

Basic Reading Skills Handbook

Harvey S. Wiener

Charles Bazerman

INSTRUCTOR'S ANNOTATED EDITION

To our children: Melissa, Joseph, Saul, Gershom

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Acknowledgments begin on page 397.

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Dear Instructor:

In your hands you have the Instructor's Annotated Edition of the BASIC READING SKILLS HANDBOOK. This ancillary provides answers to the exercises that support the instructional material in the text. For those exercises that require responses drawing on students' personal experiences or interpretations, examples of possible responses are often provided.

The BASIC READING SKILLS HANDBOOK follows the approach and format of the successful text, Reading Skills Handbook, but is written for students needing more basic instruction. In this text we have expanded and completely new material on vocabulary skills, prereading exercises, finding the main idea, and the use of visual aids; unique to this volume are the chapters on SQ3R and personalizing, or relating reading to the reader's own experiences. The two books differ in the level of instruction, the skills selected for attention, the order in which the skills are taught, and the character and level of the reading selections used for the examples, exercises, and anthology. The texts are coordinated to provide sequential development of skills; they can be used separately at the appropriate levels or together in a two-course reading sequence.

Available to adopters is a Test Package containing pre- and post-tests for most chapters in the Handbook. Complete information on the graded readability levels of the anthology readings is included there. The Computerized Testing Program makes the tests available in disks that can be used with any word-processing software on IBM PC, Apple II, and Macintosh computers.

Sincerely yours,

The Publisher

Preface

BASIC READING SKILLS HANDBOOK is a new text written specifically for the first-level reading course. Following the successful approach and format of *Reading Skills Handbook*, this text focuses on more basic college reading, study, and literal comprehension skills. Special pedagogical features include:

- Special attention to using contextual clues and to learning multiple meanings of words.
- Chapters on prereading warm-ups, visual aids, and SQ3R.
- Extensive practice in comprehension skills such as finding the main idea, sorting out major and minor details, and interpretation skills such as inferring, predicting, concluding, and generalizing.
- A “Writing to Read” unit that includes chapters on summarizing, underlining, and listing and on personalizing, where students learn to draw connections between their readings and their personal experiences, knowledge, and beliefs.

Organization

The text is divided into two main parts. The *Handbook* provides instruction in the essential reading skills integrated with examples and extensive practice exercises. The *Reading Selections* includes fourteen long reading passages accompanied by prereading, comprehension, interpreting, vocabulary, and writing exercises that are coordinated and cross-referenced with the skills taught in the *Handbook* part. Throughout the text, students will find questions that guide their understanding and interpretation of specific passages.

The organization of the book allows it to be adapted to specific courses in several ways. The instructor may teach the

five units in the *Handbook* in the early weeks of the term, postponing the study of the *Reading Selections* until students know the essential reading skills. The brief readings in the *Handbook* allow the reinforcement of newly learned concepts and students should be ready for the longer readings by the time they reach the *Reading Selections*. Or, the instructor may choose to further reinforce the skills taught in the *Handbook* by immediately assigning appropriate selections from the *Reading Selections*. Finally, the instructor may begin with the *Reading Selections* and return to key instructional units in the *Handbook* as specific needs arise in class.

Special Features

In this book, students read a careful explanation of a specific skill and an analysis of how that skill applies to a particular passage, and then they have a chance to test their mastery of that skill by means of the many exercises designed for practice and review. This step-by-step approach allows students to move from simple skills to more complex ones with confidence.

- Explanations of the basic skills are presented in clear, easy-to-understand language.
- Each question in the *Reading Selections* is keyed to the appropriate section in the *Handbook*; if students have difficulty answering a question, they can easily find and review the material that covers that particular skill. Thus, a 7 after a question means that a review of Chapter 7, on “Visual Aids,” will help the student recall the techniques readers use to interpret visual material.
- The reading selections come from a wide range of sources; they include material from magazines, how-to-books, advertisements, and newspapers, as well as from textbooks and other academic material.
- The functional design includes photographs, graphs, cartoons, and crossword puzzles to stimulate and maintain student interest in the use of visual aids.
- A vocabulary list with a pronunciation key at the back of the book includes all highlighted vocabulary words in the *Reading Selections*.
- An expanded ancillary package is available with the text.

