

READING COMPREHENSION PASSAGES

ROLAND JOHN



3

COLLINS

Reading Comprehension Passages

BOOK 3

First published 1977
© Roland John 1977
ISBN 0 00 370103 04
Printed in Great Britain
Collins Clear-Type Press

5 6 7 8 9 10

Reading Comprehension Passages

BOOK 3

Roland John

COLLINS: LONDON AND GLASGOW

Contents

1	Boys on Holiday	8
2	Royal Hunter	10
3	Great Fun, the Eiger	12
4	Birthday Present	14
5	'And Men Shall Rise up <i>Whole—</i> '	16
6	A Human Mistake	18
7	A Cupboard or . . .	20
8	A Name to Remember	22
9	An Attempt to Steal?	24
10	Business Letters	26
11	To Fairburn, Twice	28
12	Warning	30
13	Discovery—(1) Little Green Men?	32
14	Discovery—(2) A Black Hole	34
15	Letter from a Girl away at School	36
16	The Law is the Law but . . .	38
17	At Thursday Market	40
18	A Desert between Us	42
19	Holiday Job	44
20	The Complete Poacher	46
21	No Boots on	48
22	Exploring the Country and its History	50
23	Master Craftsman	52
24	Grey Killer	54
25	Out of the Sky, Death	56
26	Underwater City	58
27	Lucky Chap	60
	List of Words Outside Stage 4	62
	List of Proper Nouns	63

Reading Comprehension Passages

BOOK 3

Reading Comprehension Passages

BOOK 3

Roland John

COLLINS: LONDON AND GLASGOW

First published 1977
© Roland John 1977
ISBN 0 00 370103 04
Printed in Great Britain
Collins Clear-Type Press

5 6 7 8 9 10

Contents

1	Boys on Holiday	8
2	Royal Hunter	10
3	Great Fun, the Eiger	12
4	Birthday Present	14
5	'And Men Shall Rise up <i>Whole—</i> '	16
6	A Human Mistake	18
7	A Cupboard or . . .	20
8	A Name to Remember	22
9	An Attempt to Steal?	24
10	Business Letters	26
11	To Fairburn, Twice	28
12	Warning	30
13	Discovery—(1) Little Green Men?	32
14	Discovery—(2) A Black Hole	34
15	Letter from a Girl away at School	36
16	The Law is the Law but . . .	38
17	At Thursday Market	40
18	A Desert between Us	42
19	Holiday Job	44
20	The Complete Poacher	46
21	No Boots on	48
22	Exploring the Country and its History	50
23	Master Craftsman	52
24	Grey Killer	54
25	Out of the Sky, Death	56
26	Underwater City	58
27	Lucky Chap	60
	List of Words Outside Stage 4	62
	List of Proper Nouns	63

To the Teacher

The passages

This third book in the series contains passages and exercises at the level of Stage 4 of Collins English Library.

Each passage and its exercises are planned to occupy a lesson of 45–50 minutes. Specially written material still has advantages at this stage over the adapted work of other writers. The author has tried to make each piece complete in itself.

The vocabulary

The 1,500 headwords of stages 1–4, and their common derivatives, have been freely used. Much can be expressed and understood in this considerable vocabulary. Some seventy ‘extra’ items are introduced, partly to accustom readers to the appearance of two or three ‘new words’ whenever they read English, and partly to encourage them to work out their meanings in the exercises. (See list on page 62).

Inevitably, there is a rather longer list of proper nouns (page 63). In cases of difficulty, the phonetic transcription should help to get the pronunciation acceptable first time. There is no need for practice here: just present the name as indicated and leave it at that.

How to use the book

The methods put forward here are suggestions only. They have been followed with success among widely differing groups of learners.

Listening and reading

1. Write the two or three unfamiliar words or phrases on the board. Do not explain the meaning. The students shut their books and listen. Read the whole passage to them at your normal reading speed in class. When doing this maintain close contact (‘eye contact’) with the class, i.e. look down at the text only just sufficiently to keep an even flow. When you reach an item written on the board, pause momentarily and point to it.

2. For the second reading, divide the passage into short, manageable sections of two or three sentences each. Try to present each section in a different way. Suggestions are:

a The teacher reads aloud while the students follow the text in their copies.

b Chorus reading of short passages, especially of parts having well defined tone groups, stressed words, weak forms, etc., as in dialogue or very short sentences.

c Chaining in chorus, e.g.

