ms. Tosi prepared the initial drafts of units 2, 5, 6, 7, and 10.

Special thanks are due to Tara Blau who wrote the initial draft of unit 8.

Marvin D. Glock

To the Student

Probe Two is designed to help you do a number of things. First, it should help you to find out which particular reading skills you lack and how much practice you need to master any one of them. If you do poorly on the exercises in a particular unit, you will want to ask your instructor to provide you with more practice materials in the area in which you are having difficulties. If you answer fewer than 75 percent of the questions correctly for any exercise, you probably need some further work on that skill. There is a set of practice materials entitled *Probe*, which are keyed to this program. *Probe* is published by Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co. The *Probe* materials are available in many reading laboratories.

Secondly, *Probe Two* will provide a brief review that will help to sharpen some of the skills you once may have mastered but may have allowed to grow rusty from lack of use.

Third, this program's approach may provide you with new insights and help you improve on skills that are already in fairly good shape. For example, if you have no current plan about how to go about increasing your vocabulary, our suggestions along these lines may be of great help to you. Or, if sometimes you find it difficult to separate the most important ideas from the vivid supporting details, the exercises here may help you get back on the track.

Probe Two is probably different from other reading programs you may have tried. The use of the tape recorder lets you organize your own schedule and spend most of your time practicing those skills which you feel you need the most. Furthermore, the program allows you to work at your own pace. You can go as quickly or as slowly

as you like. The tape will not only tell you the answers to the exercises in the text, but will also tell you why some other answers you might have given would not be good ones. The tape also gives more detailed instruction on how to go about acquiring a specific skill. You can repeat a taped discussion as often as it seems necessary to you.

Probe Two is arranged to move from simpler to more complex reading skills. You have an opportunity to build your skills, like one brick on another. The first and second units discuss the main ideas of simple and complex sentences. Units 3, 4, and 5 analyze paragraphs. These units give you practice in finding the main idea, the topic, and the supporting points of a paragraph. Just as sentences are put together to form a paragraph, so paragraphs fit together to form longer passages and articles. In addition, you will see how the parts of a paragraph are related to each other and how paragraphs fit together to convey the author's overall message. Units 6 and 7 provide exercises in reading longer passages. One goal of this program is for you to be able to read with full understanding an article or textbook chapter. When you really understand what you read, you will clearly see how the parts of the passage work together to express the writer's thoughts.

Later units are designed to help you study more effectively. They will show you how to apply what you have learned to some practical situations you will come across in doing school assignments. Unit 9 discusses some of the ways in which a reader can begin to evaluate what a writer has done in a particular passage. Unit 10 will give you some ideas about how to go about underlining and outlining what you read. Unit 11 focuses on the reading of entire books, especially

textbooks. Unit 12 gives you practice in how to interpret graphs and charts. As you will see, the program starts with sentences and works up to the textbooks and homework assignments.



Unit 8 suggests one method that will help you to develop a wider vocabulary, one that will not only be useful, but a source of pride. By becoming aware of meanings of individual parts of a word — prefixes, roots, and suffixes — you can often figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word. You will also see how looking at the way a word is used in a sentence can give you clues to its meaning. These two techniques used together — recognizing word elements and context clues — can quickly broaden your vocabulary as you read.

You will note that we do not pay specific attention to your speed of reading. However, you will find that with an improved vocabulary and good comprehension skills your rate of reading will increase. Slow reading is often the result of poor concentration. *Probe Two* should help you to focus your attention and communicate with the author as you read by agreeing, disagreeing, and questioning what you read, not just mechanically watching the words go by.

This short program does not expect to create dramatic results in a few easy lessons, but you will see results. First, the materials used are of low difficulty, and to comprehend more complex texts you may need further practice with more difficult reading material. Second, as you will note from the stated purposes, the program is meant to show you where your strengths as well as your

weaknesses are, not just to correct all of your reading problems. We hope that you will learn to capitalize on your strengths as well as to correct your weaknesses.

And now just a word about how to use the book and the tapes that can be used with it. Introductions to each unit and instructions for each exercise are printed in the book and recorded on the tape; therefore, you can listen to the introductions and the exercises as you read them. The answers for the exercises in each unit are explained in full on the tape for each unit. Each unit takes up one side of a teaching tape. Short answers for the exercises are also printed at the back of most units in the book. If your answers do not agree with those in the key, we do recommend that you listen to the answers on the tape for that unit and learn where and how you were mistaken.

