

**HEADLINES:**  
**an advanced text**  
**for reading,**  
**speaking,**  
**and listening**

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## **To George and Nibo**

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# Introduction

## TO THE TEACHER

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**HEADLINES** is a 14-unit book accompanied by a 30-minute tape that combines reading, vocabulary, listening, and speaking for advanced students of English as a second language. It can be used as the basic text for advanced classes in oral communication, listening comprehension, and reading skills. Each chapter includes a newspaper article selected for its lively approach to a modern topic, a simulated news broadcast that provides facts about the United States, and a variety of speaking and vocabulary exercises.

**HEADLINES** is designed to provide both the language tools necessary for good communication and the stimulus to use those skills in daily life. Its combination of reading, listening, and discussion centered around a single topic helps students integrate new ideas, vocabulary, and idioms into everyday speech. After students read an absorbing newspaper article that introduces new words and ideas, and then listen to a tape that presents a fresh perspective on the topic, they cannot wait to discuss their reactions in class and with neighbors. In their urgency to express their own views on a subject, they must master the language skills introduced moments before. In the process of making a viewpoint known and learning the viewpoint of others, the students make the language their own.

Below is an outline of the book and hints on how to use the material.

### Reading the Article

Most students learning a new language are wedded to their dictionaries. They fear that if they do not look up every word, they will get hopelessly lost in the reading. They lose sight of what the author is trying to say and affix too much importance on the "unknown" words. Instead of focusing on the main ideas, students become mired in the minutest details.

To help the advanced student read more efficiently, the teacher should assure the student that some ambiguity is inevitable when one is reading a foreign language and this ambiguity will probably not interfere in one's understanding the thesis of the article. "Read for ideas, not for individual words" should be the slogan. The following instructions to the class help wean students from their dictionaries:

1. Try to read at the same speed as you read in your native language. Don't stop for new words on your first reading of the article.

2. On rereading, try to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context of the sentence. You'll be surprised how often you can avoid using a dictionary. Even if you can't figure out the exact meaning of a new word, determine what part of speech it is and what category of word it is. (The "Vocabulary in Context" exercise is designed to develop this skill.)
3. Most important, focus on understanding the main idea of the reading.

### Test Your Reading Comprehension

**EXERCISE A: TRUE/FALSE.** These true/false questions test the students' ability to understand the global ideas of the reading. This exercise can be assigned as homework, but the answers should be discussed in class. Have the class try to correct the false statements. When there is disagreement about the proper answer, have the students skim the article to locate the paragraph that supports their position.

**EXERCISE B: IDENTIFY THE MAIN IDEA.** This exercise encourages the student to think about the author's purpose in writing the article. The main idea will always be a true statement. The student can also be asked to mark the paragraph(s) where the author has stated the main thesis.

**EXERCISE C: VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT.** This first vocabulary exercise should be done with the entire class. The teacher should assist the class in analyzing the new word or phrase by reference to the context of the sentence.

For example, for a sentence such as "Every morning the child had granola, milk, and bananas for breakfast," how should students go about figuring out what "granola" means without using a dictionary? First, what part of speech is it? The students will tell you it's a noun. Second, what category of word is it (a means of transportation, an idea, a kind of food)? The students will tell you that it is probably food because milk and banana are food and the sentence said that the child had it for breakfast. After going through this, the class may still not realize that "granola" is a breakfast cereal eaten by Americans, but they do know enough so that the sentence is no longer bothersome.

The teacher should give students similar hints and choices to guide them through this exercise. Later in the semester this exercise can be done in small groups or in pairs. Students will catch on quickly and the exercise will become a game. Who can guess the closest? How did you figure it out? Of course, context clues are not limited to reading the individual sentence: the whole paragraph or reading is often useful for discovering the full meaning of a new word.

**VOCABULARY 1 AND 2.** These exercises give the student an immediate opportunity to use the new vocabulary introduced in the story. From the context of the sentence, a student must choose the best word or the correct word form to fill in the blank. No dictionary should be used. The exercises can be assigned as homework and students can check their own answers.

**VOCABULARY 3.** This is a written homework assignment in which students try out the new expressions. In class, the teacher should ask individuals to read their sentences aloud until several good examples are found. Students should then write down the clearest and most idiomatic use of each word or phrase.

**VOCABULARY 4.** This exercise reviews some of the most frequent errors foreigners make in usage. How many times have you heard a student say that she or he is a "twenty-years-old" student? Some of these troublesome points are repeated throughout the book to correct the bad habits many advanced students still have.

