

Understanding Ideas

Advanced reading skills

Teacher's Book

Michael Swan

Understanding Ideas

Advanced reading skills

Michael Swan

Cambridge University Press
Cambridge
London New York New Rochelle
Melbourne Sydney

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
32 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022, USA
296 Beaconsfield Parade, Middle Park, Melbourne 3206, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1976

First published 1976
Sixth printing 1982

Printed in Great Britain at the
University Press, Cambridge

ISBN 0 521 21146 8 Student's Book
ISBN 0 521 22133 1 Teacher's Book
ISBN 0 521 22066 1 Cassette

Copyright

The law allows a reader to make a single copy of part of a book for purposes of private study. It does not allow the copying of entire books or the making of multiple copies of extracts. Written permission for any such copying must always be obtained from the publisher in advance.

Preface

This is a new kind of comprehension course. Its purpose is not simply to provide practice material, but to *teach*, progressively and systematically, the various skills which are necessary for successful reading comprehension. The book contains:

Five teaching units. These provide lesson material (explanations and exercises) on various aspects of comprehension work, such as basic reading technique, guessing unknown words and writing summaries.

Eighteen practice units. These contain texts and comprehension questions (both multiple choice and open-ended) designed to give practice on the points dealt with in the teaching units.

Ten practice tests. These provide additional material which can be used for testing, assessing progress, or general revision.

A section on special forms of English. This gives training in understanding the special syntax of telegrams, instructions and newspaper headlines.

The course is designed for advanced (or 'post-intermediate') students of English as a foreign language. The book assumes a starting level just after the Cambridge First Certificate in English. It can be used for the first half of a Proficiency examination course, but it is equally suitable for comprehension work with non-examination candidates.

The texts cover a wide range of different types of modern English writing, and have been specially selected for the interest and variety of their subject matter and style. Most of them can be used not only for comprehension work, but also as a basis for other language-teaching activities such as class discussion or intensive vocabulary work.

A detailed description of the purpose and structure of the book, together with suggestions for its use, is given in 'Notes for teachers'.

Acknowledgements

The author and publisher are grateful to the following for permission to reproduce quoted passages:

p. 9, Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd © Gus John, Derek Humphrey 1971; p. 13, Thames & Hudson Ltd; p. 16, Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd © Queen's Printer, Canada 1958, 1960; p. 19, Mirror Group Newspapers; p. 20, Guardian Newspapers Ltd; p. 21, Mr Gary Jennings and Curtis Brown Ltd; p. 24, Mr L. Deighton; p. 28, Jonathan Cape Ltd and Glidrose Productions Ltd; p. 34, Faber & Faber Ltd and John Osborne; p. 36, Reprinted by permission of A. D. Peters & Co. Ltd; p. 38, Wm Collins Sons & Co. Ltd; p. 40, Mrs Sonia Brownell Orwell and Secker & Warburg; p. 43, Hodder & Stoughton Ltd; p. 43, Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd © Carl R. Rogers 1970; p. 44, Wm Collins Sons & Co. Ltd; p. 45, Hodder & Stoughton Ltd; p. 46, Faber & Faber Ltd and John Osborne; p. 48, Reproduced from *The Times* by permission; p. 51, Yale University Press; p. 53, From *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing* by A. S. Neill © 1960 Hart Publishing Co., New York; p. 56, Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd © H. J. Eysenck 1957, 1958; p. 60, Reproduced from *The Sunday Times* by permission; p. 65, *Militant*; p. 68, *The Observer*; p. 72, Guardian Newspapers Ltd; p. 79, *The Guardian* and The Press Association; p. 81, the Estate of Sinclair Lewis and Jonathan Cape Ltd; p. 85, Mr Howard Zinn; p. 87, *The Observer*; p. 89, Reproduced from *The Times Educational Supplement* by permission; p. 90, Mr Bart Barnes and the *Washington Post*; p. 94, IPC Magazines Ltd; p. 94, Smith & Nephew Ltd.

Every effort has been made to reach copyright holders; the publishers would be glad to hear from anyone whose rights they may have unwittingly infringed.

