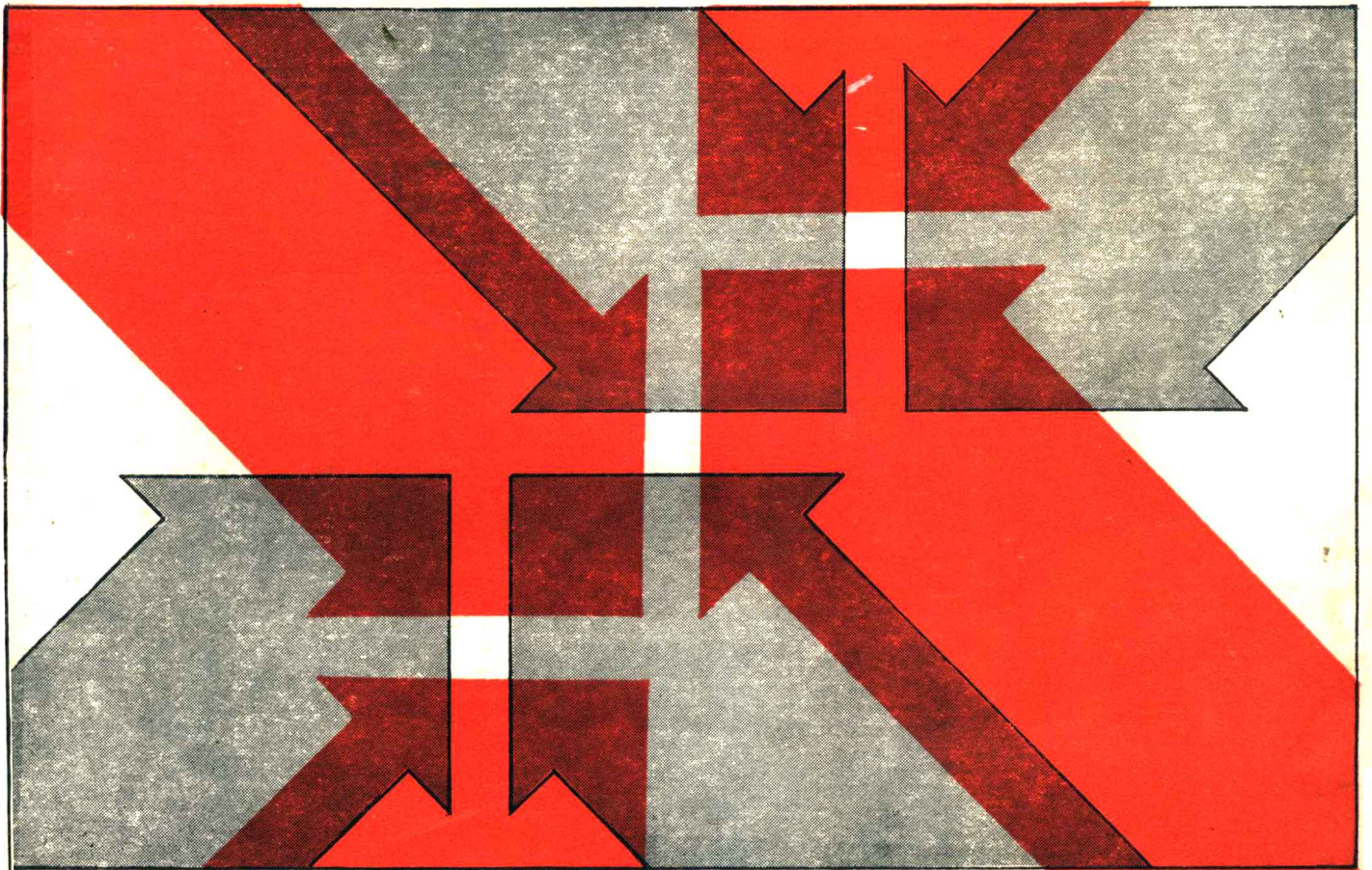


Reader's Choice

A Reading Skills Textbook for
Students of English as a Second Language



E. Margaret Baudoin, Ellen S. Bober,
Mark A. Clarke, Barbara K. Dobson, Sandra Silberstein

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Under the Auspices of the English Language Institute at the University of Michigan

