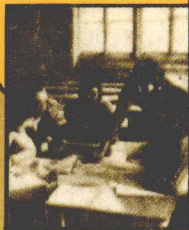


READ and RECALL

Passages for advanced reading
comprehension in English



MICHAEL BERMAN

Pergamon Press

Read and Recall

by

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INTRODUCTION

The book contains passages on a variety of subjects taken from newspapers and magazines. Each passage is followed by a number of questions to test comprehension and appreciation of the use of language, and pattern practice based on material from the text. There is also recall work, in which the students are required to supply the missing words without looking back at the passage, and then points for discussion and follow-up. The material is suitable for advanced students and for use in preparation for the Cambridge Proficiency exam.

Notes on how to deal with a reading comprehension passage:

The first point to make is that there is not only one correct way, and that the method outlined here is only intended as a suggestion.

1. Introduce the subject by asking questions related to it to whet the student's appetite.
2. If the passage is particularly difficult, pre-teach new lexis and ask the students to read the passage themselves. Then ask the class to prepare questions to ask one another on what they have read.
3. Read through the passage, a paragraph at a time, raising your voice whenever you come to any new lexis to see if the students can supply a synonym. This technique will help to cut down on teacher talking time, replacing the question "What does X mean?". If necessary, provide an example of the word in a different sentence to illustrate the meaning.
4. Ask one of the students to read through the paragraph again before going on to the next section. If he hesitates before a certain word, supply it yourself before he makes a mistake.
5. When you come to the end of a passage, give the class time to prepare answers to the questions – in groups, pairs, or individually. This way the students can see how well they would have done without your

help. When you go through the questions with the class, encourage the students to correct each other and avoid stepping in more than necessary. The questions can be examined in class and then set for homework.

6. Recall work or a dictation can be used to provide revision and consolidation at a later date.
7. The illustrations can be used to provide practice for the Interview (Paper 5) in the Cambridge Proficiency exam. Instead of the teacher providing questions on the pictures, ask the students to prepare questions to ask each other. As well as providing useful practice in question formation, this will also help to cut down on teacher talking time. Advise them to start by asking specific questions on what can be seen, and then to move on to more general questions which could lead into a discussion. If the students run out of ideas, the teacher can add questions of his own, for example, 'Magic in the air':

Who is the man on the right, and what is he wearing?

Explain what he uses the top hat and special stick for.

Why is the man on the left scratching his head?

How do you think the illusion of floating is created?

Do you believe in magic, or do you think there is always a logical explanation for what happens?

Can you perform any tricks?

FOR THE STUDENT

The passages are likely to contain a lot of new words but don't let this fact deter you. Not all of these will be essential to the understanding of the text, and others you will be able to guess the meaning of through the context. Try to avoid using a dictionary more than you need to. If you do use one, make sure that it is English-English and that it gives an example of each word used in a sentence. It is no good understanding the meaning of a word if you don't know how to use it. When you make a note of anything new, write an explanation next to it in English. If you translate the word into your own language, it will interfere with the learning process.

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1. IT'S MY ISLAND!

Of all the islands that dot the Indian Ocean, few could be more obscure than Tromelin. Understandably so. It is a tear-shaped chunk of sand less than one mile long and 700 yards wide. Its flora consists of four coconut palms and some nondescript bushes that submerge whenever the sea turns rough. Nonetheless, Tromelin has become the focus of a heated political controversy. Three nations claim it. Their feud may have to be resolved by the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Tromelin scarcely seems worth the effort. For one thing, there are no permanent residents. Other Indian Ocean islands can boast of native Maldivians, Seychellois, Mauritians or Malagasy. The only permanent Tromelinians are sea turtles and terns and the larger frigate sea birds, whose droppings until 1956 were harvested as the island's principal resource, guano, for fertilizer. A small French colony operating meteorological instruments and a radio transmitter is stationed there to forecast weather conditions.

The French live a bleak life together in a buried bunker on the island. Even drinking water must be flown in, along with food and supplies. For sanity's sake, the men are rotated frequently to larger French islands. But while they are on Tromelin, they undoubtedly dream about the island's one famous resident, an 18th century female Robinson Crusoe who was washed ashore as the lone survivor of a shipwreck. She subsisted on food that floated in from the wreck, until a passing schooner spotted the bright yellow dress she had hoisted as a distress flag.

