

# **DISCOVERING AMERICAN ENGLISH: READING**

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**MACMILLAN PUBLISHING CO., INC.**

New York

Collier Macmillan Publishers

London

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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MACMILLAN PUBLISHING CO., INC.  
866 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022  
COLLIER MACMILLAN CANADA, LTD.

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*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

Main entry under title:

Discovering American English, reading.

Includes index.

1. College readers. 2. English language—Grammar—  
1950— I. Krantz, Harriet.  
PE1122.D53 428.6 80-16007  
ISBN 0-02-366150-X

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Printing: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Year: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## PREFACE

*Discovering American English: Reading* is a text intended for use by students of English as a second language who are at the beginning or intermediate level in their reading and writing skills. These students may have lived in the United States for many years, or they may have arrived here only a short time ago; they may have studied English formally, in schools in their native lands, or they may have acquired English informally, in work and social experiences; what they have in common is the need to master, in a short time, the reading skills that will enable them to succeed in their college careers. This book has been designed to help them achieve their goals.

*Discovering American English: Reading* is composed of eight Units, each of which explores a different aspect of the American experience, ranging from the kinds of food which Americans enjoy to their attitudes about the cities, towns, and suburbs in which they live. The themes of the earlier Units are generally simpler than those of the later Units, which take advantage of the students' increasing ability to express themselves in class discussion and in reading.

Each Unit contains three original essays of increasing length and complexity, which present and develop the Unit's theme. Interesting, informative, and with a carefully controlled vocabulary, these essays present the students with real approaches to current American concerns. The more difficult vocabulary items for each essay are found in the margin of the page on which they appear, so that instructors can preview the terms with their students, and students can learn the meanings of new words immediately. Vocabulary and idioms are learned not in a vacuum, but in a context of direct application. Not only the essays but the instructional materials as well—examples, exercises, and practices—help to develop the theme of each Unit. The result is a consistently supported thematic environment which invites students, in class discussions and in reading assignments, to share their own experiences of life in the United States.

Each reading Unit is divided into major sections, and different skills are presented in each. The skills are presented in sequence, so that students move in a logical way from easy skills to more complex ones, building on what they have already learned; no skill is ever presented without reference to another. Concepts are introduced inductively, by questions and answers; an abundance of imaginative exercises allows students to practice the skill both in class and independently, and screened summaries and rules provide students with quick reference, reinforcement, and review.

Three major sections in each Unit cover the development of basic vocabulary skills, beginning in the first Unit with the use of correct homonyms. The second Unit begins the presentation of dictionary use skills;

here the emphasis is on understanding the basic parts of a dictionary entry, which is continued and developed in Unit III, where the student is introduced to the skill of syllabication. Syllabication is further developed in Unit IV, and becomes the foundation, in Units V, VI, and VII, for the skills of recognizing prefixes, suffixes, and roots. Unit VIII draws all these skills together and focuses the student's attention on the dictionary once again. In this Unit, previously mastered skills are presented as the basis for determining the correct meanings of words in context.

Each Unit of the text also contains three sections devoted to comprehension and/or study skills. Beginning with understanding sentences and paragraphs in Unit I, comprehension skills are developed in Unit II, and the focus is on understanding topics in paragraphs of varied length. Unit III develops the skill of relating topics to main idea sentences, and Unit IV introduces the technique of highlighting main idea sentences and details. In Unit V the relationship between highlighting and outlining is established. The skill of outlining paragraph selections of varying lengths is continued in Unit VI. Units VII and VIII introduce the techniques of following directions and taking tests. Specific instruction focuses on understanding directional words, answering objective test items, and following essay test directions.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a pleasure to be able to thank the many people who gave us aid and comfort during the writing, testing, editing, and production of this book. We must first acknowledge the unflagging support and understanding of our families—husbands, children, and wife. We also owe a special debt of gratitude to Paul Panes, James Shepherd, Michael Elkin, Celeste Berner, Bonnie Semon, and Myra Waldinger, our colleagues at Queensborough Community College, and to Michael Melody, Robert L. Allen, Doris A. Allen, Amy Sonka, and Rosalind Sackoff for their thoughtful evaluations of our manuscript. We are also grateful to Edith Grossman, Francine Stavas, and Barbara Grable, members of the staff of the Department of Basic Educational Skills, for their many kindnesses. At Macmillan, Anthony English was the gentle shepherd of this venture, never losing patience with his occasionally unruly flock. We are also indebted to Pat Cabeza, our production editor, for the care with which she guided our manuscript—and its authors—through the many stages of production. Finally, we must thank our students, without whom this book would have been neither possible nor necessary.