Ann Arbor

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Introduction

To Students and Teachers

Reader's Choice is a reading skills textbook for students of English as a second language (ESL). The authors of *Reader's Choice* believe that reading is an active, problem-solving process. This book is based on the theory that proficient reading requires the coordination of a number of skills. Proficient reading depends on the reader's ability to select the proper skill or skills to solve each reading problem. Efficient readers determine beforehand why they are reading a particular selection and they decide which strategies and skills they will use to achieve their goals. They develop expectations about the kinds of information they will find in a passage and read to determine if their expectations are correct. The exercises and readings in *Reader's Choice* will help students to become independent, efficient readers.

When you look at the Contents page you will notice that there are three kinds of units in *Reader's Choice*. The odd-numbered units (1 through 11) contain skills exercises. These exercises give students intensive practice in developing their ability to obtain the maximum amount of information from a reading selection using the minimum number of language clues. The even-numbered units (2 through 12) contain reading selections which give students the opportunity to use the skills they have learned. Finally, Units 13, 14, and 15 consist of longer, more complex reading selections.

Basic language and reading skills are introduced in early units and reinforced throughout the book. The large number of exercises presented gives students repeated practice in these skills. Students should not be discouraged if they do not finish each exercise, if they have trouble answering specific questions, or if they do not understand everything in a particular reading. The purpose of the tasks in *Reader's Choice* is to help students improve their problem-solving skills. For this reason, the process of attempting to answer a question is often as important as the answer itself.

Reader's Choice contains exercises which give students practice in both language and reading skills. In this Introduction we will first provide a description of language skills exercises followed by a description of the reading skills work contained in the book.

LANGUAGE SKILLS EXERCISES

WORD STUDY EXERCISES

Upon encountering an unfamiliar vocabulary item in a passage there are several strategies readers can use to determine the message of the author. First, they can continue reading, realizing that often a single word will not prevent understanding of the general meaning of a selection. If further reading does not solve the problem, readers can use one or more of three basic skills to arrive at an understanding of the unfamiliar word. They can use context clues to see if surrounding words and grammatical structures provide information about the unknown word. They can use word analysis to see if understanding the parts of the word leads to an understanding of the word. Or, they can use a dictionary to find an appropriate definition. *Reader's Choice* contains numerous exercises which provide practice in these three skills.

Word Study: Vocabulary from Context

Guessing the meaning of an unfamiliar word from context clues involves using the following kinds of information:

- (a) knowledge of the topic about which you are reading
- (b) knowledge of the meanings of the other words in the sentence (or paragraph) in which the word occurs

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(c) knowledge of the grammatical structure of the sentences in which the word occurs
Exercises which provide practice in this skill are called Vocabulary from Context exercises.

When these exercises appear in skills units, their purpose is to provide students with practice in guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues. Students should not try to learn the meanings of the vocabulary items in these exercises. However, the Vocabulary from Context exercises which appear with reading selections have a different purpose. Generally these exercises should be done before a reading selection is begun and used as an introduction to the reading. The vocabulary items have been chosen for three reasons:

- (a) because they are fairly common, and therefore useful for students to learn
- (b) because they are important for an understanding of the passage
- (c) because their meanings are not easily available from the context in the selection

Word Study: Stems and Affixes

Another way to discover the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary items is to use word analysis, that is, to use knowledge of the meanings of the parts of a word. Many English words have been formed by combining parts of older English, Greek, and Latin words. For instance, the word *bicycle* is formed from the parts *bi*, meaning two, and *cycle*, meaning round or wheel. Often knowledge of the meanings of these word parts can help the reader to guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Exercises providing practice in this skill occur at regular intervals throughout the book. The Appendix lists all of the stems and affixes which appear in *Reader's Choice*.

Word Study: Dictionary Usage

Sometimes the meaning of a single word is essential to an understanding of the total meaning of a selection. If context clues and word analysis do not provide enough information, it will be necessary to use a dictionary. We believe that advanced ESL students should use an English/English dictionary. The Word Study: Dictionary Usage exercises in the skills units provide students with a review of the information available from dictionaries, and practice in using a dictionary to obtain that information. The Dictionary Study exercises which accompany some of the reading selections require students to use the context of an unfamiliar vocabulary item to find an appropriate definition of these items from the dictionary entries provided.