Teacher: The woman—

Class: The woman—

Teacher: had been watching her—

Class: The woman had been watching her—

Teacher: from the bathroom door

Class: The woman had been watching her from the bathroom door.

d Silent reading by the students; short pieces.

e Students *in pairs* reading aloud to each other.

f Stop-go reading in groups of 2–4 students: the idea is for the first reader to stop unexpectedly, the second to carry on immediately, etc.

There is no need for individual students to read aloud to the class.

Exercises

As a general rule first deal with Sections A and B orally, marking in your copy any questions, etc. to which a correct 'answer' is not forthcoming. At first assist the process of deduction. Go on to Sections C to E, again orally. Finally return to any unfinished parts of Sections A and B.

Certain lesson units treat the 'new' vocabulary first, and the order of work (A, B, C, D, E) applies.

Written work

An exercise, or part of one, may be started in class and finished later. Avoid multiple choice exercises, because too much may have to be copied. 'Completions', content questions and all kinds of vocabulary exercises are suitable. Vary the kind of written work from one lesson to the next.

1 Boys on Holiday

Mr Rodda taught us history. I suppose he was a good historian, but that doesn't matter. This story has nothing to do with history. It's about Mr Rodda's great love, and now mine, too.

Every summer he took twelve boys away on holiday. He called these trips 'exploration'. 'We're going to study local history,' he used to say. And of course the headmaster always agreed: local history was an excellent subject for boys to study on holiday. The typed programme listed visits to old castles, churches, libraries . . . So far as I know no boy ever went inside one. Mr Rodda didn't, either. We took small tents, sleeping bags and a cooker; and we camped for a month in the hills. I was lucky enough to go once. I won't ever forget the experience. How can I? I still have *Throb* to remind me of it every day.

Mr Rodda's great love was wild birds. There was nothing the man didn't know about birds. He knew their names on sight. He knew their habits, their calls and the food they liked. He could call any bird towards him by whistling. At the end of our month's camp, a hundred birds were sharing the place with us. Five were sleeping in the tents with us.

We knew them and named them by their calls. I remember *Griff* and *Mort* and *Seelo* and *Freak*. They were the friendliest. They flew behind us to the bus stop when we left. *Throb* was different even then; now, of course, she is very different.

I must tell you about the day when Mr Rodda caught *Throb* and gave her to me . . .

A

Give a one-word answer to each question:

- 1 What did Mr Rodda teach?
- 2 a What was Mr Rodda's great love? b What is mine?
- 3 How often did I go with Mr Rodda?
- 4 By what could he call a bird to him?

B

Give short answers:

- 1 . . . no boy ever went inside one. Inside what?
- 2 Where did we camp?
- 3 What experience won't I ever forget?
- 4 We came home with something that we hadn't taken with us. What was it?

C

Read the following sentences. Change the part in italics with the correct part in brackets.

- 1 *I suppose* Mr Rodda was a good historian. (I'm afraid/I don't think/I believe)
- 2 This story *has nothing to do with* history. (is not about/is all about/tells a little about)
- 3 The typed programme *listed* visits to interesting places. (noticed/made a note of/didn't suggest)
- 4 He knew their names *on sight*. (after he looked at them/as soon as he saw them/when they saw him)
- 5 Throb *reminds me of* that holiday with Mr Rodda. (tells me about/makes me remember/knows I have forgotten)

D

Example: He knew everything about birds=**There was nothing he didn't know** about birds.

Change these sentences in the same way:

- 1 She can cook anything. (There's nothing . . .)
- 2 He knows everything about cars.
- 3 We've sold everything. (There's . . .)
- 4 'I've got everything,' Mr Rich said.
- 5 We enjoyed everything on that holiday.

E

Example: a typed programme=**a programme that somebody has typed**

Give phrases for:

- 1 a window that somebody has broken
- 2 a picture that has been stolen
- 3 an experience that boys share
- 4 food that is cooked
- 5 a plan with which we all agreed

2 Royal Hunter

We saw *Throb's* mother first. She came sailing over the hill on long, lazy wings. 'What a beauty!' I cried.