# CONTENTS

## UNIT I

### WE ARE WHAT WE EAT: From Apple Pie to Baked Zucchini

	INITIAL READING: Visiting a Supermarket	2
CHAPTER 1	Understanding Literal Meanings: Sentences	3
	Understanding Literal Meanings: Identifying Who and What	8
	Understanding Literal Meanings: Single Paragraphs	11
CHAPTER 2	Using the Correct Homonym	17
	PRACTICE READING: The Diner	20
	PRACTICE READING: A Candy Shop	23
CHAPTER 3	Understanding Literal Meanings: Longer Selections	24
	FINAL PRACTICE READING: Seasoning the American Palate	30

## UNIT II

### BEING, BECOMING, BELONGING: Getting Together in America

	INITIAL READING: Better and Better	34
CHAPTER 4	Understanding Topics	35
	Identifying the Topic	37
	Naming Topics	39
	Selecting the Correct Topic	41
CHAPTER 5	Using the Dictionary to Identify Parts of Speech	44
	PRACTICE READING: Antonia	47
CHAPTER 6	Naming Topics in Paragraphs	50
	Selecting the Correct Paragraph Topic	54
CHAPTER 7	Using the Dictionary to Determine Restrictive Labels, Synonyms, and Antonyms	59

CHAPTER 8	Recognizing Topics: Longer Passages	64
CHAPTER 9	Using the Dictionary to Identify Etymology	71
	FINAL PRACTICE READING: Untitled	73

### UNIT III AMERICAN PLAYGROUNDS

	INITIAL READING: American Playgrounds	80
CHAPTER 10	Relating Topics and Main Idea Sentences	81
	Understanding Main Ideas	86
	Recognizing the Location of the Main Idea in a Paragraph	90
CHAPTER 11	Using the Dictionary: Guidewords	92
	PRACTICE READING: Untitled	95
	PRACTICE READING: Untitled	97
CHAPTER 12	Finding the Main Idea Sentence in Different Locations in the Paragraph	99
CHAPTER 13	Using the Dictionary: Diacritical Marks	105
CHAPTER 14	Locating Main Ideas in Short Passages	108
CHAPTER 15	Using the Dictionary: Hearing Syllables	114
	FINAL PRACTICE READING: Untitled	117

### UNIT IV WOULD YOU BUY A USED CAR FROM THESE AUTHORS?

	INITIAL READING: Advertising	122
CHAPTER 16	Recognizing the Relationship of Main Ideas and Details	123
CHAPTER 17	Understanding Syllables	128
	Dividing Words into Syllables: VC-CV	129
	Dividing Words into Syllables: Consonant Blends	130
	PRACTICE READING: Untitled	130

<b>CHAPTER 18</b>	<b>Highlighting Main Ideas and Details: Note-Taking</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>CHAPTER 19</b>	<b>Dividing Words into Syllables: V-CV and VC-V</b>	<b>138</b>
	<b>Dividing Words into Syllables: -LE</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>CHAPTER 20</b>	<b>Highlighting Main Ideas and Details in Longer Selections</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>CHAPTER 21</b>	<b>Dividing Words into Syllables: Verbs Ending in -ED</b>	<b>152</b>
	<b>FINAL PRACTICE READING: Untitled</b>	<b>154</b>

## UNIT V GROWING UP IN SPITE OF IT ALL

	<b>INITIAL READING: Untitled</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>CHAPTER 22</b>	<b>Taking Notes: Highlighting and Outlining</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>CHAPTER 23</b>	<b>Recognizing Prefixes: Negatives</b>	<b>165</b>
	<b>PRACTICE READING: Which Books Would You Choose?</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>CHAPTER 24</b>	<b>Taking Notes: Single Paragraph Outlines</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>CHAPTER 25</b>	<b>Recognizing Prefixes: Frequently Used Prefixes</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>CHAPTER 26</b>	<b>Taking Notes: Outlining Several Paragraphs</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>CHAPTER 27</b>	<b>Recognizing Prefixes: Quantity</b>	<b>188</b>
	<b>FINAL PRACTICE READING: Untitled</b>	<b>191</b>