### **Retell the Story**

Students must orally reconstruct the story following the outline. The goal of the exercise is not to memorize the article but rather to incorporate the new vocabulary into a paraphrased recitation of the reading. This can be done in three steps:

1. The whole class tries to reconstruct the story with the teacher encouraging the use of new vocabulary.
2. To reinforce the vocabulary, each student retells the story in small groups or in pairs.
3. In a writing exercise, students can summarize the reading in their own words. This exercise can be assigned as homework.

The teacher should also elicit the reaction of the students to the story. This can be done orally or in writing.

### **Speak Up**

These are varied activities for inside and outside the classroom to teach students to speak and listen more carefully. However, all of these exercises can be used as written exercises after presentation in class.

**ONE-MINUTE SPEECH.** This structured assignment builds a student's confidence in speaking in front of a group. The speech should be prepared and rehearsed at home. Students should not use notes while speaking and should strictly adhere to the time limit. In class the teacher can focus on a student's individual problems in grammar or pronunciation.

**ROLE PLAY.** This exercise allows the students to interact with classmates using idiomatic expressions. The teacher can again work on individual problems.

**DEBATE.** Many of the topics in HEADLINES raise controversial issues. Students should be encouraged to voice their opinions and respond to their opponents' views. Students not directly participating should be asked to take notes and ask questions at the end. Those involved in the debate should research the issue in the school library for facts to support their position.

### **Chart**

Each chart is followed by questions to help students draw conclusions from the figures. Students should be encouraged to do research on the topic on their own and share their findings with the rest of the class.

### **Cartoons/Photographs**

The student should describe in his or her own words what is going on in the cartoon or photograph. For example, who are the people in the picture? Where are they? What are they doing? Who is talking to whom? Can the student explain why the cartoon is supposed to be funny? That is, what is the unexpected thing about it that would make an American laugh? The students should be encouraged to bring in cartoons that they found to be of interest.

### **Listening**


The listening exercise should proceed as follows:

1. Listen to the news broadcast without taking notes. (With a very advanced class, this step can be skipped. With a less advanced class, the students can go over the questions and vocabulary before listening to the tape.)
2. Listen again taking notes. (Students should never take notes in their native language. Only key words and phrases should be written down.)
3. Take the listening comprehension test. (Students should refer to their notes to answer these questions succinctly. A less advanced class should listen to the newscast twice.)
4. Go over the answers to the test.
5. Do Exercise B using the techniques outlined in the Vocabulary in Context exercise.
6. Listen to the tape for the final time. (By now the students will fully understand the main ideas of the news broadcast.)
7. Finally, do the Listening Carefully Exercise. (This is designed to teach students to hear series of words that are often slurred together in spoken English. The teacher can read the listening transcript paragraph as many times as necessary depending on the skill of the class. As the teacher reads the passage, students should fill in each blank with the missing words.)

### Interview

These questions can be discussed in pairs, in small groups, or with the class as a whole. Encourage students to be as specific as possible in their responses. The teacher should visit each group or pair during these discussions to make sure the students are trying out the new vocabulary. At the end of the class the teacher can bring the students together as a whole and discuss any question of particular interest. These questions can also be used as one-minute speeches, telephone exercises, or writing exercises.

### Telephone Exercises

Many of the speaking exercises, identified in the text with this symbol , provide the students with the opportunity to practice their conversational skills outside the classroom.

On the first day of class students should exchange telephone numbers, as well as the time of day they can be reached at that number. Students should be assigned to call each other at least once a week. A typical assignment will ask the student to exchange directions to his or her home with a fellow student. When the students return to class, they can check how accurately they gave and received directions.

The reason for an emphasis on telephone work is that most advanced English as a second language students still sound awkward and unsure of themselves on the telephone and complain of severe comprehension problems. High-level ESL students with complex vocabularies often make glaring mistakes when answering the telephone.

The instructions to the student, outlined on pages xvii-xix, provide familiar phrases used by native speakers on the telephone. Students should be encouraged to properly identify themselves on the telephone and to exchange pleasantries before rushing into the class assignment. Typical phrases for politely ending a telephone conversation are also listed.

In addition to these exercises, there are a wide variety of recorded messages that students can call on their own. Your local telephone company can tell you what

types of recorded messages are available in your area, from daily weather and traffic reports to medical and consumer advice. These recorded telephone calls can be used as the basis for a One-Minute Speech. For example, a student can be assigned to call the weather forecast for that day and report it to the rest of the class.

