

**READINGS
IN
CONTEMPORARY
CULTURE**

Alice S. Horning

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PREFACE

This text is for students of English as a second language who wish to develop their skills in reading. The style of the essays encourages the reader to get meaning from the text itself without relying on a dictionary or the glossary. Hence, the text is deliberately somewhat repetitive in style. Readers who are just beginning to read extended passages of English prose will find these readings interesting, and will build their vocabulary and comprehension skills at the same time.

There are a variety of exercises for classroom use. In each chapter, comprehension questions check a reader's understanding of content. Two types of discussion questions are given. Part A questions are relatively simple. They invite the reader to talk about ideas discussed in the reading. Part B questions are more challenging, raising issues indirectly related to the essay. Readers are asked to show their understanding of the vocabulary of each chapter by creating directed sentences using combinations of the new words introduced in the chapter. Beginning readers should be asked to use each item alone in a sentence, or to use combinations of only two vocabulary items per sentence. More advanced readers will be able to follow the directions given. Readers who have difficulty understanding new vocabulary will find glossaries by chapter at the back of the book.

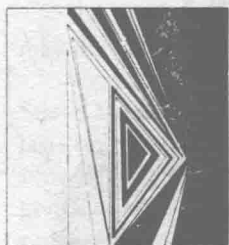
Every fifth chapter is a review chapter. It introduces no new vocabulary and has no glossary. Unlike the other essays, which are expository, the review chapters consist of opinion essays. These essays will help readers distinguish between the presentation of facts and the presentation of opinions. The comprehension and discussion questions following the opinion papers focus the reader's attention on finding and understanding the writer's views. These review chapters conclude with a word study exercise which explains common prefixes and suffixes in English, using as examples vocabulary introduced in previous chapters. A short usage practice follows the explanation.

Additional readings on the topic of each essay are also given: books, magazines and newspapers are cited for readers interested in reading more on a topic, and for those wanting to practice and expand their reading abilities.

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HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES



In the United States, a student who has finished high school may want to continue in higher education. There are several ways to continue in higher education in the United States. There are universities, colleges, community colleges, and technical or vocational schools. Each of these kinds of higher education will be described below.

A university is much larger than a college. It is larger for two reasons. First, a university in the United States usually has several different colleges in it. Each college within the university has a special subject area. There may be a college of liberal arts where humanities, social science, natural science, and mathematics are taught. There may be a college of education where students learn to be teachers. There may be a college of business where business subjects are taught. All of these colleges may be part of one university. Sometimes, in a university, each college is called a "school": "The School of Liberal Arts," "The School of Business," or "The School of Education." Second, the university always has programs for advanced or graduate study in a variety of subjects. There may be a medical school, a law school, and other advanced programs.

Students in the United States must have a high school diploma or its equivalent, to enter one of the colleges in the university. Most students have completed regular high school programs. Some older students may have the same amount of education even though they have not completed high school. These students have the equivalent of a high school degree. University students may study for an undergraduate degree in the arts or sciences. If they complete a course of study in the arts, they receive bachelor of arts degrees. In the sciences, they receive bachelor of science degrees. Students may leave the university at this time, or they may choose to go on for a graduate or professional degree.

The university may get money for its expenses from several different sources. It may get some money from the state government. If so, it is a publicly funded university. The university may get money only from private sources: contributions, tuition, investments, and other sources. If this is the case, it is a privately funded university. Finally, a university may be funded by a religious group.

投資

宗教的
a religious group
修道院, 寺院



Hunter College, New York City

in the class of 1966 - 九六级学生
a graduate school (读) (大学中的研究院)

A university program for undergraduates usually takes four years. In this way, a university and a college are alike. College students usually spend four years in school also. A college, however, usually has only one or two kinds of programs. A college does not have graduate or professional programs in a variety of areas.

A college is also like a university in the kinds of students it has. College students, like university students, usually have a high school diploma when they enter college. If a college student completes a course of study in the arts, he or she receives a bachelor of arts degree. In the sciences, the students receive a bachelor of science degree. If college students want to continue for a graduate or professional degree, they must go to a university.

The college is usually funded in one of the three ways already described. It may be publicly or privately funded. Or, it may be funded by a religious group.

Compared to universities and colleges, community colleges in the United States are quite different. The program of study in the community college usually lasts only two years. Many different subjects are taught in the community college. Not all of the subjects are the usual school subjects. The community college may give courses in dental technology, auto mechanics, sewing, and many other nonacademic subjects. The community college may also have courses in the regular academic subjects like science, math, languages, literature, and other courses in the humanities.