Here are some tips on how to know when to turn the tape on and off. At the beginning of each unit you will note this symbol . That directs you to turn on the tape recorder and read the directions while you listen. The symbol  instructs you to turn on the tape recorder to listen to discussions concerning correct and incorrect answers to the exercises. After you have listened to the instructions or the discussion of an answer, you will hear a tone that will mean "turn *off* the tape and go back to reading in the book." Remember, each unit takes up only one side of a teaching tape. At the end of the discussion of the unit, the tape will stop. Then you can either start working on the next unit in the book, or take a break, however you like.

Now, turn on the tape. 

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Probe Two

There is an optional set of cassette tapes to accompany this book. If you are using these supplementary tapes, turn on your tape recorder and listen to the appropriate tape.

Whenever you see a ♦, turn on the recorder and listen.

Starting out with Sentences



◆ Turn on the tape recorder and listen as you read the following.

EXERCISE 1 Finding the subject

We'll start at the beginning, with the smallest way that whole ideas are usually written down—with the sentence. Sentences tell us one complete idea about a subject. This exercise should help you focus on *what*

the subject of each sentence is; that is, exactly what the sentence is about. In this exercise, underline the word or words you feel the sentence is basically about. Here are two examples to give you the idea:

EXAMPLE A A Hurdy-gurdy is a musical instrument played by turning a crank.

ANSWER The answer is hurdy-gurdy. The sentence is telling us two things about a hurdy-gurdy: that it is a musical instrument and also how it is played, by turning a crank.

EXAMPLE B To help people who are having some bad problems, suicide prevention centers operate twenty-four-hour switchboards.

ANSWER Everything in this sentence tells you something about suicide prevention centers, which is the subject of this sentence. Who helps people who are having bad problems? Suicide prevention centers. Who operates twenty-four-hour switchboards? Suicide prevention centers. This example shows you that the subject of a sentence can be more than just one word long. Also, the subject doesn't always come at the beginning of the sentence, although it often does.

Here are some examples to work on by yourself. Underline the word or words you feel are the subject of the sentence. You can check your answers by listening to the discussion of each of them on the tape as you go along, and also by checking with the shortened version of the answers printed at the end of the unit.

1. Carpooling saves money on gas and can be fun, too. ♦
2. Town libraries often lend records, tapes, and even paintings, not just books. ♦
3. Young cattails can be cooked and eaten like asparagus. ♦

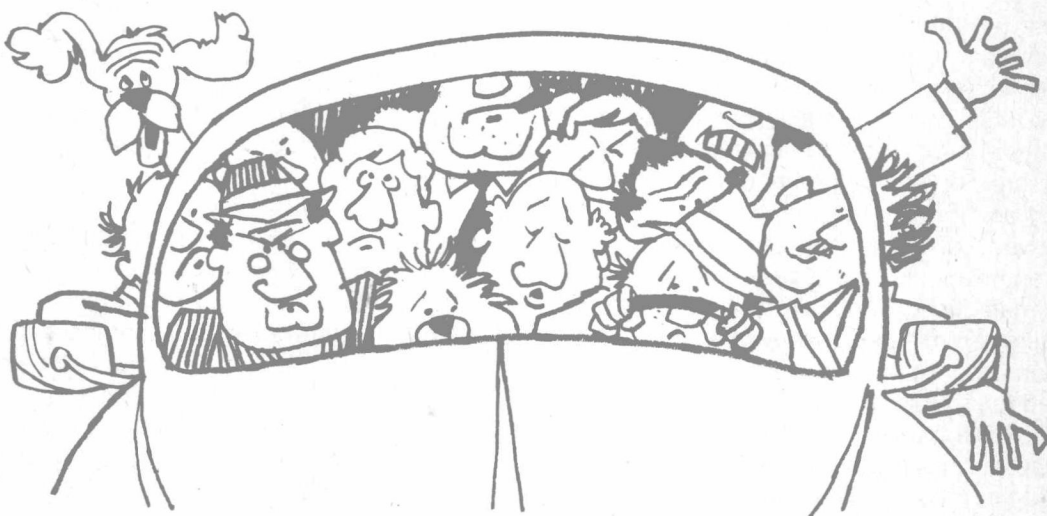
4. Small amounts of beer can be nutritious, especially for nursing mothers, according to some doctors. ♦
5. Trading used clothing and sharing large household equipment such as lawnmowers and rototillers are good ways to save money and cut down on waste. ♦
6. Shyness is often caused by fear of the opinions of others. ♦
7. Although they have fins and live mostly under water, whales are actually mammals, just like we are. ♦
8. Being easier to maneuver, small enough to carry under your arm, and having wheels that don't go flat, skateboards are replacing the bicycle among city kids. ♦
9. Soybeans can be used to make milk for babies who are allergic to cow's milk. ♦
10. Stickball is a simplified version of baseball that can be played on a city street. ♦

EXERCISE 2

What to do with examples and other "extra" phrases

♦ Turn on the tape recorder, and listen as you read the following.