### **Writing Ideas**

While the main purpose of HEADLINES is to get students to overcome their fear of reading, speaking, and listening in English, many of the exercises in the book can be used to teach writing skills. Students can be assigned to write out any of the following:

- a summary of the reading
- a reaction to the reading
- any of the "Speak Up" exercises
- a summary of the listening transcript
- a transcript of the listening
- a reaction to the listening
- any of the answers to the "Interview" exercise
- a report on any current event related to the chapter

# **Using the Telephone: A Guide for Students**

Speaking to your fellow students on the telephone will be part of the weekly homework assignment for this course. Your teacher will ask you to exchange telephone numbers with your classmates on the first day of class. Make sure you tell the other students the best time to call.

Making a phone call is difficult because you may not know the person you are talking to, you cannot see the person's face, the other party may be difficult to understand, and he or she may have problems understanding you. A working knowledge of American telephone language will go a long way to make phone conversations easier.

For example, every country has a different way of greeting a person on the phone:

Our "hello" is the original Anglo-Saxon "be whole" or "be healthy." We use it in opening a telephone conversation, and so do many other tongues which have borrowed it from us. German, however, also uses "Here Mr. So-and-so." The British and Portuguese use "Are you there?" Spanish says "What is it?" or "At the phone." Italian says "Ready!" Russian says "I'm listening." Japanese says "If, if" the implication being "by all means speak up, if it is pleases you."<sup>1</sup>

Translating what you would say in your country into English may sometimes sound rude or confusing to an American. Instead of translating, learn American telephone language. It will facilitate all your phone conversations.

<sup>1</sup>Mario Pei, *The Story of Language* (New York: New American Library, 1964) pp. 71-72.

## OPENING THE CONVERSATION (THE CALLER)

- Hello, may I please speak to Mr. Lee?
- Hello, could I please speak to Mrs. Rodriguez?
- Hello, I'd like to speak to Mr. Taru.

## ASKING FOR IDENTIFICATION (PERSON BEING CALLED)

- Who's calling please?
- Who is this, please?
- Who(m) would you like to speak to?

## IDENTIFYING YOURSELF (THE CALLER)

- This is Mr. Park
- This is Mrs. Azia speaking.
- This is Mr. Levy calling.
- This is he (she).

## ASKING SOMEONE TO REPEAT

- I'm sorry (excuse me, pardon me), what did you say?
- Could you please slow down? I'm having trouble following you.
- Would you mind repeating that?
- How do you spell that? Would you mind spelling that?
- I didn't catch what you said.

## TOO BUSY TO TALK

- Is this a good time to call? I hope I'm not interrupting anything.
- I'm in the middle of something. Can I call you back right away?
- I was just about to leave. Can I call you later?
- I was on my way out. How about calling back in an hour?
- I'm tied up at the moment. When is a good time to catch you?
- Let me take down your number. I'll call you right back.

## ENDING A CONVERSATION (THE CALLER)

- Well, it's been good talking to you.
- I'd better let you go.
- Thanks for your time.
- I appreciate your help.
- I've really enjoyed talking to you.
- I hope to speak to you (hear from you) soon.
- Speak to you soon.

## ENDING A CONVERSATION (THE PERSON BEING CALLED)

- Well, thanks for calling.
- It was really good to hear from you.
- Give me a call if you have any more questions.

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- Let me know if I can be of any further help.
- Feel free to call again.

Many students also have problems dealing with the local telephone company. Here are some typical requests for assistance:

**CALLING THE OPERATOR**

- Can you give me the area code for San Francisco?
- What is the number for information in Manhattan?
- I'd like to make a person-to-person call to Mr. Lee. The number is area code 201 777-8932.
- I'd like to make a collect call to area code 201 777-8932. My name is Ms. Rodriguez.
- I'd like to make a long distance phone call and charge it to my home phone.

**CALLING THE OPERATOR ABOUT TELEPHONE TROUBLE**

- I've been dialing this number for one hour and it's always busy. I think there is something wrong with the line. Could you check the number, please?
- I was cut off while talking. Could you reconnect me and give me credit for my call?
- There was so much static on the line that I couldn't hear the other party. Could you reconnect me please and give me credit for the call?
- I just called the wrong number. Can you give me credit please?
- I just lost a quarter in the phone booth. Can you give me credit please?
- I'm having trouble getting through to this number. Could you help me, please?

