

# READING COMPREHENSION PASSAGES

ROLAND JOHN



COLLINS

# Reading Comprehension Passages

BOOK 2

Roland John

COLLINS: LONDON AND GLASGOW

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# To the Teacher

## **The passages**

These passages, specially written at Stage 3 of Collins English Library, observe the structure rules of the series and also, very largely, the vocabulary restrictions.

The important objective is to provide practice in listening to and reading English with understanding and pleasure. The grade of the language used should ensure understanding. It is hoped that the passages will provide the pleasure.

## **The vocabulary**

The basic vocabulary at Stage 3 is about 1,000 words. The addition of closely related words and some combinations of words brings the total to about 1,300. The basic items have been freely used and also, when necessary, the related words.

In language learning a very useful skill is the ability to deduce the meaning of a word from its context. This book contains some eighty items that are outside the Stage 3 list, and an attempt is made to train students to arrive at the meaning without the need for a picture, a translation or a dictionary. These eighty items are listed on page 60 with the passage numbers, etc. where they first occur.

Users of the book are expected to know the commonly employed exercise instruction words, e.g. *correct*, *guess*. Proper nouns are listed on page 61, with a guide to pronunciation and stress.

## **How to use the book**

The methods put forward here are suggestions only. They have been followed with success among widely differing groups of learners.

Each passage and its exercises are planned to occupy a complete lesson of about 45 minutes. Where English is being learnt as part of a general curriculum, a lesson should include some written work whenever possible.

## *Listening and reading*

1. Write the two or three unfamiliar words or phrases on the board. Do not explain the meaning. The students shut their books and listen. Read the whole passage to them at your normal reading speed in class. When doing this maintain close contact ('eye contact') with the class, i.e. look down at the text only just sufficiently to keep an even flow. When you reach an item written on the board, pause momentarily and point to it.

2. For the second reading divide the passage into short, manageable sections of two or three sentences each. Try to present each section in a different way. Suggestions are:

*a* The teacher reads aloud while the students follow the text in their copies.

*b* Chorus reading of short passages, especially of parts having well defined tone groups, stressed words, weak forms, etc., as in dialogue or very short sentences.

*c* Chaining in chorus, e.g.

*Teacher:* At ten o'clock—

*Class:* At ten o'clock—

*Teacher:* the work was finished—

*Class:* At ten o'clock the work was finished

*Teacher:* and Enid tried the dress on.

*Class:* At ten o'clock the work was finished and Enid tried the dress on.

*d* Silent reading by the students; short pieces.

*e* Students *in pairs* reading aloud to each other.

*f* Stop-go reading in groups of 2-4 students: the idea is for the first reader to stop unexpectedly, the second to carry on immediately, etc.

There is no need for individual students to read aloud to the class.

### *Exercises*

As a rule first deal with Sections A and B orally, marking in your copy any questions, etc. to which a correct 'answer' is not forthcoming. At first assist the process of deduction. Go on to Sections C and D, again orally. Finally, return to any unfinished parts of Sections A and B.

Certain lesson units treat the 'new' vocabulary first, and the order of work (A,B,C,D) applies.

### *Written work*

An exercise, or part of one, may be started in class and finished later. Avoid multiple choice exercises. 'Completions', content questions and all kinds of vocabulary exercise are suitable. Vary the kind of written work from one lesson to the next.

# 1 A Day in Dover

Fifteen French children came on to the ship with their teacher.

'Where are you going?' I asked a tall, thin boy, in English.

'England,' he said. 'This ship is going to England, isn't it?'

It was, of course. He knew it, and I knew it. Everybody on the ship knew it. My question was not a good one. But he understood it, and he answered correctly in English.

'Where will you go in England?' I asked next. 'And how long will you stay there?'

'We're only going to Dover, but we'll stay there all day. We must come home again tonight.'

'I see. What are you going to do all day in Dover?'