Contents

Preface v

Acknowledgements vi

Notes for teachers i

Section A: Basic reading technique

Teaching unit 1: How to read a text 5
Night sister 5

Practice unit 1.1: Cleaner 7

Practice unit 1.2: Race riot 9

Practice unit 1.3: Chimpanzees 13

Practice unit 1.4: Physical fitness 16

Teaching unit 2: Guessing unknown words 18
Baggy pants 19

Practice unit 2.1: Driver escapes through car boot 20
Pidgin English 21

Practice unit 2.2: Blue film 24

Practice unit 2.3: The front tail 28
Waiting for the lorry 29

Section B: Open-ended tests and summary-writing

Teaching unit 3: Open-ended tests 33
Trafalgar Square Rally 34

Practice unit 3.1: The reconciliation 36

Practice unit 3.2: The pistol 38

Practice unit 3.3: Snowball and Napoleon 40

Teaching unit 4: Introduction to summary 42

Just leave the keys in, sir 43
Encounter groups 43
Fictions 44

Practice unit 4.1: School and life 45

Practice unit 4.2: The eternal flaming racket of the female 46

Practice unit 4.3: Helping black teenagers to read 48

Teaching unit 5: Writing summaries 51
War 51

Practice unit 5.1: Summerhill education and standard education 53

Contents

Practice unit 5.2: Hypnosis 56

Practice unit 5.3: The Alcatraz manifesto 57

Practice unit 5.4: The marriages that
Britain splits up 60

Practice unit 5.5: Nightmare in a California
jail 62

Section C: Practice tests

Practice test 1: Factory life – a student's
experience 65

Practice test 2: Who's crazy? 68

Practice test 3: Control units 72

Practice test 4: American finds real world
in Africa 76

Practice test 5: Women's prison goes pop 79
What do prisons do? 81

Practice test 6: The politics of
housework 83

Practice test 7: Violence 85

Practice test 8: How the West was lost 87

Practice test 9: Goodbye to the cane 89

Practice test 10: Schoolbooks and the female
stereotype 90

Section D: Special forms of English

1 Telegrams 93

2 Instructions 94

3 Newspaper headlines 94

Notes for teachers

What exactly is 'reading comprehension'?

If we say that a student is 'good at comprehension', we mean that he can read accurately and efficiently, so as to get the maximum of information from a text with a minimum of misunderstanding. We may also mean (though this is not quite the same) that he is able to show his understanding by re-expressing the content of the text – for instance, by writing sentences or paragraphs in answer to questions, or by summarising the text.

Language is not the only factor in successful comprehension: some students who speak and write English very well are poor at this kind of work, and of course people may be bad at comprehension even in their own mother tongue.

Some of the reasons for failure in comprehension are connected with defective reading habits. Not all students read efficiently, even in their own language, and there are several things that can go wrong.

- a) Some students find it difficult to 'see the wood for the trees'. They may read slowly and carefully, paying a lot of attention to individual points, but without succeeding in getting a clear idea of the overall meaning of a text.
- b) Other students (especially those who read quickly) do not always pay enough attention to detail. They may have a good idea of the general meaning of the text, but misunderstand particular points. Sometimes, by overlooking an important small word (for instance a conjunction, a negation, a modal verb) they may get a completely false impression of the meaning of a part of the passage.
- c) Some students are 'imaginative readers': especially if they know something about the subject, or have strong opinions about it, they may interpret the text in the light of their own experience and ideas, so that they find it difficult to separate what the writer says from what they feel themselves.

Other types of comprehension problem arise directly from the text.

- d) Some writers favour a wordy and repetitive style; practice is needed to be able to 'see through' the words to the (often very simple) ideas which underlie them.
- e) Words and expressions which the student does not know obviously present a problem (unless he is working with a dictionary). However, students do not always realise how easy it is to guess many unknown words simply by studying the context. Some students, indeed, are so disturbed by unfamiliar vocabulary that their comprehension of the whole passage suffers as a result.

Finally, some 'comprehension' examinations test skills which go beyond the limits of comprehension proper. Summary-writing is a good example of this: most students, even those with a good knowledge of the language and adequate comprehension skills, need special training in order to be able to summarise effectively.

Notes for teachers

In this book, the various problems referred to above are separated out, and specific training is provided in each of the skills involved.

Structure of the book

The book contains four main sections. These are:

Section A Basic reading technique and multiple choice tests

Section B Open-ended tests and summary-writing

Section C Practice tests

Section D Special forms of English

Sections A and B each contain teaching units. A teaching unit is designed for classwork, and contains introductory explanations and exercises on a specific element of comprehension technique (e.g. accurate reading; writing summaries).