Activities

1. *Answer the following questions on the text:*

- Why is it understandable that Tromelin is so obscure?
- Why has the island become the focus of a heated political controversy?
- Who is running the island at present?

2 Reading passages in English

- d) Why does Tromelin scarcely seem worth the effort?
 - e) What is the island's main resource and how is it formed?
 - f) What is the point of rotating the men who work there to larger French islands?
 - g) Why does the writer compare the woman to Robinson Crusoe?
 - h) How did she manage to survive on the island?
2. *Complete the following sentences using the structure given in the example.*

Example: Of all the islands that dot the Indian Ocean, few could be more obscure than Tromelin.

- a) Of all the places I've visited . . .
 - b) Of all the books I've read . . .
 - c) Of all the schools I've been to . . .
 - d) Of all the films I've seen . . .
 - e) Of all the people I've met . . .
3. *Without looking back at the passage, supply the missing words in the following sentences:*

Its flora consists . . . four coconut palms. Even drinking water must be flown in, along . . . food and supplies. . . . sanity's sake, the men are rotated frequently. They undoubtedly dream . . . the island's one famous resident. She subsisted . . . food that floated in from the wreck.

4. *Points for discussion and follow-up.*

- 1 How would you spend your free time if you had to live on Tromelin?
- 2 What would you take with you to keep yourself occupied?
- 3 Imagine you are shipwrecked and floating on a raft. There's not enough food left for everyone, so that one of you will have to be thrown overboard. Explain why it shouldn't be you.

2. TOUGHER CODE SOUGHT FOR DRINKS ADVERTS

Government moves are afoot to curb drinking problems by restricting alcohol advertising.

Confidential approaches to advertising watchdog bodies and the drink industry have been made by Department of Health officials, and a White Paper is due in the middle of the year. Drink firms are likely to fight the proposals.

The Advertising Standards Authority was asked by the Department whether it could start a system to vet all alcohol advertisements in advance. The Authority is understood to have rejected the idea as impractical. Officials also approached the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers with a suggestion that codes be tightened to prevent drink being shown in advertisements with a foreign backdrop.

The aim would be to reduce alcohol's glamour, and top of the list of the Department's targets are apparently the effervescent Mediterranean cinema and television advertisements selling Cinzano and Martini.

Already for several years firms have been observing a voluntary agreement not to advertise spirits on television. The only exception is supermarket advertising, and discussions have taken place between the Department and the Independent Broadcasting Authority on ways of closing that loophole.

There have also been discussions within the Department on whether alcohol containers should carry warnings on the dangers of misuse, similar to the Government health warning on cigarette packets.

At the end of last year a Government-appointed committee of experts recommended several measures to combat alcoholism and increasing alcohol misuse by people under 30. These included:—

'The presentation of alcohol to society, particularly in advertisements and the media, should be modified to produce a less one-sided picture of its effects.'

But the committee advised the Government to concentrate on 'a more positive role in advertising,' emphasising the dangers of drink rather than 'increasingly rigorous codes of advertising practice.'

Activities

1. *Answer the following questions on the text:*

- a) How does the Government plan to deal with drinking problems?
- b) What are watchdog bodies?
- c) How will drink firms probably react to the moves?
- d) Why did the Advertising Standards Authority reject the idea of vetting all alcohol advertisements in advance?
- e) Find another word to use in place of 'vet'.
- f) Explain what a 'backdrop' (line 12) is. Then make sentences with the following words:
backlog/backward/backbencher/background/backfire
- g) What is the point in preventing drink being advertised this way?
- h) Explain what a loophole is.
- i) How could the Government play a more positive role in advertising?
- j) Find another word to use in place of 'rigorous'.

2. *Change the structure of the following sentences to a form similar to that given in the example.*

Example: It is understood that the authority rejected the idea.

The authority is understood to have rejected the idea.