'Talk to the people in English.' He pointed to the young woman teacher. 'Miss Demetz is our English teacher. She wants us to talk English all day.' Then he spoke into my ear. 'I'm going to buy an English lamp for my bicycle. They're cheaper than French lamps.'

It began to rain. Miss Demetz called to the children. 'Come inside the ship or you'll get wet.'

I went in after them and began to read my newspaper. My friend sat down beside me. 'Didn't you bring a book?' I asked.

'No,' he said, 'but I have this.' He put his hand in his pocket and took out an English £5 note. He read all the words on the note three times. Then he began to sing—

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea  
In a beautiful pea-green boat,  
They took some honey, and plenty of money,  
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.

## A

Give *short* answers to the questions.

- 1 Was the boy French or English?
- 2 Where is Dover?
- 3 Were the children on the right ship?
- 4 Who was Miss Demetz?
- 5 What was the boy's answer to my third question?
- 6 Why did we all go inside the ship?

## B

Read; then choose the right part.

- 1 'We're only going to Dover . . .' French people like to go to Dover and back in (an hour/a day/two days).
- 2 My question was not a good one . . . Everybody knew (Dover/the question/the answer).
- 3 'I'm going to buy an English lamp . . .' The boy will also (talk English/keep dry/go home).
- 4 'No,' he said . . . The boy (couldn't read/read nothing/read his £5 note).
- 5 My friend sat down . . . My friend was (Miss Demetz/the French boy/another Englishman).
- 6 'Talk to the people in English,' he said. The French children will speak English to (Miss Demetz/their friends/the people in Dover).

## C

What did the boy say? Can you complete these sentences about:—

- 1 *the ship*—He said, 'It's .... ?'
- 2 *home*—He said, ' .... '
- 3 *English bicycle lamps*—' .... '
- 4 *Miss Demetz*—' .... '

## D

Put the right word in each space.

**people, learn, go, holiday, French, speak.**

Miss Demetz told them: 'You must .... English to the English .... . They will not understand .... .'

'Don't they .... French at school?' Denise asked.

'Yes, they do. And they .... to France for holidays. But remember: today isn't a .... for you. It's a school day.'

## 2 A Woman at the Wheel

The pits at the race track were very busy. Drivers and engineers were working hard on their powerful racing cars. Each racing team had its own pit: there was fuel and oil for the cars, a workshop, spare parts . . . The drivers were all young men, except one. That one was Lella Lombardi.

Miss Lombardi is a young Italian woman. She is small but strong; and she is a good racing driver. She is the only woman whom you might see at the wheel of a modern racing car.

'I've been in love with fast cars all my life,' she says. 'I always wanted to be a racing driver.'

She used to work for her father in his meat business. Sometimes she drove one of his meat lorries. At that time she saved as much money as possible. Then, in 1965, she bought her first racing car. It was a small car that cost about £500. She drove it in two races, and her parents did not know. She won her third race—and after that everyone knew her name!

Since then Lella Lombardi has owned several racing cars. Each car has been bigger and faster than the one before. At first men drivers did not like to race against a woman. But they have had to change their minds. Miss Lombardi now drives some of the fastest cars in the world.

Have a look at the newspapers in the motor racing season. You will be sure to see her name. It is possible that she will win one or two important races.

## A

Choose the correct part.

- 1 The engine is the most important part of a racing car. The engineers in the pits are the men who (make the engines/drive the engines/care for the engines/pay for the engines).
- 2 It's a racing car; and the woman at the wheel (is changing it/needs help/is probably Miss Lombardi/is too weak to drive).
- 3 Her parents did not know that she (could drive anything/was a racing driver/had a big car/ won three races).
- 4 The men drivers did not like (to race against a woman/Lella Lombardi/her big, fast car/motor racing).
- 5 Miss Lombardi was driving a (new/small/man's/powerful) car when she won her first race.

## B

Answer these questions.