Each teaching unit is followed by a number of practice units (suitable for classwork or homework), containing texts and questions. The practice units give further work on the point dealt with in the teaching unit, together with general comprehension practice and revision of points dealt with earlier.

The practice tests in Section C are similar in design to practice units, but a little more difficult. They can be used at the end of a course for various purposes – for instance: a) to assess progress b) to screen potential examination candidates c) for revision work. Alternatively, they might be used during a course as supplementary practice material for students who want to do extra work.

Section D provides explanations and exercises on certain uses of English which present particular comprehension difficulties because of the special syntax involved (telegrams, instructions and newspaper headlines).

How to use the book

Obviously the exercises and materials in the book can be used in various ways, and experienced teachers will adopt whatever approach is best suited to their style of teaching and the needs of their classes. The following notes are intended merely as suggestions.

- a) *Progression.* Sections A and B constitute a progressive teaching programme for comprehension skills, beginning with basic reading technique and finishing with summary-writing. It is therefore advisable, on the whole, to work through the teaching units 'from left to right' – that is, in the order in which they come in the book.
- b) *Teaching units and practice units.* After doing a teaching unit, there is no need to do all the practice units which follow. One at least should be done straight away (either for homework or in the next comprehension lesson); if time allows and more practice is needed, teachers may wish to do a second practice unit before going on to the next teaching unit. Others can be dropped, or used for revision at a later stage. Practice units in each set vary a little in length and level, and there are great differences of style and subject matter, so it is worth looking at all of them to see which is most suitable for a particular class. Note that in the section on writing summaries there are more practice units than usual in order to give adequate work on this point, which many students find especially difficult.
- c) *Handling a teaching unit in class.* As well as introductory exercises on the point being taught, the teaching units contain explanations addressed directly to the students. These are not, of course, intended to replace the teacher's lesson on the point; their purpose

Notes for teachers

is rather to provide students with a simple guide to which they can refer when preparing or revising the work done in class. Teachers will decide for themselves how to present and work through the teaching unit material; three possible approaches are as follows:

- (i) Begin by giving your own lesson on the relevant point (modifying or supplementing the teaching apparatus in the book to suit your own approach and the needs of the students). Then work through the exercise material in the teaching unit. This can be done orally, or students can write their answers and then discuss them. Group work can be very effective with some of the exercises: students can work together to produce answers to the questions, or they can write their answers individually and then join together into groups to compare and discuss what they have written.
- (ii) If there is not much time available, ask students to prepare the lesson by reading the teaching unit at home before the class. Lesson time can then be devoted to doing the exercises and discussing the problems which arise.
- (iii) If time is really short, simply give a brief lesson on the point dealt with in the unit, and ask students to read the unit and do the exercises for homework.

Note that the teaching units vary in length; with some of the longer ones, it may be necessary to spend two lessons on the unit, or to begin the unit in class and ask the students to finish it for homework.

- d) *Dictionaries.* On the whole, it is advisable for students to do their comprehension class-work and homework without dictionaries. It is important for them to get used to dealing confidently with unfamiliar vocabulary (see teaching unit 2, 'Guessing unknown words'), and of course examination candidates need to practise working without reference books. Where a text contains a difficult word or expression which could hinder comprehension of the whole passage, the meaning is explained in a footnote.

Beyond comprehension

Although the passages in the book are intended to function primarily as vehicles for comprehension training, many of them deserve more than this. It seems absurd to deal with Neill's views on education, for example, purely in terms of 'What does the word *it* in line 6 refer to?' or 'Summarise the passage in a paragraph of 100 words'. Once a text like this has been thoroughly understood, and the comprehension work is finished, it should be possible to move on to other activities, such as intensive vocabulary work, semi-controlled composition, and (in many cases) discussion. The following suggestions may be helpful.

Intensive vocabulary work. The best approach here is probably to select for teaching a limited number (perhaps 10 to 20) of words and expressions from the text. These should obviously be items which the students cannot yet use correctly (though they may already understand them), but they should be common and preferably useful for speech as well as writing. If the students are going to do writing or discussion work related to the text, the words and expressions ought to be chosen with this in mind. When these words and expressions have been explained and practised, give the students time to study them and then, perhaps in the next lesson, give a 'recall test' – that is to say, ask questions to which the answers are the items that were studied.