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Handbook

Introduction

Learning to read is not learning just a single skill. It is learning many skills that work together and build on each other. Each time you improve any one skill, it strengthens all the others. As your vocabulary improves, you will be able to understand and interpret your reading. And as you learn to comprehend and interpret better, you will gain more clues about the meaning of unfamiliar words.

The first half of this book teaches the basic skills of reading. Each skill is explained clearly in its own section. Exercises follow each section so that you can practice each skill as you learn about it. Teachers may assign sections for the whole class to study or may assign you sections to work on individually, depending on your needs. Also, as you find areas that you want to work on personally, you can go over sections on your own.

To help you find skills that you need to study, the skills are separated into five different units: Vocabulary, Aids to Reading, Comprehension, Interpretation, and Writing to Read. The detailed table of contents and index will help you locate the exact page of any skill that you wish to work on.

Each skill is also given a number, based on the chapter and section it is discussed in. For example, finding main ideas in paragraphs is discussed in section *b* of Chapter 9, "Reading for the Main Idea." The number **9b** refers, then, to the section that you need to look at to gain help in finding main ideas in paragraphs. When you are reading one section, the book may cross-refer to another section by using the number of the other section. Your teacher may also write the number on a piece of your work to suggest that you go over a particular section. Finally, the second half of this book has reading selections with questions. Each question has a reference number that lets you know which skill is needed to answer the question. If you have problems with the question, you can look at that section in the first half of the book for help.

UNIT ONE

Vocabulary

1

Building a Strong Vocabulary

1a How to Find Out What Words Mean

Most of us have vocabularies that let us read widely from many sources of information around us: newspapers, magazines, signs, posters, advertisements, credit card and job applications, instructions, and recipes. The person with the richest and most useful vocabulary, however, can read many different kinds of information easily. You may not be as confident about reading a textbook or a set of directions on how to work your stereo as you are about reading newspaper ads or signs in the supermarket. Still, adding to your usual readings with a wide variety of materials can help you expand your knowledge of words. It can also improve your reading skills.

First, you should realize that you cannot know the meaning of every word you see. Sometimes you may say to yourself, "I sort of know what this means," or "I can get by without figuring this one out." But often you really need to find out exactly what those words mean. In the short run, not paying attention to words that you don't know may save you some work. But in the long run, not paying attention to words means that you just won't know as much as you should. Here are some ways to find the meaning of difficult words:

- Learn to use the context — that is, clues that surrounding sentences give about the meanings of new words.
- Learn to use visual clues, **such as** pictures, drawings, signs, and symbols that can **help you figure out** meanings. Often a picture starts you **thinking about an unfamiliar word** on the page, and you can **work out a usable definition**.
- In a word you don't know, **look for** familiar parts within the word. You might know what the parts mean. For example, if you know what the meaning of *art* is, you might be able to guess at the meaning of *artistic* or *artful*.
- Learn the difference between what a word means and what a word suggests or makes you feel. Even words that have the same meaning can suggest different things to different people. Although *happy* and *joyous* both suggest good feelings, *joyous* is a much stronger word and creates a feeling of very powerful happiness.
- Be aware that one word can mean many different things. The word *check*, for example, has more than thirty separate meanings! We check our facts, write a check to pay bills, get a checkup at the doctor's, and put a check next to a correct answer, just to name a few.
- Learn to use a dictionary so that you can find meanings easily. Dictionaries help you in many ways, not only for finding meanings of words but also for finding how to pronounce them, how to use them correctly, how to spell them, and how to change their forms, among many other uses.
- Keep a list of words that you want to add to your vocabulary. By writing down new words and trying to learn them you can improve your vocabulary.

EXERCISES

1. Spotting Problem Words

In the following paragraph from a science textbook, underline twice any words that you do not know at all. Underline just once any words that you are familiar with but for which you do not know the exact definition. Try to see how some of the methods listed above might help you find the meanings of difficult words.

There is a certain amount of matter on Earth. Most of the matter here when Earth was formed is here now. Very little has been lost.