- 1 What did she say that she always wanted to be?
- 2 How did she get money to buy the first car?
- 3 When did Italians begin to know her name?
- 4 What did the men have to change their minds about?
- 5 What is Lella Lombardi in love with?

## C

Read the first paragraph again. Then choose the part that is probably correct.

- 1 A motor racing **track** = (a road for motor races/a field/a road between two cities).
- 2 A **pit** at the track = a kind of (club/shop/garage).
- 3 You'll always find (customers/workmen/things to buy) in a **workshop**.
- 4 Which of these are in a racing **team**?—(drivers/eleven players/engineers/two linesmen/a manager).
- 5 Wood and oil are **fuels**. They burn in fires, lamps or cookers. The best **fuel** for racing cars is (water/wood/petrol). (What is its name in your country?)
- 6 My bicycle needs a **spare** part for the front brake. So I must get (a new bicycle/a new front brake/one new part).

## D

Many people in many countries know the name Lella Lombardi. Why has she become famous in motor racing? Do you know the names of any other famous sportswomen?

### 3 Boy in a Basket—Part I

Three men were crossing a desert on camels. They were taking food and soap and cotton clothes to the village of Gasan. There were eight camels in the camel-train.

The hot afternoon changed to cool evening. The camel-train stopped at some camel-thorn, and the animals began to eat. The men lit a fire to make some coffee.

While they were drinking, one man—Samir—said, 'A strange thing has happened. We left the town this morning with eight camels. Now we have nine. Look at them and count.'

Rajeb looked and counted. 'You're right,' he said.

Nuri said, 'That female with empty baskets on her back isn't ours.'

'You're right—she isn't,' said Rajeb.

Samir said, 'She is probably a lost camel.'

'You're probably right,' Rajeb said. 'What shall we do?'

'Take her with us to Gasan,' Nuri replied. 'We'll leave her—'

'At the police station,' said Samir. 'The police will soon find the man who has lost a female camel.'

There was a thoughtful look on Rajeb's face. 'You're both right,' he said. He stood up then, and went across the stony ground to the newcomer. He looked into the baskets on her back. 'Samir, Nuri!' he called. 'Come! There's a boy asleep in the basket. What are we going to do?'

'Sh!' said Nuri. 'If you wake him up, he'll be afraid.'

'Let him sleep,' Samir said. 'The police will soon find the man who has lost his son.'

'Yes, I'm sure you're right.'



## A

Answer these questions.

- 1 Who said 'Yes, I'm sure you're right' in the last line?
- 2 What were the men doing while the camels were eating?
- 3 What did Nuri think about the baskets on the female's back? Was the thought true or not?
- 4 Where did the camel drivers decide to take the stranger?
- 5 Why did they decide to take her there?
- 6 What did Rajeb discover?

## B

Choose the part that completes the sentence in the correct or the best way.

- 1 'A strange thing has happened.' The strange thing was: (there was food for the camels/there was one new camel/the two baskets were empty/the stranger was a female).
- 2 'You're right—she isn't.' Rajeb meant: '(The baskets aren't empty/ The camel wasn't a female/She isn't one of our camels).'
- 3 Rajeb did not (have any useful ideas of his own/often agree with his friends/ask any questions/know the baskets were empty).
- 4 A lost camel is one that (has been lost by somebody/has lost something/has never had an owner/is either sick or wild).
- 5 A thoughtful look came to Rajeb's face. And after that he (woke the boy up/ finished his coffee/went and looked into the baskets/ counted the camels again).

## C

Complete:

- 1 The camel drivers didn't know the man who ....
- 2 Also, they didn't know the boy who ....
- 3 .... thought the police were wonderful.

## D

What does it mean? Choose the best answer.

- 1 **camel-thorn** = grass/a green vegetable/a plant that camels eat.
- 2 **a newcomer** = one who has just come/something new/a female camel.
- 3 **Sh!** = come back/stop/you're wrong/be quiet.
- 4 **Let him sleep** = Wake him/Don't wake him/He must sleep/He needn't sleep.