## UNIT VI IF I HAD IT TO DO ALL OVER AGAIN . . .

	<b>INITIAL READING: Untitled</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>CHAPTER 28</b>	<b>Outlining: Titled Paragraphs in a Selection</b>	<b>198</b>
<b>CHAPTER 29</b>	<b>Recognizing Suffixes</b>	<b>203</b>
	<b>Verb Endings: -EN, -IZE, -IFY</b>	<b>204</b>
	<b>Verb Endings: -ED, -ING</b>	<b>206</b>
	<b>Verb Endings: -S, -ES</b>	<b>208</b>
	<b>Noun Endings: -S, -ES, -IES</b>	<b>210</b>
	<b>PRACTICE READING: Untitled</b>	<b>212</b>



CHAPTER 30	Outlining: Multiple Paragraphs as a Selection	215
CHAPTER 31	Recognizing Suffixes: Adjective Endings	220
CHAPTER 32	Outlining: Short Selections	223
CHAPTER 33	Recognizing Suffixes: Noun Endings	233
	FINAL PRACTICE READING: Untitled	235

## UNIT VII

### WHO REALLY WEARS THE PANTS?

	INITIAL READING: The Generation Gap	240
CHAPTER 34	Following Directions	242
	Understanding Signal Words: Quality and Quantity	243
CHAPTER 35	Recognizing Roots	248
	Recognizing Roots: Scribe, Script	250
	Recognizing Roots: Aud	251
	Recognizing Roots: Port	252
	PRACTICE READING: The Elderly	254
CHAPTER 36	Understanding Signal Words: Sequence	256
	Understanding Signals of Sequence in Instructions and Questions	260
CHAPTER 37	Recognizing Roots: Duc, Duct, Mit, Miss, Vert, Vers	264
	Recognizing Roots: Chron, Chrono, Gram, Graph, Cred	267
	FINAL PRACTICE READING: Untitled	271

## UNIT VIII

### URBAN, SUBURBAN, AND RURAL: Where We Live Now

	INITIAL READING: Modern Farming	276
CHAPTER 38	Taking Tests	278
	Preparing for the Test	279
	Alotting Time on a Test	283
	Answering Test Questions	286
	Following General Directions on a Test	288

CHAPTER 39	Using the Dictionary: Multiple Meanings of Words	291
	PRACTICE READING: Suburbs	297
CHAPTER 40	Taking Objective Tests	300
	Following Signal Words: Objective Tests	301
	Following Directions: Doing What the Instructor Asks on Objective Tests	303
CHAPTER 41	Using the Dictionary: Practice with Multiple Meanings of Words	309
CHAPTER 42	Taking Essay Tests	312
	Allowing Time for Essays	313
	Understanding Directional Words	315
	Following the Instructor's Directions	317
CHAPTER 43	Understanding Vocabulary: Selecting the Correct Meanings of Words	321
	FINAL PRACTICE READING: Street Games	325
GLOSSARY	Homonyms	329
APPENDIX I	Guidelines for Spelling: Base Word and Suffix	333
APPENDIX II	Contractions	335
APPENDIX III	Certain Consonants and Vowels with their Pronunciation	339
INDEX		343

# UNIT I

## WE ARE WHAT WE EAT: From Apple Pie to Baked Zucchini

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°short compositions

°one side or view

°very strongly

°a movement protecting  
buyers' rights

°relating to a particular  
geographical area

The sentences, paragraphs, essays,° and exercises that follow are designed to help you improve your reading comprehension and, at the same time, to describe an aspect° of American life to you. Like all people, Americans are intensely° interested in food: buying it, cooking it, tasting it, testing it, enjoying it, and trying not to eat too much of it. It is helpful to know something about how Americans feel about food. The information in each series of exercises is loosely organized around the following food subjects: supermarkets, consumerism,° health foods, dining out, preparing foods, dieting, and regional° cooking.

#### DISCUSSION

Where do you do your shopping for food? Why? What are some differences between shopping for food in the United States and in other countries? What are some advantages of shopping in supermarkets? What are some disadvantages of shopping in supermarkets?

