英语阅读文库 ethinking ADVANCED CULTURAL READER M.E. Sokolik (美)编著 Ш



外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

北京 BEIJING

京权图字: 01-2002-0833

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Rethinking America 3 First Edition

Original Book ISBN: 0-8384-4732-5

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

解读美国 3/(美)索科里克(Sokolik, M.E.)编著;张熹春,张翼注释. —北京: 外语教学与研究出版社,2004.9 (英语阅读文库)

书名原文: Rethinking America

ISBN 7 - 5600 - 4437 - 9

I. 解··· Ⅱ. ①索··· ②张··· ③张··· Ⅲ. 英语一阅读教学一教材 Ⅳ. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2004)第 089039 号

出版人:李朋义

责任编辑: 张黎新

封面设计: 李 萌 王 琳

出版发行: 外语教学与研究出版社

社 址: 北京市西三环北路 19 号 (100089)

呦 址: http://www.fltrp.com

印刷:北京大学印刷厂

开 本: 850×1168 1/16 ;

印 张: 18.25

版 次: 2005年5月第1版 2005年5月第1次印刷

书 号: ISBN 7-5600-4437-9

定 价: 27.90 元

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进入21世纪,经济全球化进程加快,国际交往日益频繁,科学和技术日新月异;我国加入世界贸易组织后,国内学英语、教英语、用英语的热潮持续升温,有关英语教学改革的新举措频频出台,令人鼓舞,催人奋进。我作为外语教学战线上的一名老兵,面临如此机遇和挑战,深受鼓舞和鞭策。这些年,我一直埋头于翻译研究和词典编纂,外语教学研究领域涉及不多,但为我国英语教学出一份力的念头始终没有放弃过。现在,终于有了这样一个机会,外语教学与研究出版社独具慧眼,从众多国际知名出版社引进一套大型"英语阅读文库",邀请我担任该文库的顾问。该文库首批推出12本英语阅读教材,内容涵盖了政治、经济、环保、教育、科学与技术等领域中广大读者最感兴趣和关心的话题,并由国内经验丰富的英语教学专家、教授、博士为各书撰写导读,为读者解疑释惑,指点迷津。文库后续几辑不久也将陆续与读者见面。出版这样大规模的英语阅读系列丛书,这在我国还是不多见的。这套阅读文库所带来的全新阅读教学理念,无疑为我国英语阅读教学和阅读教材的编写吹来了一股新风,

长期以来,人们认为,在听、说、读、写、译五项语言技能中,阅读一直是我国学生的强项。教育部颁布的《全日制高级中学英语教学大纲》和《大学英语教学大纲(修订本)》也将其目标分别定位在"侧重培养阅读能力"和"培养学生具有较强的阅读能力"。但是,有人却认为讲好英语或许更有助于我们在国际舞台上参与竞争。因此,外语教学界有人对大学英语教学大纲是否应该继续将培养阅读能力放在首位提出了质疑。

也为广大英语师生、涉外人员和普通英语学习者献上了一套内容新颖、知识丰富、图文并茂

的从书,对此我感到由衷的高兴。

要解决这个问题,首先要弄清楚:英语在中国是"外国语"(EFL)还是"第二语言"(ESL)?我们不得不承认英语在中国还只是外国语。英语为母语或第二语言的学习者通常是在具备相当程度的听和说的能力后才开始学习阅读技能的。而在中国,情况绝非如此,这是不言自明的。尽管通过多年的努力,教授英语听和说的条件有所改善,但是由于种种条件的限制,听、说方面的条件仍不尽人意,因此阅读仍然是扩展英语知识和能力的重要途径。可以说,阅读输入是其他输出的主要前提条件。从某种意义上说,没有阅读就没有英语学习,学生要学好英语就必须广泛阅读。通过大量的语言输入,开阔眼界,扩展知识,更好地理解所学语言

解决了为什么要阅读这个问题,就需要弄清楚我们应该怎样看待阅读——是把阅读看成简单、被动的字符释义,还是看成读者与原文之间的互动交流?在这个问题上,大致上有两种观点:一种观点注重阅读的结果,强调文章的形式和意义,认为阅读只是字符的简单解码过程;另一种观点则注重阅读的过程,更重视读者在理解文章内容时所采用的策略,认为阅读过程中,读者要调动已有的语言知识来理解所读文章的意思。一方面,阅读是大脑认知的过程;另一方面,阅读也是读者与文章之间的沟通与交流。现代语言学以及语言习得理论