Semi-controlled composition. Vocabulary is not usually learnt very effectively unless it is actually used to express something. A good approach is to follow up intensive vocabulary

Notes for teachers

study with a composition exercise. In this, students are asked to write about a subject similar to that of the text, so that they can use the new words and expressions to convey their own ideas. (For example, after studying *School and life*, p. 45, students could write about their own education, saying how effective they feel it was as a preparation for life.) Make sure that students understand that they are expected to use words and expressions from the text, and that they realise why this is important.

Discussion. Some of the texts can be used as a basis for discussion. This is probably most effective after vocabulary study and writing work have been done, so that students are familiar with some of the words and expressions they will need.

Grouping texts. In order to facilitate discussion and composition work, two or three texts on similar subjects can be studied in combination. Texts which could be grouped in this way are:

- practice units 1.2, 4.3, 5.3 and practice test 8 (racialism)
- the three texts in teaching unit 4 (pretences)
- practice units 4.1, 4.3, 5.1 and practice tests 9 and 10 (education)
- practice unit 5.5 and practice tests 3 and 5 (prisons)
- practice unit 5.4 and practice tests 6 and 10 (position of women)
- teaching unit 5 and practice test 7 (war and violence).

Note: contracted forms

Students are sometimes told that contractions such as *don't*, *it's*, *they'll* are only used in writing down direct speech. This is not, of course, true: contractions are common in informal written English of all kinds, and they will be found in many of the texts in this book. The instructions to students in the teaching units are deliberately written in a casual, informal style, and these too contain contractions. However, students who use the book should perhaps be warned not to use contractions themselves when a more formal style is appropriate. They should realise clearly that contractions would be out of place, for instance, in a job application or a serious essay in an examination.

Section A:

Basic reading technique

Teaching unit 1: How to read a text

In this unit you are going to practise the technique of reading a text so as to understand the meaning as clearly as possible. It is generally a good idea to read a comprehension passage at least twice: once to get an overall impression of what it's about, and then a second time to concentrate on the details. Read much more slowly than you would read a novel or a newspaper article – most people read comprehension texts far too fast. Time spent reading is saved later, because you can answer the questions more quickly and accurately.

First reading

Read the following text once, not too fast, and then do exercise a.

Night Sister

Ferzana Yusaf from Kenya is twenty-five and has been a night sister at the new Charing Cross Hospital since last April. She's in charge of ~~up to~~ ten wards, including two cancer wards and the kidney transplant unit. ~~We did a transplant~~ But last night – the call came through from Guy's Hospital earlier, saying that they'd got a suitable donor, but it took hours to locate our patient because ~~he'd gone drinking somewhere~~! And he was in the operating theatre from 1 o'clock till about 5. It was quite a night, last night!

She works eight nights on, six nights off, from 9.15 p.m. to 8 a.m. 'We get an hour off for lunch about 2 a.m. . . . ' I smiled at 'lunch'. 'Well, what else would you call roast lamb and two veg? We have another half-hour break after on, though we can drink as much tea or coffee as we like – it's very welcome about midnight, when I sometimes start feeling a bit sleepy.'

She'd worked nights before, as a student nurse, and hadn't enjoyed the experience at all. 'I was in a geriatric hospital which was rather grim. And I worked so hard that by 8 o'clock I was too tired to sleep. But it was only twelve weeks a year, and somehow I got through it.'

It's perhaps surprising, then, that she chose to work nights permanently. 'I felt I needed a change for one thing. And for another, I hope eventually to be a sister tutor (training other nurses) and the experience will be useful.' This time around she's finding it much easier – a sister's work is physically less demanding than a nurse's – and she's found she can sleep eight hours during the day. 'I do find, though, that when I've finished my eight nights it takes me three or four days to get over it. But when I go back on duty after six days off I adjust straight away – I have to.'

The only problem she has are the headaches she gets from the dim, luminous lighting in the wards – and her weight: 'I put on a lot in the first few months, but now I've

taken it all off so I'm trying to fatten myself up again!' She never gets frightened, 25
though, and rarely feels lonely. 'The odd times it's happened, when we're very quiet,
it's been boredom more than loneliness. But on the whole the atmosphere is so lively at
night that I'm very happy.'