#### INITIAL READING

### Visiting a Supermarket

Visiting a supermarket is like taking a trip around the world. Over here is a mountain of oranges from sunny Florida. Over there are heads of lettuce from California. The frozen crab meat comes all the way from Alaska. There are also sardines from Norway and Portugal. In the next aisle° there is mustard from Germany, soy sauce from Hong Kong, and wine from Chile and Argentina.

A young Haitian student discovers a pile of mangoes from the Caribbean. They are so expensive here! A Korean man is carefully examining a small piece of ginger. Two women from Lebanon are looking for dried chickpeas. An elderly Italian man finds a can of olive oil from Italy. What will they do with these things?

°the path between rows of  
shelves

# CHAPTER 1

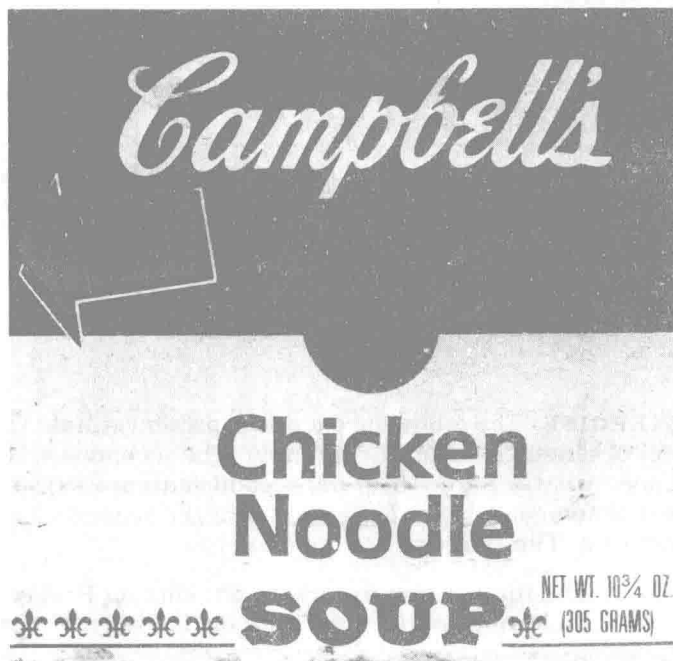
## UNDERSTANDING LITERAL MEANINGS:

### Sentences

\* \*

To understand the world you live in, you must understand what you are seeing, hearing, feeling, and reading. Every day you read labels on food products, directions on street signs, headlines in newspapers, and chapters in textbooks. When you understand things literally, you can shop wisely, follow directions, understand the day's events, and comprehend course work. Look at the following picture.

#### EXAMPLE



Reprinted by permission of the Campbell's Soup Company.

#### QUESTIONS

1. What is the brand name of the soup? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What kind of soup is mentioned on the label? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the weight of the can in ounces? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the weight of the can in grams? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is the soup condensed? \_\_\_\_\_

These questions ask you to recall written information. The can of Campbell's Chicken Noodle Soup weighs  $10\frac{3}{4}$  ounces or 305 grams and is condensed.

**Literal comprehension** means understanding and recalling the facts.

Often you answer questions from other kinds of written material.

#### EXAMPLE

Bob buys a dozen eggs.

#### QUESTIONS

1. How many eggs does Bob buy? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who buys the eggs? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Does Bob buy twelve eggs? \_\_\_\_\_

Bob buys twelve, or one dozen, eggs. Again, the questions ask for a recall of facts. Remember that the question may have a different word than appears in the sentence. In the example, "a dozen" is the same as twelve eggs.

Recalled facts may often be stated in different words.

**EXERCISE** The following exercises present simple statements. Read each pair of sentences carefully. Compare the second sentence with the first sentence. Answer Same (S) if the second sentence says the same thing as the first sentence. Answer Different (D) if the second sentence says something different. The first two are done for you.

- D 1. The lines in supermarkets are long on Friday night.  
Supermarket lines are long on Tuesday.
- S 2. Bargain hunters watch for sales in their markets.  
Supermarket sales attract people looking for bargains.
- \_\_\_ 3. Food coupons help homemakers save money on their groceries.  
Grocery coupons do little to help homemakers.