XII "英语阅读文库"丛书总序

的研究成果告诉我们:要驾驭一门外语,学习者 定得经历从语言能力(linguistic competence)的成熟,到社交语用能力(socio-pragmatic competence)的成熟,最终到文化能力(cultural competence)的成熟这一必经的过程,三个阶段缺一不可。也就是说,学习一种外国语不只是学习语言本身及其运用的技巧,更需要学会跨越与该语言伴随而来的文化障碍,即不同的文化背景所产生的不同思维方式和生活习俗。而要完成上述过程,阅读能力的培养始终是英语教学的首要任务。因为阅读是语言输出的主要来源,是听、说、写、译的基础,也是学生毕业后继续深造的基石。

正是基于这样的认识,"英语阅读文库"丛书的编写者们在充分汲取英美阅读理论的研究成果的基础上,围绕培养学生的"阅读速度"和"理解深度"这两个中心环节,紧扣学生学习过程中可能碰到的问题,以准确、通俗、精练的文字,对英语阅读的基础理论、方法和技巧作了深入浅出的归纳和介绍,并围绕每一核心话题,配以内容涵盖了人文类、社科类和科普类等日常生活的方方面面的练习,环环紧扣,自然合理,符合阅读训练的规律,较好地处理了教材编写中"知识性与可思性、系统性与灵活性、可接受性与前瞻性、语言规范与时代气息"之间的关系,让我们有机会了解到21世纪国际外语教学变革的最前沿动态。

总之,"英语阅读文库"体现了教育部制定的英语教学大纲的指导思想、教学目的和教学要求,顺应21世纪外语教学改革的大趋势。它以语言能力为基础,以跨文化交际能力为核心,以提高交际能力为目的,为读者提供了理论与实际相结合、适合教学或自学之用的辅助材料,对英语学习者一定有很大的吸引力。我相信这套丛书会成为广大读者的良伴益友。

是为序。

一、如何提高 英语阅读能力

《大学英语教学大纲》明确把"提高阅读能力"作为一个重要的目标。由此可见,阅读能力是我们学习新的语言知识的一项基本技能。所谓阅读,实际上包含两个目的:一是为了获取信息,另一个是为了学习新的语言知识。阅读目的不同,学习者采取的阅读方法也不一样。日常学习活动主要是为了获得新信息,读者的注意中心是内容,而不是语言形式。但是为了达到获得新信息的要求,就必须学会各种阅读技能,如浏览、略读、细读等。当我们阅读的目的是学习新的语言知识时,学习阅读的方法就不一样了。

英语阅读活动一般都具有双重性, 既要训练阅读技能, 又要学习新的语言知识, 这就需要我们对阅读理解的层次和标准有个深刻的认识。

阅读理解的程度由低到高可以分为三个层次:表层理解(literal comprehension)、深层理解(inferential comprehension)和评价性理解(critical comprehension)。表层理解指的是懂得文章的字面意思,深层理解要求读者能弄清楚作者的言外之意,评价性理解则要求读者对作者所表达的内容提出自己的见解。对每一篇文章的理解应该包括这三个层次。表层理解是基础和前提,评价性理解又是在深层理解的基础上进行的。因此,这三种理解是相互联系,缺一不可的。此外,不同层次的理解标准也不同,掌握了阅读理解的标准,我们就可以根据不同的阅读目的进行有效的训练。

目前,我国大学生英语阅读能力的提高主要面临四个障碍:词汇量贫乏、语法基础不扎实、背景知识有限、阅读技能欠缺。因此,要提高阅读能力,应从以下几方面入手:

1. 扩大词汇量

词汇是阅读的基础。词汇学习中的基本要求是努力巩固已学词汇,并利用一些有效的记忆方法,不断积累词汇,把扩大词汇量变成经常的自觉行为。那么,用什么方法才能有效地扩大词汇量呢?