During the day, she's found, there's so much going on in the wards to distract patients 30
that nursing is very largely confined to the practicalities – dishing out medicines,
fetching bedpans and so on. But during the night, when there's nothing for the patients
to do but think, it becomes much more personal – psychological even. 'Patients want
to talk more at night, and we have more time to listen. For me, the most rewarding
thing of all is to have someone confide his fears in me and be able to reassure him.'

She hasn't found that working nights has caused too great an upheaval in her 35
domestic life. She shares a flat in a hospital house with a nurse on a different shift, so
shopping for food and visits to the launderette can be worked out between them. But
she doesn't like not having time to wash her long thick black hair for eight days on the
trot, and she's had to learn to cram all her socialising into six days out of a fortnight. 'I
can go out between 6 and 9 on the evenings I'm working, but I don't because it doesn't 40
feel right. I can have visitors too, but my friends are very strongly discouraged from
coming before 6! After all, if I'm going to do a night's work I must get a good day's sleep.'
(From an article in *Honey Magazine*)

Exercise a

Answer the following questions without looking at the text. You can answer in a word, a
short phrase, or a complete sentence, just as you like. If you have a lot of difficulty with the
exercise, it probably means that you read the text too fast.

- 1 What sort of work does Ferzana Yusuf do?
- 2 Does she have a responsible position in her hospital?
- 3 Is she happy with her job?
- 4 What was the job she had before?
- 5 Was she happy in that job?
- 6 Why did she choose to do night work? (Two reasons)
- 7 How does she adjust to the change from night to day?
- 8 Does she have any problems because of doing night work?
- 9 What does she find is the most important difference between day and night nursing?

Second reading

Now read the text again. This time, read even more slowly, and pay special attention to
points that seem difficult. Don't read a sentence until you've understood the sentence
before as well as you can. If there's a word you don't know, don't waste too much time
worrying about what it might mean. Look at what comes before and after, make an
intelligent guess at the meaning, and then go on. When you think you're ready, try the
next exercise.

Practice unit 1.1

Exercise b: Same or different?

Some of the following sentences say the same thing as part of the text; others have a different meaning. Write the numbers of the sentences, and put S (= same) or D (= different) after each one. You can look at the text if you want to.

Example:

- 1 Ferzana is in charge of two cancer wards. Answer: 1S
- 2 The hospital has existed since last April. Answer: 2D
- 3 Ferzana recently carried out a kidney transplant.
- 4 She was in the operating theatre for about four hours.
- 5 She works eight nights every fortnight.
- 6 They have a break at midnight to drink as much coffee or tea as they like.
- 7 She works twelve weeks a year.
- 8 She started night work to have a change, and for the experience.
- 9 This job is easier than her previous nursing post.
- 10 When she goes off duty she adjusts straight away.
- 11 She's fat.
- 12 She usually finds it quiet and boring at night.
- 13 Night nursing is more personal than day nursing.
- 14 She goes out between 6 and 9 on the evenings she's working.

Check your answers (you may like to discuss them with other students first). If you got several wrong, it means that you didn't pay enough attention to detail: be careful to look at *all* the words, both in the text and in the questions.

Practice unit 1.1

Read the text slowly and carefully. After the first reading, do exercise a: this will help you to see whether you have got a good general idea of what the passage says. Then read the text again, paying careful attention to detail, and do exercise b.

Cleaner

'Margaret' is married with two small children and for the last seven years has been working as a night cleaner, with one of the big contractors who provide cleaners to both private and Government office buildings all over London.

She trained as a nurse, but had to give it up when her eldest child became seriously ill with asthma. 'I would have liked to go back to it, but the shifts are all wrong for me. They work from 8 or 9 at night till 8 in the morning, and that's no good because I have to be home to get the children up and off to school. They could do it themselves, I suppose. But I don't think it's fair to expect them to.'

So she works as a cleaner instead, from 9 p.m. till 6 a.m. five nights a week – Friday and Saturday nights are free – for the princely sum of just under £20, before tax and insurance.

'It's better than it was before we had the strike last year, but I still think they should pay us more.' (A certain amount of victimisation – if that's not too strong a word – followed the strike. Hence 'Margaret' prefers not to be named.) She agrees that people who work

'unsocial hours' should get a bit extra, though she's pretty certain that she and the other cleaners won't!