SENTENCE STUDY EXERCISES

Sometimes comprehension of an entire passage requires the understanding of a single sentence. Sentence Study exercises give students practice in analyzing the structure of sentences to determine the relationships of ideas within a sentence. Students are presented with a complicated sentence followed by tasks which require them to analyze the sentence for its meaning. Often the student is required to use the available information to draw inferences about the author's message.

PARAGRAPH READING AND PARAGRAPH ANALYSIS EXERCISES

These exercises give students practice in understanding how the arrangement of ideas affects the overall meaning of a passage. Some of the paragraph exercises are designed to provide practice in discovering an author's general message. Students are required to determine the main idea of a passage: that is, the idea which is the most important, around which the paragraph is organized. Other paragraph exercises are meant to provide practice in careful, detailed reading. Students are

required not only to find the main idea of a passage, but also to guess vocabulary meanings of words from context, to answer questions about specific details in the paragraph, and to draw conclusions based on their understanding of the passage.

NONPROSE READING

Throughout *Reader's Choice* students are presented with nonprose selections (such as a menu, train schedule, road map, etc.) so that they can practice using their skills to read material which is not arranged in sentences and paragraphs. It is important to remember that the same problem-solving skills are used to read both prose and nonprose material.

READING SKILLS EXERCISES

Students will need to use all of their language skills in order to understand the reading selections in *Reader's Choice*. The book contains many types of selections on a wide variety of topics. These selections provide practice in using different reading strategies to extract the message of the writer. They also give students practice in four basic reading skills: skimming, scanning, reading for thorough comprehension, and critical reading.

SKIMMING

Skimming is quick reading for the general idea(s) of a passage. This kind of rapid reading is appropriate when trying to decide if careful reading would be desirable or when there is not time to read something carefully.

SCANNING

Like skimming, scanning is also quick reading. However, in this case the search is more focused. To scan is to read quickly in order to locate specific information. When you read to find a particular date, name, or number you are scanning.

READING FOR THOROUGH COMPREHENSION

Reading for thorough comprehension is careful reading in order to understand the total meaning of the passage. At this level of comprehension the reader is able to summarize the author's ideas but has not yet made a critical evaluation of those ideas.

CRITICAL READING

Critical reading demands that readers make judgments about what they read. This kind of reading requires posing and answering questions such as *Does my own experience support that of the author? Do I share the author's point of view? Am I convinced by the author's arguments and evidence?*

Systematic use of the exercises and readings in *Reader's Choice* will give students practice in the basic language and reading skills necessary to become proficient readers. Additional suggestions for the use of *Reader's Choice* in a classroom setting are included in the section To the Teacher.

To the Teacher

It is impossible to outline one best way to use a textbook; there are as many ways to use *Reader's Choice* as there are creative teachers. However, based on the experiences of teachers and students who have worked with *Reader's Choice*, we provide the following suggestions to facilitate classroom use. First, we outline general guidelines for the teaching of reading in a skills-based program; second, we provide hints for teaching specific exercises and readings in the book; and finally, we suggest a sample lesson plan.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The ultimate goal of *Reader's Choice* is to produce independent readers who are able to determine their own goals for a reading task, then use the appropriate skills and strategies to reach those goals. For this reason, we believe the best learning environment is one in which all individuals—students and teachers—participate in the process of setting and achieving goals. A certain portion of class time is therefore profitably spent in discussing reading tasks before they are begun. When confronted with a specific passage, students should become accustomed to the practice of skimming it quickly, taking note of titles and subheadings, pictures, graphs, etc., in an attempt to determine the most efficient approach to the task. In the process, they should develop expectations about the content of the passage and the amount of time and effort needed to accomplish their goals. In this type of setting students are encouraged to offer their opinions and ask for advice, to teach each other and to learn from their errors.

Reader's Choice was written to encourage maximum flexibility in classroom use. Because of the large variety of exercises and reading selections, the teacher can plan several tasks for each class and hold in reserve a number of appropriate exercises to use as the situation demands. In addition, the exercises have been developed to make possible variety in classroom dynamics. The teacher should encourage the independence of students by providing opportunities for work in small groups or pairs. Small group work in which students self-correct homework assignments has also been successful.