- a) It is said that the pilot was drunk.
 - b) It was alleged that the policeman accepted bribes.
 - c) It is presumed that all the passengers were killed in the crash.
 - d) It was rumoured that there had been an earthquake.
 - e) It is understood that the Prime Minister handed in his resignation.
3. *Without looking back at the passage, supply the missing words in the following sentences:*

Alcohol containers should carry warnings . . . the dangers . . . misuse, similar . . . the Government health warning printed on cigarette

packets. The committee advised the Government to concentrate . . . a more positive role . . . advertising.

4. *Points for discussion and follow-up.*

- 1 How could the Government play a more positive role?
- 2 How do you feel about British licencing laws?



3. DID MEDIUM GET MESSAGE?

A tribunal will now have to decide what took place during a church seance led by Britain's top spiritualist.

A churchgoer claims that he rigged the session by cribbing names and addresses of those present from a raffle list.

But the spiritualist, Mr. Gordon Higginson, vigorously denied the allegations when he appeared before a special tribunal in Bristol yesterday.

The complaint before the National Spiritualists' Union was brought by Mrs. Phyllis Simpson, president of the Bristol United National Spiritualists Church.

Her solicitor, Mr. Paul Mildred, told the hearing that Mr. Higginson wanted quiet before the meeting so he was left alone for at least an hour in the church.

Each name and address was available to him: he had access to the church healing book, library book register and a "name-the-doll" raffle list in the kitchen, said Mr. Mildred.

Mr. Higginson had been offered tea but had preferred to stay in the church to "get the feel of it".

The service — in February 1976 — began with a hymn, a prayer and later Mr. Higginson, a grocer from Stoke-on-Trent, gave a demonstration of clairvoyance.

"He called out seven names and addresses. His method was to indicate that he was getting names and addresses and then inviting the audience at large to respond," said Mr. Mildred.

"Mr. Higginson gave these names and addresses because he got them from these lists and not from the spiritual world, as he purported to do," he said.

Mrs. Simpson, of Ramsey Road, Horfield, Bristol, a spiritualist for 20 years, became suspicious when Mr. Higginson gave an address and said: "I must have a wrong link."

She said: "I was suspicious because in the world of spirits they know who's there or someone who's very close to them. I kept my ears cocked from then on."

She claimed that he should have been able to give more intimate details if he were properly qualified. "If he gave names of one or two persons who were not on the list I would have no complaint," she said.

But another member of the meeting, Mr. William Thomas, aged 50, of Redland Road, Bristol, said he "responded" when Mr. Higginson was getting messages about the name "Grandpa Thomas".

"He told me about a difficulty in my life. I had not long lost my sister to the world of the spirit. He said there was a young life in the family. Three weeks or a month later my niece from America wrote to me saying she had given birth to a baby boy."

Activities

1. *Answer the following questions on the text:*

- a) What is a seance?
- b) How could the medium have rigged the session?
- c) When did he have the opportunity?
- d) What evidence is there to suggest that Mr. Higginson does not earn a lot of money from his work as a medium?
- e) Why was Mrs. Simpson suspicious?
- f) Put the sentence "I kept my ears cocked from then on" into your own words.
- g) Why is the word "responded" in inverted commas?
- h) In what way was the message about "a young life in the family" inaccurate?
- i) What do you think Mr. Higginson said to Mr. Thomas?
Reconstruct the conversation that might have taken place.

2. *Complete the following sentences using a construction similar to that given in the example.*

Example: A churchgoer claims that he rigged the session by cribbing names and addresses.

- a) I learnt the language by . . .
 - b) She managed to lose weight by . . .
 - c) . . . by working his fingers to the bone.
 - d) The film star killed herself by . . .
 - e) The Government is hoping to reduce inflation by . . .
3. *Without looking back at the passage, supply the missing words in the following sentences:*

He had access . . . the church healing book, library book register and a "name-the-doll" raffle list. He had preferred to stay in the church to 'get the feel . . . it'. His method was to indicate that he was getting names and addresses and then inviting the audience . . . large to respond. He told me about a difficulty . . . my life. My niece wrote to me saying that she had given birth . . . a baby boy.

4. *Points for discussion and follow-up.*

- 1 What experience have you had of the supernatural?
- 2 Work in pairs and prepare a dialogue between a fortune teller and someone who goes to her for help.