Let's go one step further and try to pick out what the main idea of a sentence is. The



MAIN IDEA = the SUBJECT + the most IMPORTANT THING that the sentence tells you about the subject. To find the main idea of a sentence:

1. First, pick out the subject of the sentence, the same as you did in the exercise we just finished, and underline it.
2. Then, go back and also underline the main thing the sentence tells you about this subject.

Both of these together will give you the main idea of the sentence. Often, the main idea will include the entire sentence you are reading. That is, if you leave out any part of the sentence, you will miss what the writer is saying. For instance, look at this sentence: "The Milky Way is the name of the Galaxy in which we live." If you leave out any part of it, you will miss what the writer is telling you about the Milky Way.

But many long sentences that might be hard for you to follow when you first read them can be understood more easily if you first look just at the main idea, and leave out any "extra" information that might be included in the sentence. What sorts of "extra" information might be part of a sentence, but not part of the main idea? Some sentences, such as the one in example A below, include phrases that give examples of the main point, but are not actually part of the main idea. Also, a sentence might include phrases that make it sound more like conversation, or make it flow more smoothly, but actually give no information about the subject and therefore are not part of the main idea. Phrases such as "It has been mentioned," and "By the way," or words that are enclosed inside parentheses (like this) usually are not part of the main idea. Finally, in order to be clear, writers sometimes use a word or phrase that means the same thing and can be substituted for another word or phrase in the sentence. Example B, shows such a sentence. Since the main idea is the shortest way to state the meaning of the sentence, you can leave such phrases (called appositive phrases) out. The "extra" information is

often set off from the main idea by commas or dashes. This might be a clue for you to watch for as you do this exercise.

Underline the main idea in each of the following sentences. Here are some examples:

EXAMPLE A Pachyderms are any of a certain large, thick-skinned, hoofed animal, like elephants and rhinoceroses.

ANSWER This sentence is intended to define the word "pachyderm," which is the subject of the sentence. The phrase at the end of the sentence gives you examples of pachyderms. Mentioning two familiar animals helps you to get a picture of the members of the class called pachyderms, but it is not necessary to the definition. Notice that the "extra" phrase is set off from the main idea by a comma.



EXAMPLE B North American Indians smoked the calumet, a long-stemmed tobacco pipe, as a token of peace.

ANSWER Here again, the phrase that is set off from the rest of the sentence by commas is not part of the main idea. The sentence is about North American Indians, and it tells us something they did—smoked a calumet. It also tells us why—as a token of peace. But just in case you didn't know that a *calumet* is a pipe, the

writer has included an explanation of an unfamiliar word as part of his or her sentence. You could leave out *calumet* and substitute "a long-stemmed tobacco pipe," and the sentence would mean the same.

Underline the main idea in the following sentences.

1. Recycling, it has been suggested, can eliminate the waste of paper, glass, and aluminum cans. ♦
2. Some dangerous drugs, such as cocaine and heroin, are illegal; but other dangerous drugs, such as tobacco and alcohol, are not. ♦
3. There are many Americans in foreign jails serving life sentences for narcotics possession. ♦
4. The whole nude scene—can you believe it!—was shown on television. ♦
5. The price he wanted for his run-down shack, between \$18,000 and \$20,000, was ridiculous. ♦
6. Walt Disney always assumed an avuncular, that is to say an uncle-like, manner with his employees. ♦
7. The trend, as government statistics show, is that unemployment among young people is increasing. ♦
8. As has been said time and time again, a man's home is his castle. ♦

9. Groups of American women today are making a concerted effort to fight job discrimination based on sex. ♦

10. Many actresses and actors, from Jane Fonda to Frank Sinatra, are very active in politics. ♦

EXERCISE 3

Finding the main idea:

Using the fewest words

♦ Turn on the tape recorder and listen as you read the following.