Exercises do not have to be done in the order in which they are presented. In fact, we suggest interspersing skills work with reading selections. One way to vary reading tasks is to plan lessons around pairs of units, alternating skills exercises with the reading selections. In the process, the teacher can show students how focused skills work transfers to the reading of longer passages. For example, *Sentence Study* exercises provide intensive practice in analyzing grammatical structures to understand sentences; this same skill should be used by students in working through reading selections. The teacher can pull sentences from readings for intensive classroom analysis, thereby encouraging students to do the same on their own.

In a skills-based curriculum, it is important to *teach, then test*. Skills work should be thoroughly introduced, modeled, and practiced before students are expected to perform on their own. Although we advocate rapid-paced, demanding class sessions, we believe it is extremely important to provide students with a thorough introduction to each new exercise. At least for the first example of each type of exercise, some oral work is necessary. The teacher can demonstrate the skill using the example item, and work through the first few items with the class as a whole. Students can then work individually or in small groups as they practice the skill.

SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

Reader's Choice has been organized so that specific skills can be practiced before students use those skills to attack reading selections. Although exercises and readings are generally graded according to difficulty, it is not necessary to use the material in the order in which it is presented. Teachers are encouraged:

- (a) to intersperse skills work with reading selections
- (b) to skip exercises which are too easy or irrelevant to students' interests
- (c) to do several exercises of a specific type at one time if students require intensive practice in that skill
- (d) to jump from unit to unit, selecting reading passages which satisfy students' interests and needs
- (e) to sequence longer readings as appropriate for their students either by interspersing them among other readings and skills work, or by presenting them at the end of the course

LANGUAGE SKILLS EXERCISES

Nonprose Reading

For students who expect to read only prose material, teachers can point out that nonprose reading provides more than an enjoyable change of pace. These exercises provide legitimate skill work. The same problem-solving skills can be used for both prose and nonprose material. Just as one can skim a textbook for general ideas, it is possible to skim a menu for a general idea of the type of food offered, the price range of the restaurant, etc. Students may claim that they can't skim or scan; working with nonprose items shows them that they can.

Nonprose exercises are good for breaking the ice with new students, for beginning or ending class sessions, for role playing, or for those Monday blues and Friday blahs. Because they are short, rapid-paced exercises, they can be kept in reserve to provide variety, or to fill a time gap at the end of class.

The Menu, Newspaper Advertisements, Train Schedule, and Road Map exercises present students with realistic language problems which they might encounter in an English-speaking country. The teacher can set up simulations to achieve a realistic atmosphere. The Questionnaire exercise is intended to provide practice in filling out forms. Since the focus is on following directions, students usually work individually.

In the Poetry exercise, students' problem-solving skills are challenged by the economy of poetic writing. Poetry is especially good for reinforcing vocabulary from context skills, for comprehending through syntax clues, and for drawing inferences.

Word Study

These exercises can be profitably done in class either in rapid-paced group work or by alternating individual work with class discussion. Like nonprose work, Word Study exercises can be used to fill unexpected time gaps.

Context Clues exercises appear frequently throughout the book, both in skills units and with reading selections. Students should learn to be content with a general meaning of a word and to recognize situations in which it is not necessary to know a word's meaning. In skills units, these exercises should be done in class to ensure that students do not look for exact definitions in the dictionary. When Vocabulary from Context exercises appear with reading selections, they are

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intended as tools for learning new vocabulary items and often for introducing ideas to be encountered in the reading. In this case they can be done at home as well as in class.

Stems and Affixes exercises appear in five units and must be done in the order in which they are presented. The exercises are cumulative: each exercise makes use of word parts presented in previous units. All stems and affixes taught in *Reader's Choice* are listed in the Appendix with their definitions. These exercises serve as an important foundation in vocabulary skills work for students whose native language does not contain a large number of words derived from Latin or Greek. Students should focus on learning word parts, not the words presented in the exercises. During the introduction to each exercise students should be encouraged to volunteer examples of words containing the stems and affixes presented. Exercise 1 can be done as homework, exercise 2 can be done as a quiz.