Many different types of students study at community colleges. Not all students have a high school diploma. Many students are adults with children, and sometimes with grandchildren, of their own. The community college serves the community, and anyone who lives nearby may go. When community college students complete a two-year program, they receive an associate of arts or associate of science degree. They may then go to a college or university for two more years to get the bachelor's degree. However, the student may get a job instead, or just stop going to school.

Community colleges are nearly always publicly funded, by the state, county, or city governments. They are not usually funded by religious groups.

The community college gives training for a variety of jobs, and also has an academic program. The technical or vocational school, however, has only job training. Its programs may last a short time or a long time. Some programs take six months, while other programs may take two years or more to complete.

Students in the technical or vocational school may have a high school diploma. Many, however, do not have the diploma. Many people go to a technical or vocational school instead of going to high school. When they complete their training, they may be able to get a good job right away. The technical or vocational school provides training for work in areas such as electronics, carpentry, plumbing, and others.

The technical or vocational school may be funded in any of the ways already described. It may be publicly or privately funded, or it may be funded by a religious group. Other sources of money for this kind of school are trade unions or charity organizations.

Students who have finished high school, and even some who do not go to high school, may choose from these four kinds of higher education in the United States. High school students who want further academic or professional training may go to a college or university. Students who want both academic and nonacademic training may go to the community college. Students who want to learn a job may go to a technical or vocational school. Students may choose the kind of higher education that they like best.

EXERCISES

Comprehension

1. What are the four kinds of higher education described in the essay?
2. What is a university?
3. How does the university get money for its expenses?
4. Who may go to a university?
5. How long does it take to get an undergraduate degree?
6. Give three ways in which a college and a university are alike.
7. How do community colleges differ from universities and colleges?
8. Describe the community college student.
9. Compare the community college to a technical or vocational school.
10. What are some subjects you could study at a technical or vocational school?

Cornell University



Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Discussion

Part A

1. What do students in your country do when they finish high school?
2. Do very many students continue to study after high school?
3. What are the different kinds of schools you can go to after high school?
4. Must you finish high school before going on to another kind of school?
5. Can anyone continue to go to school after high school?
6. How do students in your country pay for their education after high school?
7. Compare the kinds of funding in United States higher education with the funding in your country.

Part B

1. Compare United States higher education to higher education in your country. Which do you like best? Why?
2. If you were a United States citizen, which kind of higher education would you choose? Why?
3. If you are in the United States or plan to go there to study, which kind of higher education would you choose? Why?
4. Read the catalog of a United States university, college, community college, or technical or vocational school. Describe one of the programs at the school.

Directed Sentences

Directions: Make sentences using the following word groups. You may use any form of a given word. You may use the words in any order.

1. electronics-carpentry-plumbing-technical or vocational school-others
2. auto mechanics-dental technology-sewing-community college
3. higher education-described-essay
4. diploma-associate degree-however
5. undergraduate degree-bachelor's degree-equivalent
6. university-graduate-professional-enter
7. sources-expenses-private-publicly funded
8. contributions-charity organizations-trade unions-larger-investments
9. nonacademic-training-group
10. receive-liberal arts
11. tuition-amount-higher education
12. adults-grandchildren-humanities

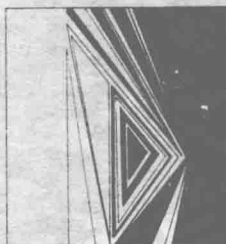
Suggested Reading

College catalogs for U.S. colleges and universities

Profiles of American Colleges (Barron's Publishing, 1976)

Note: Turn to Glossary (page 155) for words emphasized for study in each chapter.

LINGUISTICS



You are a student of English as a second language. This means that you do not yet know English completely. But you do know another language. This is the language that you already speak. It is sometimes called your native language. You may speak French, or Arabic, or Japanese. You can do many things with your native language. You can speak it, of course. You can also understand it. You can read it and write it too. ^{linguistics} Linguistics is a field of study that is concerned with these abilities that you have. It studies your ability to speak and understand a language—any language. Linguists are trying to understand your ability to use a language.

Much of the modern work in linguistics has been done in the United States in the last fifteen years. Noam Chomsky, an American professor of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has written several important books on linguistics during this time. Chomsky and other scholars have been studying our ability to use and understand language. The linguists have been asking questions about these abilities that we all have. They have been developing a theory to explain how people can use language. The theory tries to account for four of our abilities with language.

One of your abilities with your language is your ability to speak it. You can say a sentence in your language. This is very easy for you to do. In fact, you can say many sentences in your language. If you tried to say all of the sentences in your language, however, you could not do it. Linguists know that there are an infinite number of sentences in every language. Every speaker of the language has the ability to say them all. But because there are so many possible sentences, no speaker could find the time to actually do this. Linguists are trying to explain this unused ability all speakers have to say all the sentences of their language.