1) 勤查词典——给你知识的"无声老师"

选定一本英汉双解词典,在平时的学习中,常查查,勤翻翻,坚持下去、大有好处。查词典可以从旧词横向拓展,以熟带生,通过它们"远亲近邻"的关系,顺便很轻松地认识一些新词。查词典也可以使旧词纵向发展,达到吃透词义、掌握多义的目的。这样纵横展开、新旧关联,就很好地起到了温故知新、举一反三的效果。

2) 掌握构词法—— 令你惊奇的"灵丹妙药"

英语词汇至少有几十万,但大部分单词是通过构词法构成的。英语构词法主要有三种:转化法、合成法、派生法。在学习中通过分类比较,尤其是掌握最常用的前缀和后缀的含义及用法,就可以由已知的词"猜出"它的派生词及其词性,从而达到巩固和扩大词汇量的目的。构词法不但可以帮我们记住单词、理解词义,而且是扩大词汇量所必须掌握的"快捷方式"。难怪有人把词根、前缀、后缀称为学习英语词汇的三把"金钥匙"。

3) 广泛阅读——扩大词汇量的必由之路

阅读教学中有一句名言 "To read well, you need a strong vocabulary. To build a strong vocabulary, you need to read well." 这句话表面上看似矛盾,其实千真万确。要流利地阅读,你必须掌握大量的词汇。而大量的阅读不但可以使你复习和巩固已学词汇,而且还可以接触新词、获得新知、实为扩大词汇量的有效途径。

2. 善于运用语法知识

语法知识在阅读中起着不可忽视的辅助作用。如果把阅读看成一个"解剖麻雀"的过程,语法则是一把"手术刀"。运用语法知识对句子进行适当的分析,搞清各部分之间的关系,能有助于准确地理解整个句子的意思。譬如在阅读中遇到令人费解的长句、难句时,有效方法是借助语法分析,找出哪是主干(即句子的主语和谓语),哪是修饰成分,搞清各部分之间的关系。经过这样逐级逐层的分析,就能像庖丁解牛一样,使疑难句子豁然而解。语法学习中,有一点值得注意,即对语法知识不要进行过细过深的分析,要把语法作为手段来学,作为桥梁来学,克服为学语法而学语法的偏向,摒弃那种死记硬背的做法。较好的做法是,在语法学习中善于创造情景,引出语法点。也就是先给定一个情景,在这个情景中进行操练,在熟悉某个句型的基础上进行语法归纳,然后再进行巩固性操练,从而达到话学活用、化枯燥为趣味的境界。

3. 拓宽文化背景知识

语言是文化的载体。一篇文章、总会在不同程度上反映作者的身份、地位、立场和观点。了解不同国家和地区的风俗习惯,不同制度和不同文化背景下人们的思维方式、表达方式和心态等将有助于对读物的认识和理解。因此、阅读中不仅要学习语言知识,而且要吸收文化知识,通过阅读将了解文化与语言学习有机结合起来。如果平时留心积累有关英语国家的知识,集脓成裘,积少成多,在阅读中将大有用武之地。

4. 掌握阅读技巧

阅读能力是一种综合能力,它由几种最基本的阅读技能组成。阅读能力的全面提高有赖于这些基本技能的培养和掌握。我们认为,通过以下训练可以提高阅读理解能力:

1) 掌握阅读材料的上旨和大意

任何文章或段落都有中心内容,是否能掌握它的中心思想可以反映出学生的阅读能力。

2) 掌握用以说明文章上旨和大意的事实和细节

文章的主旨是靠大量的事实和细节支撑的,了解这些细节是理解文章的前提条件之一。它包括what happened, why / how / where / when it happened 等。在阅读时,特别是阅读一些含有大量事实和数据的文章时,应以细节阅读为核心,以提高获取和处理信息的能力为宗旨贯穿阅读的始终。

3) 利用对文章或段落的中心和大意的理解,提高综合概括能力

初级阶段可利用一些难度小的文章,找出主题句。

4) 发挥推理想像以加深对隐含意义及作者意图的理解, 培养推理判断能力

学生的英语阅读水平是知识与能力互动的结果,提高阅读能力就是要将阅读从知识为主的层面提高到能力为主的层面上来。学生可以通过建立知识网络对阅读能力进行开发、利用、拓宽和加深,通过精练与泛练相结合、专项训练与综合训练相结合以及协调身心状态等,最大限度地挖掘潜在积极因素,促进知识向能力方向的转化。

总之,阅读是一个综合过程,能力的提高更是一个循序渐进的过程。只有就阅读能力的各个环节提出切实可行的目标,分别侧重不同的材料,才能收到更好的效果。

<u>二、本套丛书</u> 的特色

《解读美国》是为有志提高英语阅读能力的学生而准备的一套高质量的系列阅读教程,由美国著名的汤姆森学习出版集团出版。本书选择的文章原汁原味,体裁广泛,包括报道、评论、诗歌、短篇小说、图表等等,为我们开启了一扇了解美国的窗户。书中的阅读材料和练习有助于学生提高跨文化意识,加深理解英语语言与美国文化,促进文化与价值观的互动与交流,这一点对于英语学习十分重要。通过学习本教程,学生不仅可以学会如何审视美国文化,也能学会与本国的文化进行对比和思考,将提高英语水平融入文化学习之中。