Dictionary Study exercises provide review of information available in English/English dictionaries. Exercise 1 in Dictionary Usage in Unit 1 requires a substantial amount of class discussion to introduce information necessary for dictionary work. Students should view the dictionary as the last resort when attempting to understand an unfamiliar word.

Sentence Study

Students should not be concerned about unfamiliar vocabulary in these exercises; grammatical clues will provide enough information to allow them to complete the tasks. In addition questions are syntax based; errors indicate structures which students have trouble reading, thus providing the teacher with a diagnostic tool for grammar instruction.

Paragraph Reading and Paragraph Analysis

Main Idea paragraphs should be read once, and questions answered without referring to the text. If the exercises are done in class, they are good for timed readings. If the exercises are done at home, students can be asked to come to class prepared to defend their answers in group discussion. One way to stimulate discussion is to ask students to identify incorrect choices as too broad, too narrow, or false.

Restatement and Inference and Paragraph Analysis exercises are short enough to allow sentence-by-sentence analysis. These exercises give intensive practice in syntax and vocabulary work. In the Paragraph Analysis exercises the lines are numbered to facilitate discussion.

READING SELECTIONS

Teachers have found it valuable to introduce readings in terms of ideas, vocabulary, and syntax before students are asked to work on their own. Several types of classroom dynamics have been successful with reading selections:

1. In class—teacher reads entire selection orally; or teacher reads part, students finish selection individually; or students read selection individually (perhaps under time constraint).
2. In class and at home—part of selection is read in class, followed by discussion; students finish reading at home.
3. At home—students read entire selection at home.

Comprehension questions are usually discussed in class with the class as a whole, in small groups, or in pairs. The paragraphs in the selections are numbered to facilitate discussion.

The teacher can pull out difficult vocabulary and/or sentences for intensive analysis and discussion.

Readings represent a variety of topics and styles. The exercises have been written to focus on the most obvious characteristics of each reading.

- (a) Fiction and personal experience narratives are to be read for enjoyment. Teachers often find it useful to read these to students, emphasizing humorous parts.
- (b) Well-organized readings with many facts and figures are appropriate for scanning and skimming. This type of reading can also be used in composition work as a model of organizational techniques.
- (c) If the reading is an editorial, essay, or other form of personal opinion, students should read critically to determine if they agree with the author. Students are encouraged to identify excerpts which reveal the author's bias or which can be used to challenge the validity of the author's argument.
- (d) Satire should be read both for enjoyment and for analysis of the author's comment on human affairs.

LONGER READINGS

These readings can be presented in basically the same manner as other selections in the book. Longer readings can be read either at the end of the course, or at different points throughout the semester. The schedule for working with longer readings is roughly as follows:

- (a) Readings are introduced by vocabulary exercises, discussion of the topic, reading and discussion of selected paragraphs.
- (b) Students read the selection at home and answer the comprehension questions. Students are allowed at least two days to complete the assignment.
- (c) In-class discussion of comprehension questions proceeds with students referring to the passage to support their answers.
- (d) The vocabulary review can be done either at home or in class.
- (e) Vocabulary questions raised on the off day between the assignment and the due day may be resolved with items from Vocabulary from Context exercises 2 and 3 and Figurative Language and Idioms exercises.

"The Dusty Drawer" is a suspense story whose success as a teaching tool depends on students understanding the conflict between the two main characters. Teachers have found that a preliminary reading and discussion of the first eleven paragraphs serves as an introduction to the most important elements of the story. The discussion questions can be integrated into the discussion of comprehension questions.

"In the Shadow of Man" is well organized and may, therefore, be skimmed. Teachers can ask students to read the first and last sentences of the paragraphs, then paraphrase the general position of the author. Discussion of some Discussion-Composition items can serve as an effective introduction to the reading. In addition, some questions lead discussion away from the passage and might, therefore, lead to further reading on the topic. Some teachers may want to show the film, *Miss Jane Goodall and the Wild Chimpanzees* (National Geographic Society; Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Films) in conjunction with this reading. Teachers should be aware that this selection raises the subject of evolution, a sensitive topic for students whose religious or personal beliefs deny evolutionary theory.