A second ability that you have with your language is your ability to understand it. If someone says something to you in your native language, you will probably understand it. You can understand almost all of the sentences in your native language. All speakers of a language have the ability to understand all of the sentences of their language. They may not understand all of the words, but they can probably understand a very large number of the sentences spoken in the language.



"Chicken too hot to eat"

A third ability you have with your language is your ability to understand two different sentences which have the same meaning. You may not yet be able to do this with two sentences in English. But you can probably do it with two sentences in your native language. Here are two sentences in English: "The child wrote down the number." "The child wrote the number down." You can probably understand that these two sentences mean the same thing. If not, you may ask your teacher, or someone who knows English very well. They will tell you that these two sentences mean the same thing. You can probably make up two sentences in your native language that mean the same thing. You have the ability to understand that two different sentences may have the same meaning. All native speakers of your language will also understand that these two sentences have the same meaning. All native speakers of a language can do this. Linguists are trying to understand this ability that people have with their language.

A fourth ability that you have with your language has to do with ambiguous sentences. A sentence is ambiguous if it has more than one meaning. There are many such sentences in all languages. All speakers have the ability to understand ambiguous sentences. You can understand an ambiguous sentence in your native language. It is easy to say what two meanings the sentence has. Someone else who speaks your language will also know that the sentence is ambiguous. This person will find the same two meanings in the sentence that you find. The sentence "The chicken was too hot to eat" is ambiguous in English. If you do not understand the two meanings of the sentence, perhaps a more advanced student or a native speaker can explain them to you. You will not have this problem when you know English well, and you do not have a problem understanding ambiguous sentences in your native language. Linguists would like to know more about this ability which all native speakers have.

Chomsky and other scholars have a theory to explain these abilities that all people seem to have with language. This theory is called transformational generative grammar. Linguists believe that all people know certain things about language. Everyone knows how language works. You use this knowledge to say sentences in your native language. You also use this knowledge to understand sentences in your language. It helps you to understand two sentences that have the same meaning. The same knowledge allows you to understand the two meanings of an ambiguous sentence. Transformational theory may explain what we know when we know a language. It may make language learning easier sometime in the future. The theory has many interesting and important possibilities.

EXERCISES

Comprehension

1. What is linguistics?
2. Who is Noam Chomsky?
3. What have Chomsky and other scholars been working on?
4. Explain your first ability with language.
5. Discuss your second ability with language.

6. Do you understand the two sentences which have the same meaning? Explain.
7. What is your fourth ability with language?
8. What is an ambiguous sentence?
9. What is transformational generative grammar?
10. What may transformational theory help to explain?

Discussion

Part A

1. Would you like to be a linguist? Why or why not?
2. If you were a linguist, what areas in linguistics would you study?
3. Do you think linguists could contribute to world peace and understanding? How?
4. Should there be an international language? Should it be a new language? Your language? English? Give your view and explain it.

Part B

1. What is language?
2. How do you use it?
3. Have you ever listened to a child learn to talk? What happens? How do you think the child learns?
4. How many languages do you speak?
5. Do you know anyone who speaks many languages?
6. Is all language spoken or written?

Robert J. Capece



"Chicken too hot to eat"

Directed Sentences

Directions: Make sentences using the following word groups. You may use any form of a given word. You may use the words in any order.

1. account-ambiguous-chicken-meaning
2. linguist-concerned-ability-allow-unused
3. field-linguistics-possibility-professor-scholar
4. actually-speaker-certain-knowledge
5. believe-transformational generative grammar-theory
6. person-easier-infinite-native language

Suggested Reading

- Falk, Julia S. *Linguistics and Language* (Wiley, 1978)
Fast, Julius. *Body Language* (Evans, 1970)
Hall, Edward. *The Silent Language* (Doubleday, 1973)
Lyons, John. *Chomsky* (Fontana Modern Masters, 1970)
Postman, Neil & C. Weingartner. *Linguistics* (Dell, 1966)

1. person-early influence native language
2. believe transformational generative grammar theory
3. actually specific training knowledge
4. hold language is primarily a social activity
5. focus on context and social interaction
6. argument and discussion on key meaning
7. view of a given word, phrase or sentence in context
8. language is a social activity, not just a set of rules
9. language is a social activity, not just a set of rules
10. language is a social activity, not just a set of rules

Language is a social activity, not just a set of rules. This is a key point in the study of language. It is important to understand that language is not just a set of rules that we follow, but a social activity that we engage in. This means that language is used to communicate with others, and it is shaped by the social context in which it is used. This is why it is important to study language in its social context, rather than just as a set of abstract rules.

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