

ENGLISH BY NEWSPAPER

***How to Read and Understand
an English Language Newspaper***

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Introduction

English by Newspaper gives you a skill that you can use to improve your English for the rest of your life: the ability to read and understand an English language newspaper.

- This book contains:
 1. A reading comprehension method that you can use for almost any nonfiction reading—not just the newspaper.
 2. Exercises that give you practice in using this method.
 3. Specially designed news stories that cover most of the subjects commonly found in your English language newspaper.
 4. A glossary of essential newspaper vocabulary.
 5. An appendix that gives the answers to the exercises.
- You will learn to:
 1. Catch the main idea of a story.
 2. Understand the all-important opening sentence of a news story.
 3. Find the story's essential details.
 4. Use the story to guess the meanings of new words.
 5. Understand newspaper headlines.
 6. Read a news story critically.
 7. Understand newspaper features and editorials.

How to Use This Book

- Six Important Suggestions:
 1. Look over the whole book before you begin.
 2. Note that some words are printed in *italics*. These words are often found in the newspaper and their meanings are explained in the glossary in the back of the book. The words in the glossary are defined according to how they are used in the stories. For this reason, some of the definitions may differ from those you might find in a dictionary.
 3. *English by Newspaper* is most effective when used together with an actual newspaper. When you learn a new method, try it out with an English language newspaper and see how well it works. When you finish a section from the sample stories, try to find a similar story in a recent newspaper. You will be surprised how many words you recognize.

4. Work regularly. A little every day is better than a lot once a week or once a month. With regular reading you should see much improvement within a short time.

5. *English by Newspaper* has an answer key. This means you can choose to work without a teacher. However, you should try not to use the answer key until you have made your best effort to do an exercise by yourself. Studies have proven that people learn more if they work out a problem before they know the correct answer.

6. Do not overuse the glossary. The glossary is very convenient and tempting to use, but it is important to try to understand as much of a story as you can without it.

To the Teacher

Here are seven reasons why teachers around the world use the English language newspaper as an essential part of their reading programs:

1. It is a source of up-to-the-minute English.
2. It covers subjects of immediate interest and importance.
3. It is an excellent tool for building vocabulary.
4. It is readily available and can even be delivered to your doorstep.
5. Its consistent style and content make it one of the easiest reading materials written for native speakers.
6. Since most students already have a background in current affairs from local language newspapers, radio, and television, it can be introduced before other types of unsimplified materials.
7. It is the one type of English reading material that students are most likely to continue reading after they complete their education.

The English language newspaper is an attractive possibility for almost any reading comprehension program. Unlike most other reading materials, it can be taught as a coherent unit. It is not a loose collection of stories varying widely in style and content. The teacher can be confident that what is learned from one story can be quickly applied to another. In addition, it is a medium that lends itself splendidly to strategies fostered in progressive reading programs—skimming, scanning, anticipation, the use of context, vocabulary development, inference, and critique.

All this because newspaper journalism, especially the hard news variety, is predictable. A story is summarized at the beginning and then retold in greater detail. Items are arranged in descending order of importance. Sentence structure is highly consistent and vocabulary is largely topic specific—fire has one set

of high-frequency terms, election results have another. Technical terms are explained.

This predictability can be exploited and *English By Newspaper* points the way. The book presents a systematic approach to the English language newspaper, providing a thoroughly tested reading comprehension method and an overview of the topics and vocabulary most commonly encountered. It can be used as the core reference book for a newspaper course or as a supplementary text for a more general reading comprehension course. It is designed to be a self-study program, so classroom time can be spent applying the method to actual newspaper stories.

Here are some suggestions:

1. If at all possible, use *English By Newspaper* in conjunction with a newspaper. Most English language newspapers have discount rates for students and many offer special limited subscriptions, allowing for perhaps a single delivery a week. The use of old issues is another possibility. Newspaper companies are often willing to give away multiple copies of newspapers returned from newsstands. If you use this alternative, try to obtain several consecutive issues, so you can follow the development of major stories.