这套教程的构思和编排独特。每册包括10章,每章围绕一个主题组织阅读材料。在一个大主题下又有两个小主题,每个小主题由两篇阅读文章组成,分别从不同的角度探讨主题内容。除阅读材料外,每单元还包括以下各部分:

1. 预习

在正式阅读开始之前有一些准备性材料,包括与阅读文章相关的照片、图表,文章的概要,以及与文章主题相关的问题。

2. 文化提示

对阅读涉及到的具体文化信息加以解释、例如有关的电视节目或历史人物等。

3. 作者简介

4. 专项练习

- ※ 阅读理解: 在每篇阅读材料后有五道与文章内容有关的问题。
- 阅读策略: 每课针对书中"阅读策略指南"部分列出的阅读策略,结合阅读文章,逐项展开阅读技能训练。
- 词汇: 词汇练习种类丰富,包括游戏、填空、填字游戏等,要求学生 熟练掌握所学词汇。
- 常课后思考:要求学生将所学内容与自己的知识与经验联系起来,例如参与情景模拟、查找课外材料等。

5. 综合练习:

每章最后设有综合练习、帮助学生将本章中四篇文章的内容联系起来。

- 讨论与辩论:包括用于课堂讨论或辩论的一系列问题,鼓励学生表达自己的观点。
- 写作: 包括不同层次的写作任务,从简单的问答到段落写作,以及记日记和短文写作等。
- 课外活动:包括诸如看影碟、做调查、在图书馆或是网上查资料等可以 在课外进行的活动。

6. 声像材料:

每章配有选自美国有线电视新闻网(CNN)资料档案的声像材料片段,与课文内容相关,并附有讨论题目。

为了保持这套丛书的原有风格和特色,帮助广大读者更好地使用,我们只对本套书做了以下必要的辅助性工作,具体包括:

- 对每册书的特点和编写结构做了导读。
- 2) 对课文标题进行了双语对照,

3) 对课文中涉及的应重点掌握的词汇做了汉语注释。

我们相信,这套丛书的出版,将为我国的英语阅读教学和阅读教材的编写引入全新的理念,对全国大、中学生和各类英语学习者提高英语水平起到积极的推动作用。

谨以此套丛书献给立志学好英语的广大朋友们。

许文胜

南京大学外国语学院

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fact that only my name appears on the cover seems a misrepresentation. Many, many people have helped in putting these volumes together. First and foremost, I would like to thank my Developmental Editor, John Chapman. His clarity of vision, insightful ideas, and masterful organization made this process much smoother than it otherwise would have been. Second, I would like to thank Erik Gundersen, Senior Editor, Heinle & Heinle for his unstinting support of the series and its expansion. I would also like to express my appreciation to Amy Lawler, Managing Developmental Editor, for doing such a great job in pulling all the pieces together and making sure everything was done right.

Other people at Heinle & Heinle have made valuable contributions as well. Joyce LaTulippe, Associate Developmental Editor, and Jonathan Boggs, Marketing Development Director, helped with the initial conception and development of the series. Jill Kinkade, Assistant Editor and Anne Sokolsky, Permissions Editor, dealt with the near-impossible task of getting rights to the authentic selections. And Becky Stovall, CNN Executive Producer in Atlanta, tracked down all the CNN video clips used in the series.

I also want to thank the reviewers and focus-group participants, whose insights and suggestions aided in the revision of the original text and in the conception of the two new volumes in the series:

Leslie Adams, Santa Ana College, CA

Alicia Aguirre, Cañada College, CA

Thom Allen, Chabot College, CA

Angelina Arellanes-Nûnez, El Paso Community College, TX

Mardelle Azimi, California State University at Fullerton, CA

Victoria Badalamenti, LaGuardia Community College, NY

Gerald Lee Boyd, Northern Virginia Community College, VA

Pam Breyer, Braille Institute, CA

Mary Lou Byrne, Triton College, IL

Judi Camacho, Harper College, IL

Karen Carlson, Contra Costa College, CA

Jennifer Castello, Cañada College, CA

Anne Dorobis, Language Training Institute, NJ

Kathleen Flynn, Glendale Community College, CA

Ellen Clegg, ELS Language Center, CA

Patty Heiser, University of Washington Extension, WA

Jan Herwitz, ELS Language Center, San Francisco, CA

Gregory Keech, City College of San Francisco, CA

Julie Kim, University of Pennsylvania, PA

Tay Leslie, ELS Language Center, Los Angeles, CA

Kathleen Letellier, University of California Berkeley Extension, CA

Emily Lites, American Business English, CO

Robyn Mann, Harper College, IL

Roxanne Nuhaily, University of California, San Diego Extension, CA

Judith L. Paiva, Northern Virginia Community College, VA

Anita Razin, Santa Ana College, CA

Jan Rinaldi, Rio Hondo College, CA

Sandy Saldana, Triton College, IL

Irene Schoenberg, Hunter College, NY

Jane Selden, LaGuardia Community College, NY

Kathy Van Ormer, EDTP UAW-Ford National Programs Center, IL

Rose White, Lindsay Hopkins Technical Education Center, FL

James Wilson, Mount San Antonio College, CA

Finally, I want to thank every student who has ever said to me, "I don't understand." That statement alone has prompted me to try to put into writing answers to important questions. I hope I have succeeded.

-M. E. Sokolik

To Jim Duber

Rethinking America is a multi-skill cultural series for students of English as a Second Language. Each book has ten broad topic areas. However, the subject matter in these areas varies from book to book. Rethinking America incorporates authentic texts as a source of reading. Authentic texts give the student an entry into understanding American culture by hearing authentic voices about their views and experiences. These readings also represent a variety of genres: newspaper articles and essays, poems, short stories, charts, graphs, and many others.

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The readings and activities throughout *Rethinking America* foster cultural awareness, understanding, and interaction among students, and between students and their local settings, whether they are studying English in the U.S. or in another country. This series is intended to get students to examine not only American cultural values, but their own cultural values as well. Through these readings and activities, students engage in meaningful dialogues, and in the process, refine their English language skills.

Many of the changes and additions in this new edition stem from the thoughtful suggestions of students and teachers who have used *Rethinking America* over the years and from the suggestions of reviewers who carefully examined all three new manuscripts as we developed the series. It was extremely gratifying to be able to make use of these ideas as we expanded the original book into a three-book series.

This expansion involved several different types of changes. First of all, there are two new books at the intermediate and high-intermediate levels. Secondly, we have increased the scope of the reading comprehension sections, added specific reading strategies instruction in each chapter, and provided some exciting new ancillary components, including a video segment to accompany each chapter and an Almanac containing supplementary information at the back of each book. Thirdly, all follow-up activities now include exercises which are relevant to students who are using the book in a setting outside of the United States as well as within the U.S.

ORGANIZATION

Chapter Organization Each chapter is organized around a central theme and divided into two subthemes.

Each subtheme contains two readings that examine the topic from different points of view.

INTRODUCTORY MATERIALS

Before You Read Each reading is introduced by a photo, chart, or some other visual opener related to the reading topic. A brief preview of the reading follows, and students are encouraged to think about what they already know about the topic and to answer some questions about the preview.

Cultural Cues Information that may be culture-specific, such as references to television shows or historical figures, is explained before the reading.

About the Author Brief biographies of many of the authors are included. Photos of major figures in American culture are also provided.

THE READING

Each reading includes line numbers for easy reference by the student and teacher. In addition, some words are highlighted for quick reference.

Within each chapter, a video segment related to the topic and obtained from the CNN video archives is listed. Each video clip is accompanied by a set of suggested discussion questions.

EXPANSION MATERIALS

Check Your Comprehension Following each reading are five or more questions regarding the content of the reading.

Reading Strategy A specific reading strategy is highlighted in each follow-up reading activity. A brief statement about the strategy appears in a box in the margin along with a reference to the Reading Strategy Guide in the front of the book which contains a more complete explanation of the strategy.

Vocabulary In this section, students work with the vocabulary from the reading. The activities are varied and designed to keep the interest level high: some ask the students to think about the grammatical context of vocabulary, such as the use of prepositions in idiomatic phrases; some are matching and filling in the blank exercises; still others are games, such as word searches or crossword puzzles.

Think About It This section asks students to go beyond the factual content of a reading and relate their

own knowledge and experience to the themes that are introduced. These questions sometimes ask students to apply their understanding to projects, such as participating in simulations, or looking at outside materials such as magazines and newspapers.