'Watch her,' Mr Rodda said. 'She has the sharpest pair of eyes in the world. She might show us her power.'

We waited and watched. The bird was circling in the air, rather carelessly I thought. Then suddenly she closed her wings. And she dropped like a bullet to the ground. It was the fastest thing I'd ever seen. A moment later she rose, carrying a small rat. She flew towards some rocks on a hilltop.

'Falcon,' said Mr Rodda. 'Royal hunting bird. She was moving at 120 kilometres an hour when she dropped. The rat didn't have the smallest chance. He was dead before he even saw her. Let's try to follow her. She might be feeding young ones.'

Two days later we found the falcon's nest. Mr Rodda climbed to it and brought back a little grey bird. He put it gently in my hand. I could feel its heart throbbing very fast. 'I'm going to call you *Throb*,' I said to it.

'She's a girl,' Mr Rodda said, 'a female. They're better hunters than the males; and they're easier to teach.'

'Is it all right to take her from the nest?' I asked.

'It's all right for you to have her. I think you love birds. You can give her a safe and happy life. There are three more young ones in the nest. The mother won't miss her, you know. Birds don't count higher than one.'

That afternoon I went by bus to the village. *Throb* needed fresh meat, and we didn't have any in our camp.

A

Complete these sentences, using the verb in brackets.

- 1 The falcon was moving very fast when (drop)
- 2 In spring birds build nests in which (lay)
- 3 A falcon is a hunting bird that (kill) and (eat)
- 4 I called her *Throb* because (throb)
- 5 'The mother won't miss her as' (count)
- 6 I went to the village where (buy)

B

Give a *short* answer to each of these questions:

- 1 The bird was circling. Was she flying carelessly about?
- 2 What was she looking for? What did she find?
- 3 What was the fastest thing I'd ever seen?
- 4 The rat didn't have a chance. He didn't have a chance to do—
what?
- 5 If the falcon was feeding her young, where would she take the food?
- 6 Hunting with a falcon is sometimes called 'The Sport of Kings'.
Which word in the story is connected with kings?
- 7 The young falcon's heart was *throbbing* fast. Which of these things
might also throb, do you think?
an aching head a wound a short knock on the door a
drum machinery in a factory a football

C

Give a complete answer to each of these questions:

- 1 What must a falcon do before it can drop at speed to the ground?
- 2 The falcon was high in the air, but it saw the rat. What does this
tell us about a falcon?
- 3 Why did I have to go to the village that afternoon?
- 4 'You can give her a safe and happy life.' Does this tell us anything
about a wild falcon's life? If so—*what*?

D

In each group, which word does *not* fit?

- 1 cow, mother, daughter, female, bird
- 2 girl, sister, male, *Throb*, cow
- 3 tent, nest, bird, house, home

3 Great Fun, the Eiger

Peter Fern was mad on mountains. Climbing was the love of his life. Church towers, seaside cliffs, rock faces, ice mountains, anything—‘If it’s *there*,’ he used to say, ‘then I want to climb it.’

So the news of his marriage gave me a shock. I’d never known him take much interest in girls. Well, well, Peter Fern a married man! I couldn’t get over it. I wondered whether his wife would try to stop some of his risky adventures.

She was French perhaps—from that place where he usually spent his holidays. Chamonix, wasn’t it? From Chamonix he’d climbed Mont Blanc on his seventeenth birthday, and one of the Aiguilles the day after! That was it, then: she was French, from a mountaineering family, no doubt. No other explanation.

A month later I met them both in town. Anna surprised me—because she was English. She was a dancer in the theatre.

‘Never climbed more than sixty steps in my life,’ she told me. ‘Peter has his interests, and I’ve got mine. No problems.’

‘None at all,’ Peter said, smiling.

‘Where did you spend your honeymoon?’ I asked. ‘Somewhere far from theatreland and mountains, was it?’

‘We had a week’s holiday,’ Anna said. ‘I flew to New York to see the Drake Dancers on Broadway. A wonderful show!’

Peter said, ‘Didn’t want to miss the good weather. So I went to Switzerland and climbed the north face of the Eiger with Allen Dunlop. Great fun, the Eiger. Grand place for a honeymoon! I’ll show you the photographs we took one day.’