2. Tape radio or TV broadcasts of the day's news and use them as listening comprehension exercises to supplement the newspaper. Compare the newspaper's treatment of a story with that of a weekly news magazine.

3. Design activities that build on the knowledge your students have gained from the newspaper. If, for example, you read about a major strike, divide the class into workers and management and have a debate based on newspaper accounts of their positions. This is not only entertaining, but it activates vocabulary that might otherwise remain passive.

4. Follow major stories. Note that each story has a core vocabulary that is repeated day after day. Discuss the stories thoroughly and have the students try to anticipate future developments. This will give them a reason to open tomorrow's newspaper and will increase their comprehension as well.

Credits

The excerpts from AP, UPI and Reuters news stories were reprinted by permission.

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CHAPTER

1

Scanning

This chapter will show you how to use your present knowledge of English to understand the main ideas of a newspaper story without using a dictionary.

To scan is to make a quick first reading of the story. This has three purposes:

1. To find out what the story is about.
2. To find out whether the story interests you.
3. To get a quick general understanding of a story you have chosen to read.

A *Focusing on the Beginning*

You will usually find the most important point of a news story in the first paragraph (called "the lead"), so this is the place to begin your scanning. Look for words you understand. Two or three key words will often be enough to catch the main idea.

Hanoi rages over spying charges

HONG KONG (Reuter)—Vietnam yesterday angrily rejected American charges that Vietnamese diplomats were involved in espionage and warned that such accusations could jeopardize US attempts to normalize relations.

This is clearly a story about Vietnam and the United States. From the word **angrily** you can be quite sure that it must report some

problem between the two countries. This is enough for successful scanning. If the subject doesn't interest you, scan other stories until you find one that does.

EXERCISE

Read the following newspaper leads. Look for key words that you already understand. Then answer the questions that follow. Note that the key words are underlined for you in the first three stories. You should finish each item in less than a minute. You can check your answers on page 161 in the appendix.

1.

Battle over Narita Airport

NARITA, Japan (Reuter)—Red-helmeted students and more than 800 riot police yesterday fought running battles for the second consecutive day to gain control of a concrete and steel tower at Tokyo's controversial new international airport.

This story is about:

- a. the completion of a new airport in Tokyo.
- b. a fight between students and police at a Tokyo airport.
- c. the building of a concrete and steel tower at Tokyo's international airport.

I AM / AM NOT interested in reading this story.

2.

Defector weds

NEW YORK (Reuter)—A top-ranking Soviet diplomat, who defected from his United Nations post and later became embroiled in a controversy over payments to a professional escort girl, has secretly married an American woman, Newsweek magazine reported yesterday.

This story is about:

- a. a problem in the United Nations.
- b. a marriage between a Russian man and an American woman.
- c. a secret agreement between Russia and the United States.

I AM / AM NOT interested in reading this story.

3.

Rich find in Ireland

DUBLIN (Reuter)—A hoard of Eighth Century treasure, including a priceless silver and gold chalice, has been found in an Irish bog, the Government announced Thursday.

This story is about:

- a. the Irish economy.
- b. the price of silver and gold.
- c. the finding of treasure.

I AM / AM NOT interested in reading this story.

4.

Diplomat leaps to freedom

BOGOTA, Colombia (UPI)—Uruguayan Ambassador Fernando Gómez leaped out of a window of the besieged Dominican Embassy early yesterday in a dramatic escape from leftist guerrillas who are holding 19 other diplomats captive.

This story is about:

- a. an escape.
- b. a visit.
- c. an election.

I AM / AM NOT interested in reading this story.

5.

Death threats to Fondas

LOS ANGELES (Reuter)—A 31-year-old man was arrested here Saturday on suspicion of making death threats to film star Henry Fonda and his children, Jane and Peter Fonda.

This story is about:

- a. an arrest.
- b. a murder.
- c. film stars on holiday in Los Angeles.

I AM / AM NOT interested in reading this story.