15

The hours she's chosen to work mean that she sees plenty of the children, but very little of her husband: 'He's going to work as I get home, and I only see him for a couple of hours in the evenings.' But she doesn't think that puts any strain on the relationship: 'Secret of a happy marriage, that,' she says with a grin.

The work she does – hoovering, dusting, emptying waste-paper baskets, cleaning lavatories – isn't physically very hard. But it's not exactly pleasant, either: 'I do get irritated with people who leave their offices like pigsties – tables and desk tops are the worst, covered in sticky coffee and tea stains, with crumbs of buns and biscuits all over the place – it really can be filthy. I sometimes think people imagine their offices get cleaned by magic, by the Little People! If they thought about it and realised that people like me have to do it, perhaps they'd be a bit more careful.'

25

The fact that she's working all night doesn't worry Margaret at all. Unlike some buildings where there's very little lighting at night – and where a cleaner who had an accident could easily not be found for hours because no one else is working on her floor – the building where she works is fully lit all night, and the women work in groups of three. 'I'm doing the job because I have to. But since I've got to be here night after night I try and enjoy myself – and I usually do, because of the other girls. We all have a good laugh, so the time never drags.'

She gets home about 6.30, gets the children ready for school, then starts on her own housework. Some days she goes to bed for two or three hours; others she doesn't go to bed at all. 'I didn't today, and I won't be able to tomorrow, either, because I'm taking my son back to his special school. But I often go two or three days without any sleep. At first I found it hard, but that was because I'd never done any cleaning before. You soon get used to it, though.'

35

You also, apparently, get used to the reaction of other people when you tell them what you do for a living. 'They think just because you're a cleaner you don't know how to read and write. I must admit, when I first started I used to think "What would my Mum and Dad say if they knew I'd been cleaning?" But I don't think that way any more. It's about the only job I can do at the moment that suits me, what with the children and everything. I don't dislike the work, but I can't say I'm mad about it. If they opened a factory round here and the hours and pay were the same as I'm getting now, then I'd rather take a job there. But it would have to be as close to my house as this place is. Because here, if my son gets ill, my husband can come straight round and fetch me.'

45

'I'll give myself another year or eighteen months at the cleaning. Though what I'll do then I'm not sure. The children will be that much older, so perhaps I'll go back to nursing.'

50

It's easy to understand why she wants to do that – the work's just as hard, the pay probably not quite as good. But at least people know you can read and write.

(From an article in *Honey Magazine*)

Exercise a (first reading)

Answer the following questions without looking at the text. You can answer in a word, a short phrase, or a complete sentence, just as you like.

- 1 What is Margaret's job?
- 2 Why did she stop being a nurse?
- 3 Why couldn't she go back to nursing?

Practice unit 1.2

- 4 Is she well paid?
- 5 Have her conditions improved?
- 6 Is Margaret her real name?
- 7 Who does she see more, her children or her husband?
- 8 Does she mind?
- 9 Is her work hard?
- 10 What are the good sides of the job?
- 11 What are the bad sides?
- 12 Why does her son go to a special school?

Exercise b (second reading): Same or different?

Write the numbers of the sentences, followed by S (if you think the sentence says the same as the text) or D (if you think it means something different). Look at the text if you want to

- 1 Margaret works from 8 or 9 at night till 8 in the morning.
- 2 She is paid £20 a week plus tax and insurance.
- 3 She used to be a nurse.
- 4 The strike got the cleaners more money but caused some trouble for her.
- 5 She's sorry she doesn't see her husband more.
- 6 Some people leave their offices very dirty.
- 7 Margaret doesn't mind working all night.
- 8 A cleaner had an accident in the building where Margaret works.
- 9 The time passes quickly because Margaret works with three other cleaners.
- 10 People think cleaners are badly educated.
- 11 In a year or two Margaret is going to return to nursing.

Practice unit 1.2

Read the text slowly and carefully. After the first reading, do exercise a: this will help you to see whether you have got a good general idea of what the passage says. Then read the text again, paying careful attention to detail, and do exercises b and c.