This exercise is actually a repeat of the one above. But this time you are going to write down the main idea in the space below each sentence instead of underlining it. Remember, the main idea equals the subject plus the most important thing you are told about the subject. In some cases, you may have to write down the entire sentence. In other cases, your answer will be shorter than the entire sentence. That is because there will be other things in the sentence besides the subject and the most important thing about the subject. There will be examples, appositive phrases, or parenthetical expressions. Also, if you think that you can sum up the idea of the sentence in fewer words by writing it down in your own words, do it. The following example will give you one idea how



you can sum up the main idea using fewer words.

EXAMPLE Toasters, can openers, blenders, televisions, fry pans, and even hot combs are a significant drain on the nation's electricity.

ANSWER A good statement of the main idea here would be something like this: Many electrical appliances are a significant drain on the nation's electricity. Rather than repeat the whole list of specific examples that make up the subject, you can state the idea in much fewer words by summing them up with the general term "electrical appliances." Doing this also helps you focus on what the writer is talking about. You also could probably shorten what you are told about electrical appliances—that they use a lot of electricity. Here is a short sentence that would state the main idea: "Many electrical appliances use lots of electricity."

Write down the main idea in the space beneath each sentence.

1. A tepee is much better to live in than a cabin—always clean, warm in the winter, cool in the summer, and easy to move. ♦
2. "Natural" foods are more nutritious than foods that have gone through the usual processes of refining, preserving, and packaging, say some people. ♦
3. Bad lighting, lack of ventilation, and too much background noise all prevent good studying. ♦
4. Some diseases seem to spread like wildfire—going from one person to another, then to whole families, and finally to whole

communities, until almost everyone has the same illness. ♦

5. Here is a fascinating bit of information: the roll-on deodorant was invented in 1948! ♦
6. Muhammed Ali, twice World Heavyweight Boxing Champion, legally changed his name from Cassius Clay. ♦



7. Scientists have succeeded in talking with chimpanzees by using the sign language of the deaf. ♦

8. It takes skill, it takes know-how, it takes luck, but most of all it takes being over 6'5" tall to play professional basketball. ♦
9. Many famous persons, among them Mark Twain and Thomas Edison, never graduated from grade school. ♦
10. It won't be long before you will be buying porkchops by the kilo, instead of the pound, and rope by the meter instead of the yard. ♦

EXERCISE 4

Finding the main idea:

Who/which/that clauses

◆ Turn on the tape recorder and listen as you read the following.

Many sentences include groups of words that describe or explain one particular word in the sentence, usually the word they immediately follow. Such groups of words are called *relative clauses* since they are closely related to one word in the sentence. Relative clauses generally begin with a clue word such as *who*, *whose*, *which*, or *that*. Clauses beginning with *who* and *whose* usually are related to persons. Clauses beginning with *which* and *that* usually are related to things or ideas. Deciding whether or not a relative clause is part of the main idea takes some thinking about how the parts of a sentence fit together.

Look at example A, below. If you leave out the *who* clause, you still have a clearly identified subject, Clyde, and a clear statement about him, that he "punched me in the nose." So you don't need that "*who*" clause in order to arrive at the main idea. The rule, then, is this: If the *who/which/that* clause can

be dropped from the sentence without greatly changing the meaning of the subject, or what is said about the subject, then the clause is not considered to be part of the main idea.

But look at example B. Here, leaving out the *who* clause changes the meaning of the entire sentence. Actually, the *who* clause is part of the subject of the sentence—"men who hate women." So, if dropping the relative clause would greatly change, or reduce, the information in the sentence, then the relative clause has to be included as part of the main idea.

Notice that the punctuation often gives you a clue here. When a clause is not necessary to the main idea, it is usually set apart from the rest of the sentence by commas.

In this exercise, underline the main idea of the sentence.

EXAMPLE A Clyde, who was wearing a red sweater, punched me in the nose. *relative clause*

ANSWER Obviously, the main idea here is that the writer was punched in the nose. The fact that Clyde wore red is a pretty minor part of the idea. And we already know who the puncher is since he is identified by name, Clyde.

EXAMPLE B Men who hate women should stay single.

ANSWER Try reading the sentence leaving out the *who* clause: "Men should stay single." That is a far cry from the meaning of the original sentence, isn't it! What the writer means to do in this sentence is to single out women-haters as the subject. The writer isn't speaking about all men. You must underline all of this sentence to indicate the main idea.

1. The man who was wearing the red sweater punched me in the nose. ♦
2. Police officers say that they need help from local citizens to stop organized crime enterprises, such as loansharking and prostitution. ♦
3. Joe finally admitted that he was wrong, something which he had never done before. ♦