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"The 800th Lifetime" requires a careful introduction because of the challenging syntax and the colloquial vocabulary. In addition, the author assumes that the reader is familiar with many of the phenomena described. For this reason, the teacher may want to spend some time discussing certain cultural and social phenomena in the United States to help students develop appropriate expectations. Because students may be personally familiar with cultural shock, they can be asked to read the article for the parallels between culture shock and future shock. As with "In the Shadow of Man," discussion questions can lead the class to other topics and readings.

ANSWER KEY

Because the exercises in *Reader's Choice* are designed to provide students with the opportunity to practice and improve their reading skills, the processes involved in arriving at an answer are often more important than the answer itself. It is expected that students will not use the Answer Key until they have completed the exercises and are prepared to defend their answers. If a student's answer does not agree with the Key, it is important for the student to return to the exercise to discover the source of the error. In a classroom setting, students should view the Answer Key as a last resort, to be used only when they cannot agree on an answer. The Answer Key also makes it possible for students engaged in independent study to use *Reader's Choice*.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

The following lesson plan is meant only as an example of how goals might be translated into practice. We do not imply that a particular presentation is the only one possible for a given reading activity, nor that the exercises presented here are the only activities possible to achieve our goals. The lesson plan demonstrates how skills work can be interspersed with reading selections.

It is assumed that the lessons described here would be presented after students have worked together for several weeks. This is important for two reasons. First, we hope that a nonthreatening atmosphere has been established in which people feel free to volunteer opinions and make guesses. Second, we assume that by now students recognize the importance of a skills-based reading program and that they are working to improve those skills using a variety of readings and exercises.

Although these lessons are planned for fifty-minute, daily, ESL reading classes, slight modification would make them appropriate for a number of other situations. Approximate time limits for each activity are indicated. The exercises and readings are taken from Units 7 and 8.

Monday

Nonprose Reading: Poetry (20 minutes)

- (a) The teacher points out that each poem is a puzzle; that students will have to use their reading skills to solve each one.
- (b) The teacher reads the first poem aloud; students follow in their books.
- (c) Discussion focuses on getting information from vocabulary and syntax clues and drawing inferences.
- (d) If the students can't guess the subject of the poem, the class should do the Comprehension Clues exercise.
- (e) The last two poems can be handled in the same manner or students can work individually with discussion following.

Reading Selection: Magazine Article ("Why We Laugh") (30 minutes)

Introduction:

- (a) Discussion: Why do we laugh? Is laughter culturally conditioned? Do students think English jokes are funny?
- (b) Vocabulary: Vocabulary from Context exercises 1 and 2; students work as a class or individually, with discussion following.
- (c) Skimming: the teacher skims the article aloud, reading first (and sometimes second and last) sentences of each paragraph.
- (d) Discussion: What is the main idea of the author? What type of article is it? Is the author an expert? Who are the experts she quotes?

Homework: Read "Why We Laugh"; do Comprehension exercises 1 and 2.

Tuesday

"Why We Laugh" (35 minutes)

- (a) Work through Comprehension and Critical Reading exercises as a class, in small groups or in pairs. Students should defend answers with portions of the text; emphasis is on convincing others or being convinced on the basis of the reading.
- (b) Pull out, analyze, and discuss structure problems, difficult vocabulary.
- (c) Wrap-up discussion proceeds from Critical Reading and Discussion questions.

Stems and Affixes (15 minutes)

- (a) Introduction: students volunteer examples of words containing stems and affixes presented in the exercise.
- (b) Class does exercise 1 orally as a group, if time permits.

Homework: Finish Stems and Affixes exercises.

Wednesday

Stems and Affixes (15 minutes)

- (a) Go over as a class; students volunteer and defend answers.
- (b) The Appendix can be used if a dispute arises concerning one of the stems or affixes presented in previous units.
- (c) Work is fast paced and skills focused. Students concentrate on learning word parts, not the words.

Sentence Study: Restatement and Inference (35 minutes)

- (a) The first one or two items are done orally. The teacher reads the sentence and the choices aloud and students mark answers in the book.
- (b) Discussion follows. Students must defend answers using grammatical analysis of sentences.
- (c) Students complete the exercise individually after which answers are discussed.