6.

UK-France iron out problems

PARIS (Reuters)—French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing arrived in Britain for talks with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on major differences between the two countries over EEC policies.

This story is about:

- a. an agreement.
- b. a United Nations meeting.
- c. a visit.

I AM / AM NOT interested in reading this story.

7.

UK steel industry shuts down

LONDON (UPI)—Britain's state-owned steelworks shut down at midnight last night in the first nationwide steel strike since 1926, threatening widespread disruption of Britain's heavy industries.

This story is about:

- a. British steel production in 1926.
- b. a steel strike.
- c. rebuilding Britain's steelworks.

I AM / AM NOT interested in reading this story.

New light shed on Kennedy shooting?

WASHINGTON (Reuter)—A new theory that four shots, not three, may have been fired when President Kennedy was assassinated is being studied in an attempt to show that Lee Harvey Oswald, his accused assassin, did not act alone.

This story is about:

- the killing of President Kennedy.
- the opening of the Kennedy Center in Washington.
- President Kennedy's large family.

I AM / AM NOT interested in reading this story.

Now try this method with an English language newspaper or with several of the stories in the back of this book. Do not be unhappy if you are not always able to understand the subject of a story. Your vocabulary may not be big enough. If you are diligent, however, you will see a big improvement from week to week and month to month. In fact, by the time you finish this book you will be able to catch the main idea of almost any story—just from scanning.

B *Scanning the Entire Story*

When you have found an interesting story, you should read quickly through it. You are scanning the entire story in much the same way you scanned the lead—to find out as many important facts as you can without using a dictionary. This will give you a general understanding of the story which will help you greatly when you go back and read the story more carefully.

In section A you scanned a story about the finding of a treasure. Here is the complete story. Read through it quickly and see how many important facts you can discover in two minutes.

Rich find in Ireland

DUBLIN (Reuter)—A hoard of Eighth Century treasure, including a priceless silver and gold chalice, has been found in an Irish bog, the Government announced Thursday.

It is regarded as the most significant Irish archeological and historical find this century and was uncovered about two weeks ago by an amateur with a

metal detector, government officials said.

The finder and precise location of the burial place, somewhere in County Tipperary in the Irish Midlands, are being kept secret, Brian O'Riordain, Director of the National Museum of Ireland, told reporters.

It has not yet been worked out when
(Continued on next page)

(Continued from p. 7)

the objects were buried, but museum officials speculated that they might have been hidden by a monk or priest to protect them from plunder by Vikings.

The hoard has been acquired by the Government as a treasure trove, but there would probably be a reward for the finder.

It was found in bogland near a river but no other details are being released until further archeological work has been carried out.

The collection has been sent to the British Museum for cleaning and restoration and will then go on display in the National Museum of Ireland, museum officials said.

You should have been able to find out the following:

Q: What kind of treasure was found?

A: A silver and gold chalice and other unmentioned items.

Q: Who found it?

A: An unnamed amateur.

Q: Where was it found?

A: Somewhere in Ireland.

Q: When was it found?

A: Two weeks ago.

Q: Where is it now?

A: In the British Museum.

Note that the questions were answered only in a general way. You can add specific details later. It is also unnecessary to understand all the vocabulary at this time.

EXERCISE

Scan the following and answer the questions. Try to use no more than two minutes for each story.

1.

UK steel industry shuts down

LONDON (UPI)—Britain's state-owned steelworks shut down at midnight last night in the first nationwide steel strike since 1926, threatening widespread disruption of Britain's heavy industries.

Final hopes of averting the strike failed on Monday when unions and management refused to budge from their positions on steelworkers' pay.

"The strike is on. It is an impossibility to call it off. The only question now is how long it lasts," said Bill Sirs, leader of the steelworkers' Union.

The steelworkers are demanding a 20 percent pay increase but the employers are sticking to their offer of six percent on basic rates.

This story is about:

- British steel production in 1926.
- a steel strike.
- rebuilding Britain's steelworks.