Synthesis At the end of each chapter, a section of exercises and activities helps students integrate the ideas presented in the four readings of each chapter. These activities are designed to be relevant to students inside as well as outside the U.S.

Discussion and Debate This section presents several questions that can be used for class discussion or debate. This activity encourages students to come up with their own questions, as well.

Writing Topics The writing topics present different levels of writing tasks, from simple question-and-answer assignments or single-paragraph writing, to journal entries and short essays.

On Your Own This section suggests projects that can be done outside of class. These activities include

watching videos, conducting surveys, doing library or Internet research, as well as an array of other studentcentered pursuits.

BONUS FEATURES

CNN Video Segments Each volume of the Rethinking America series has an accompanying CNN video. The clips on this video are closely tied to one or more of the readings in the Rethinking America text. Questions are included in the text to foster discussion of the video. The video transcriptions are available and appear in the CNN video package.

The Almanac An almanac filled with stimulating and rich cultural information is found at the back of each book. It includes a list of major events in U.S. history, temperature conversion tables, and other general information.

Answer Keys All answer keys are offered in the part following the almanac for the sake of the learner's convenience of checking them after finishing the exercises.

Reference Guide to Reading Strategies

Strategies

The following reading strategies are introduced and practiced in *Rethinking America 3*:

Active Reading Reading actively means creating questions and comments about a text as you read it. This can help you understand and remember ideas and information. As you read, write questions and comments in the margin of your reading.

Finding and Understanding the Main Idea The main idea is the central, most important idea in the reading. Finding and understanding the main idea will help you understand the central purpose of the reading.

Identifying Topic Sentences A topic sentence states the main idea of the reading. Finding the topic sentence will help you understand the key message of the reading.

Making Inferences Inferences are conclusions you make from information available to you. Sometimes readings contain suggestions rather than direct statements. When this happens, you have to guess, or make an inference about the message or purpose of the reading.

Reading Aloud Reading Aloud simply means speaking what you are reading, rather than reading silently. When you read aloud you hear the sound of words and phrases. Reading aloud can help you understand new words and information.

Scanning Scanning means reading quickly, without reading every word, in order to *find specific information* in a reading.

Skimming Skimming means reading quickly, without reading every word, in order to *get the main idea* of a reading. When you skim, look at titles, illustrations and anything else in a reading that will quickly give you information.

Summarizing Summarizing means taking only the most important ideas and information from a reading and putting them in your own words. Try fitting your summaries on index cards.

Understanding Arguments To understand an argument made by an author, you must identify what the author wants to convince you of, and find the ideas the author uses to support this argument.

Understanding by Categorizing Categorizing means placing information into groups or categories. Putting ideas into two or more different categories can help you get a better understanding of the relationships between ideas in a reading.

Understanding Contrasts Contrasting means comparing two things to see the differences between them. You can use two different color highlighters to mark contrasting ideas in a text.

Understanding Definitions Definitions are the meanings of words. Often, the definition of an unfamiliar word can be found in the reading itself. You can learn the meaning of a difficult word by looking at how the word is used in the sentence or surrounding sentences.

Understanding Descriptions Descriptions are explanations of what something is like. Good descriptions help the reader to get a strong picture of what is being described.

Understanding Dialect A dialect is a form of a language spoken in one part of a country which is different from the standard official language. Readings sometimes include dialects to give the reader a feel for the sound of the language in certain regions of the country.

Understanding Humor Sometimes it can be difficult to understand the humor of another language and culture. However, by looking out for areas where the author exaggerates, or writes something which is clearly the opposite of what is true (sarcasm), you can often spot areas of humor in a reading.

Understanding Intention Understanding intention means understanding the reason the author wrote the piece.

Understanding Long Sentences When trying to understand a long sentence, it helps to break the sentence down into smaller parts.

Reference Guide to Reading Strategies xxiii

Understanding Point of View The same situation can be looked at differently by different people. A point of view is the way one person sees a situation. Sometimes the author is not the only one with a clear point of view—the characters or people quoted within the text can also have their own points of view.

Understanding Processes A process is a sequence of related events. Understanding the process of events in a reading helps you see the order in which events happen. Look for words like "first," "second," "then," "next," and "finally" to help you understand a process.

Understanding Through Outlining An outline is a numbered, structured grouping of the main points of a reading. Creating an outline helps you understand the structure of a reading by giving you a simplified picture of these main points.

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