- \_\_\_ 4. Some cakes sold in supermarkets have no real food substances in them.  
Some supermarket cakes contain no real food substances.
- \_\_\_ 5. Watch the cash register at the checkout counter because you can be overcharged.  
Overcharging at the checkout counter never happens.

**PRACTICE** Answer Same (S) if the two sentences say the same thing. Answer Different (D) if they are different.

- \_\_\_ 1. Most Americans are constantly on diets.  
All Americans are usually on diets.
- \_\_\_ 2. The dinner meal is usually the big meal of the day for Americans.  
Dinner is always the main meal for Americans.
- \_\_\_ 3. Americans are concerned about their eating habits.  
Americans are not interested in their diets.
- \_\_\_ 4. Americans are always trying to lose weight.  
Americans don't want to be overweight.
- \_\_\_ 5. Each American consumes gallons of soda every year.  
Americans drink a lot of soda.

**EXERCISE** Here is another exercise to help you improve literal comprehension. In this exercise read the pairs of sentences carefully. The second sentence has a word or group of words missing. Complete the second sentence with the facts from the first sentence. The first one is done for you.

1. Service is one difference between a fast-food restaurant<sup>o</sup> and a diner.  
Fast-food restaurants and diners differ in service.
2. Fast-food restaurants are money savers for consumers.  
Consumers can save \_\_\_\_\_ by eating at fast-food places.
3. Pizza parlors are crowded on Friday nights.  
There are many people at \_\_\_\_\_ on Friday nights.
4. Fish and chips are easy to eat but hard to digest.  
I love to eat fish and chips, but they are \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Fast-food restaurants like McDonald's and Burger King are popular in the United States.  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are popular U.S. restaurants.

<sup>o</sup>a restaurant with inexpensive, quickly prepared food

**PRACTICE** Read these pairs of sentences. Complete the second sentence with the correct information from the first sentence.

1. Lunch for a busy person might be a hot dog at the nearest stand.  
A \_\_\_\_\_ person might be found at a hot dog stand.
2. Many restaurants have special menus for children.  
Children get \_\_\_\_\_ menus at many restaurants.
3. Fried chicken is a popular take-out item.  
A popular take-out food is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Eating too many hot dogs can give you a stomach ache.  
You can get a stomach ache from eating \_\_\_\_\_.
5. At any coffee counter, most people will order muffins, doughnuts, rolls, or coffecake for breakfast.  
\_\_\_\_\_ people eat cake products for breakfast at coffee counters.

**EXERCISE** Here is another exercise to help you improve literal comprehension. Using the information in the first sentence, choose the best answer for each statement. Write your choice (a, b, c, or d) in the space. Part of the first one is done for you.

1. You must pay the full sales tax on the price of a product even when you use a coupon.  
a A coupon lowers
  - a. the price of the product.
  - b. the tax on the product.
  - c. both the price and the tax.  
\_\_\_\_ With a coupon, you pay sales tax on
  - a. the discount price of the item.
  - b. the full price of the item.
  - c. the tax on the item.
2. The produce section of a supermarket displays lettuce, tomatoes, other vegetables, and fruit.  
\_\_\_\_ One item not found in the produce section is
  - a. apples.
  - b. string beans.
  - c. lettuce.
  - d. cheese.



- Lettuce, tomatoes, and vegetables are  
a. kept in the produce section.  
b. not found in the produce section.  
c. found in the dairy° section.
3. A picnic in the park is a lovely way to spend a Sunday afternoon.
- On a Sunday afternoon it is lovely to  
a. eat at home.  
b. have a picnic in the backyard.  
c. have a picnic in the park.
- Sunday afternoons are great for  
a. parking.  
b. picnicking.  
c. sleeping.
4. The cost of a Saturday night dinner at a restaurant is getting higher and higher.
- Prices are rising for  
a. Saturday dinners.  
b. all dinners.  
c. Friday lunches.
- Restaurant prices are  
a. getting higher for breakfasts.  
b. getting lower for Saturday night dinners.  
c. getting higher for Saturday night dinners.
5. We can cut down on the sweets we eat by using sugar substitutes.
- Sugar substitutes cut down on  
a. the food we eat.  
b. some sweets.  
c. only candy.
- Sugar substitutes can help us  
a. do away with sweets.  
b. increase our sweets.  
c. reduce our sweets.