# **Contents**

**Introduction xi**

**TO THE TEACHER xi**

**Using the Telephone: A Guide for Students xvii**

**CHAPTER 1. Chinese Accountants Find That America Is Hard to Figure 1**

*A look at some of the funny obstacles foreigners run up against when confronted by a new culture.*

**CHAPTER READING, by Dean Rotbart 2**

**TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION 4**

**RETELL THE STORY 7**

**SPEAK UP 7**

**TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION 10**

**INTERVIEW 11**

**CHAPTER 2. Cairo Tightens Lax Approach to Driver Test 12**

*A description of the "wild" driving habits in Egypt.*

CHAPTER READING, by Christopher S. Wren	13
TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION	14
RETELL THE STORY	16
SPEAK UP	17
TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION	18
INTERVIEW	19

**CHAPTER 3. Worthy of Contempt 21**

*A lawyer trying to fight racial prejudice against his black client in the courtroom.*

CHAPTER READING, by Tom Wicker	22
TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION	24
RETELL THE STORY	26
SPEAK UP	26
TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION	29
INTERVIEW	30

**CHAPTER 4. Burned-up Bosses Snuff Out Prospects of Jobs for Smokers 31**

*Discrimination against smokers and their new sheepish image.*

CHAPTER READING, by Jennifer Bingham Hull	32
TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION	34
RETELL THE STORY	36
SPEAK UP	36
TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION	37
INTERVIEW	39

**CHAPTER 5. The Experts on Product Safety: What They Say and What They Do 40**

*Members of the United States Product Safety Commission do not always practice what they preach.*

CHAPTER READING, by Michael deCourcy Hinds	41
TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION	42
RETELL THE STORY	45
SPEAK UP	45
TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION	46
INTERVIEW	48

**CHAPTER 6. Singapore Fast Food: Try Pig Intestines or Maybe a Big Mac 49**

*An amusing account of the contrasts between old and new fast food.*

CHAPTER READING, by Barry Newman 50  
TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION 52  
RETELL THE STORY 55  
SPEAK UP 55  
TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION 56  
INTERVIEW 57

**CHAPTER 7. More Men Infiltrating Professions Historically Dominated by Women 59**

*Some young men refuse to accept their fathers' ideas about "women's work."*

CHAPTER READING, by Carol Hymowitz 60  
TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION 61  
RETELL THE STORY 64  
SPEAK UP 64  
TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION 65  
INTERVIEW 66

**CHAPTER 8. No Vacancy 67**

*Staying with mom and dad and other solutions to the apartment shortage.*

CHAPTER READING, by Anthony Ramirez 68  
TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION 70  
RETELL THE STORY 72  
SPEAK UP 72  
TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION 73  
INTERVIEW 77

**CHAPTER 9. Literacy in America 78**

*A discussion of the change in the educational system, public values, and the rise in illiteracy.*

CHAPTER READING, by Anthony Brandt 79  
TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION 80  
RETELL THE STORY 82  
SPEAK UP 83  
TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION 84  
INTERVIEW 85

**CHAPTER 10.    When in Japan, Do as the Japanese Do: By  
Speaking English    87**

*How English-hungry Japanese try to master the  
language.*

**CHAPTER READING, by Urban C. Lehner    88**  
**TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION    90**  
**RETELL THE STORY    92**  
**SPEAK UP    93**  
**TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION    94**  
**INTERVIEW    94**

**CHAPTER 11.    Hazy Issue in Alaska: How Big a Pot Crop  
Gardeners Can Grow    96**

*An Alaskan declaration of independence from  
one sort of government interference.*

**CHAPTER READING, by Kenneth G. Slocum    97**  
**TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION    99**  
**RETELL THE STORY    101**  
**SPEAK UP    101**  
**TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION    102**  
**INTERVIEW    103**

**CHAPTER 12.    Eight Hospitals in City Struck by Doctors    104**

*It's not about money; these striking doctors say  
their patients are dying.*

**CHAPTER READING, by Ronald Sullivan    105**  
**TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION    106**  
**RETELL THE STORY    109**  
**SPEAK UP    109**  
**TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION    110**  
**INTERVIEW    111**

**CHAPTER 13.    The Perils of Santa: North Pole Is Safer Than a  
Large Store    112**

*What is it like to be a department store Santa?  
It's sometimes hard to stay jolly.*

**CHAPTER READING, by Jeffery H. Birnbaum    113**  
**TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION    115**  
**RETELL THE STORY    117**  
**SPEAK UP    118**  
**TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION    118**  
**INTERVIEW    119**

**CHAPTER 14. The Only Gentleman 120**

*A book is banned in Virginia, but for the wrong reason.*

**CHAPTER READING, by Russell Baker 121**

**TEST YOUR READING COMPREHENSION 122**

**RETELL THE STORY 125**

**SPEAK UP 125**

**TEST YOUR LISTENING COMPREHENSION 126**

**INTERVIEW 127**

**APPENDIX I Listening Transcripts 129**

**APPENDIX II Answer Key 137**