Word Study: Context Clues (if time permits)

- (a) Group or individual work.
- (b) Students arrive at a definition, synonym, or description of each word, then defend their answers by referring to the syntax and other vocabulary items in the sentence.

Thursday

Reading Selection: Narrative ("An Attack on the Family") (40 minutes)

- (a) Vocabulary from Context: students work as a class or individually with discussion following.
- (b) The teacher reads story aloud, students follow in their books.

To the Teacher

- (c) Students take ten minutes to answer Comprehension questions individually.
- (d) Discussion follows. Students will have to examine the text carefully to answer the questions.

Paragraph Analysis: Reading for Full Understanding (10 minutes)

- (a) The teacher reads the Example paragraph aloud. Students mark answers in their books.
- (b) The class discusses the answers using the Explanation on pages 118-19.

Homework: Finish Paragraph Analysis exercise.

Friday

Paragraph Analysis (25 minutes)

- (a) Discussion of the homework: students must use excerpts from the paragraphs to defend their answers or to refute the choices of other students.
- (b) Grammatical analysis can be used to develop convincing arguments supporting the correct answers. Context clues often furnish the definition of unfamiliar words.

Reading Selection: Narrative ("The Lottery") (25 minutes)

Introduction:

- (a) Discussion of lotteries in general, lotteries in the students' countries.
- (b) Vocabulary from Context exercise 1: students work as a class or individually with discussion following.
- (c) The teacher reads the first nine paragraphs, discusses content, vocabulary, syntax with students. Most of Vocabulary from Context exercises 2 and 3 can be covered during this discussion.

Homework: Read "The Lottery"; do Comprehension exercises for Monday.

This lesson plan represents a skills approach to the teaching of ESL reading. Students are required to do more than merely read passages and answer questions. The type of reading that the students are asked to do varies from task to task. They skim "Why We Laugh" to determine the main idea, then scan to find the answers to some of the Comprehension questions. Sentence Study exercises require close grammatical analysis, just as Stems and Affixes exercises require analysis of word parts. "Why We Laugh" and "The Lottery" both require critical reading. The vocabulary and syntax work is presented as a tool for comprehension, appropriate for helping students solve persistent reading problems.

Within a single week, a great variety of activities is presented. In the course of any single lesson, the tempo and tasks change several times. In the course of the week, virtually all language and reading skills are reinforced in a variety of contexts and with a variety of materials. This variety has important implications for the nature of the class and for the role of the teacher.

The classroom dynamics change to fit the task. The poetry and the discussion sessions are class activities, the teacher encouraging students to volunteer answers and opinions. The vocabulary and structure exercises on Tuesday and Wednesday, as well as the paragraph work on Thursday and Friday might be organized as workshop sessions, giving students the chance to work at their own pace and providing the teacher the opportunity to assist individuals.

The role of the teacher also changes from activity to activity. During vocabulary and structure work, the teacher teaches, providing help and encouragement as students work to solve language problems. The teacher is a facilitator during the poetry and short passage readings, intervening only in the event that linguistic expertise is needed to keep the discussion going. In discussions of how readings relate to the "real world," the teacher is primarily a participant on equal terms with the

students in exploring mutually interesting topics. Of course, the role and behavior of the teacher can change a number of times in the course of a class session to suit the situation. It is hoped, however, that as the semester progresses, the teacher as teacher will gradually be replaced by the teacher as facilitator and participant.

Another important feature of this lesson plan is the opportunity provided to encourage students to choose their own reading strategies and to apply the skills dictated by the strategy chosen. It should be noted that "Why We Laugh" and "The Lottery" are introduced by the teacher through vocabulary work and discussion, followed by skimming and scanning. This type of introduction gives students the opportunity to develop expectations about the selection and, guided by their expectations, to read more effectively. It is hoped that this procedure will be repeated when students encounter similar readings in the future. Often the teacher will want to simulate a "real life" situation by giving the students a task and asking them how they would approach it. The approach to a newspaper editorial, for example, might be quite different depending on whether the selection is read for pleasure or for a university political science course.

Throughout the semester, students are taught to shift gears, to vary their reading strategies according to their goals for the selection at hand. As they become more proficient readers, we expect them to determine for themselves what they read, why they read it, and how they read it.

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