Race riot

'Blackie bastards!' yelled Kenneth Horsfall at three young Indian men who were leaving a cafe a few minutes after midnight. 'Blackie bastards, keep quiet and go!' he repeated. Mohammed Rashid shouted at him to stop the abuse and then attacked with his fists.

This was the beginning of the incident which triggered off the most serious racial disturbances which have occurred so far in Britain. The date was 27 July 1969.

Horsfall, a nineteen-year-old furniture packer, ran off to get help after exchanging blows with Rashid. A gang of white men rapidly left their homes and came down the hill to meet the Indians. How many there were is uncertain because witnesses' estimates varied. There was a running battle but the Indians – who were three in number with a fourth in the background – were outnumbered and Bhupinder Singh drew a knife which he had taken from another participant, Dian Singh Ball, during a violent argument earlier in the cafe. It was the only knife among them but it had tragic consequences.

Seeing the knife flash, Horsfall ran off to fight the other two Indians. Singh ran after him and buried the knife once into Horsfall's shoulder and once into his brain. He died in hospital at 2.20 a.m. The blood-letting stopped the fighting and the police arrested the three Indians in nearby streets within a few minutes. 15

The events which followed that fight are of far greater significance. Kenneth Horsfall's death happened too late for it to be reported in the morning newspapers and as the following day was Sunday there were no evening newspapers. So it was left to word of mouth to spread accounts of the killing around Burley and into other parts of Leeds. 20 Sunday was a fine, warm day, people were out in their gardens – if they had them – or sat on their doorsteps in the sunshine, all circumstances were conducive to a high circulation of gossip. The versions of how Horsfall died grew more exaggerated as they circulated – one account had it that it was a ritual killing and forty Pakistanis had danced a triumphal war dance around his dead body! 25

When the public houses opened at noon the stories spread like wildfire and as they closed at the end of the lunch period violence was close. But it took another session of drinking that sultry evening for enough people to acquire courage to put their talk into action. When the pubs closed at 10.30 people began to gather in Woodsley Road quite near to the scene of the stabbing twenty-three hours earlier. There was talk of 'doing the Pakis' – throughout the whole affair people referred to the killers as Pakistanis instead of Indians. Rumour circulated in the town that coachloads of people from other parts of Leeds were coming to help in a big retaliation against the Pakistanis. As the crowd began to move forward – it numbered between 800 and 1,000 strong – there were shouts of 'We want a riot' and one woman yelled: 'We are going to smash up the Pakistani houses.' 35 Middle-aged women were prominent in the verbal viciousness.

The police tried to persuade people to go home but the mob surged on to the cafe in Hyde Park Road, from which the three Indians had emerged when they encountered Kenneth Horsfall, and smashed its windows. The fronts of several other business premises owned by Indians and Pakistanis were also damaged. Kenneth Horsfall's father jumped 40 onto a garden wall and said: 'It is me that is suffering. It is me that has to go to the funeral. I don't want to see anything like this and my son would not have liked it either.' No notice was taken of his appeal. Another man also addressed the crowd from a wall: 'I don't like black men either but let us go home.' The crowd swept down into Burley Lodge Road and any Pakistanis still on the street fled to the top of the hill and watched at a safe distance 45 from behind walls. The others kept to the shelter of their homes. Stones and bottles were thrown at windows of houses which the mobsters thought had black owners but many of their targets were white-owned. A white Hillman Imp saloon parked in Burley Lodge Place, which the crowd believed belonged to a Pakistani, was overturned and set alight by eight men. In fact it belonged to a white resident. As firemen put out the blaze the cries 50 of 'Let's get the Pakistanis' increased and police formed a human barricade to head off the mob. Nazi salutes were given and cries of 'Sieg Heil' as scuffles between the police and the crowd broke out. Four policemen were hurt making twenty-three arrests.

The anger of the white community began to turn from the Pakistanis to the police when it was realised that the police were protecting the immigrants. A police sergeant 55 was asked: 'Why don't you black your face?' Then he was called a 'Paki-lover' and told: 'Get out of the way, it's not you we're after.' Some of the worst violence occurred when rioters tried to release men arrested by the police. The conduct of the police throughout the entire disturbances was exemplary despite considerable provocation and violence used against them. A few militants persisted in shouting 'Get the wogs' and 'Pakis go home', but by 1 a.m. the area was growing quiet. Fortunately the rumoured coachloads of