



READING

POWER

Third Edition

JAMES I. BROWN

Reading Power

Third Edition

James A. Brown
University of Minnesota

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To the Student

What's most worth knowing? To answer that all-important question is not easy. After all, we're feeling the full impact of a knowledge explosion of unbelievable magnitude. Books, for example, are now being published at a rate of about a thousand a day! If you read only one book today, you have already fallen 999 books behind in your effort to keep informed. That's a dramatic reminder that we're living in a time of fantastic change. It's so rapid we're being put into a state of shock—"future shock" as Toifler once called it.

Well—how about your answer? What *is* most worth knowing? Knowing how to read really well. That was apparently the answer back in the last century. Remember the three R's? Reading stood first and foremost. And that's still the answer today. A nationwide survey published in the *Phi Delta Kappan* lists developing "skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening" as the number one goal of education. Again, reading comes first.

If reading comes first, what comes next? To find out, begin by putting this page so close to your face that your nose actually touches it. Then try to read the entire page. Go ahead. Try it!

See? To read even one page, you need one more thing of key importance—perspective. You need to get back far enough to see the whole, not just a small fragment.

Perspective is, in a word, the key to this book, as it is to life. We have to view the present within the frame of both past and future. This book helps you look back, say, to the white man's first penetration into Indian territory as well as ahead to the need for controlling acid rain here in America. It includes both exposition and narration. It focuses on what's serious and what's humorous, what's entertaining and what's useful. And since all work and no play means lack of perspective, selections touch not only on the work of becoming a good listener or an effective job seeker but also on such fascinating mysteries as bird navigation, the Bermuda Triangle, and learning without a brain. In short, the thirty-one selections provide wide-ranging glimpses of life, from the practical to the exciting.

Furthermore, all the selections are much more than just selections. They fit into a broader perspective, for they let you explore rate and comprehension. They provide, in short, excellent opportunities to apply newly developed reading skills in a variety of reading situations.

The very heart of reading—understanding—must also reflect desired perspective. It's not enough just to get the facts. You want to see both the trees *and* the forest—the facts as well as the main ideas. You'll find both in this book, laid out in gradual steps, which bring factual and thoughtful comprehension into balance. To round out the picture, the skills of listening, outlining, and note-taking are included.

And take vocabulary. It's easy to focus on context and overlook word parts, or on the dictionary and overlook context. For better perspective the exercises put all three together—context, parts, and dictionary.

At times, context—even very limited context—practically defines a strange word for you; at other times it provides little or no help. In the following exercises, the very brief contexts in “Part A, Leaning on Context,” reflect this varying degree of helpfulness. Always, however, the context will let you know the part of speech and, even more important, will lay the groundwork for desired habits of attention to whatever clues are present. Add the heightened awareness of word parts, resulting from “Part B, Leaning on Parts,” and you'll be even better prepared to unravel word meanings. Finally, in “Part C, Making the Words Yours,” you'll find new sentence contexts, more conversational in nature, where you can fit the new words, making them indeed yours.

Of course, reviewing is a necessary part of the learning process. To expedite that step, you'll find mini-reviews of all the prefix, root, and suffix elements covered in Part B, plus an important mini-review of twenty other useful prefix shortcuts. You'll also find a description of a formula—the LDE Formula—that will let you deal with literally thousands of additional word parts. Lastly, you'll find a simplified pronunciation guide to help you with those words that might pose a pronunciation problem.

So, as you work through this book, be assured that you are using the requisite program for vocabulary growth needed to develop that skill most worth having, plus an increased awareness of how to fit what you read into better perspective. It's a challenge worthy of your best efforts.

To the Instructor

This book combines attention to efficient reading with how-to-study suggestions for maximum help in dealing with printed materials. Emphasis is on the practical, an informal style being used to encourage easy reading.

The fourteen instructional articles are short—only a thousand words in length. Each is followed by two selections to provide opportunity for applying the specific instructional techniques or suggestions. This application step moves the reader quickly from theory into practice, making him immediately aware of the usefulness of the technique or method discussed.

The book is divided into five carefully structured parts, each moving the reader one stage further toward fuller development of reading potential. **PART I, THE CHECK-UP**, focuses on the important diagnostic step, with initial explorations into the major factors of reading rate, comprehension, and word power. This opening part is intended to involve the reader and to motivate increased effort, matters of key importance. These informal explorations should probably be supplemented by standardized test scores. The two articles in this part, both narrative in form, focus on human relations.

PART II, THE BUILD-UP, starts the reader on the road to vocabulary improvement and on how to read for facts. The four articles that follow, in recognition of the primary role interest plays in assuring maximum progress, deal with people and, humorously, with the trauma of change, sexist and otherwise.

The first two parts provide the needed foundation for **PART III, THE SPEED-UP**. Under that caption the reader is introduced to specific methods for improving speed. Even more important, the reader is presented with a variety of specialized techniques—surveying, skimming, and scanning—of particular value in achieving academic success.

PART IV, THE SHAPE-UP, turns from rate and methods for improving rate to comprehension—comprehension in depth. Special attention is given to words, paragraphs, and entire selections. The reader is led step by step into increased awareness of how to deal with major elements of written communication, up to and including the outline form. This part ends with practical suggestions for getting better grades and developing the interest patterns so indispensable in handling different subject-matter areas.

Finally, **PART V, THE EASE-UP**, provides a look ahead, fitting the newly developed reading skills and abilities into a broad framework.

As threads running through the entire book, forty-five vocabulary exercises are included, one for each selection. All but the first two have a threefold focus—on context, on word parts (prefixes, roots, and suffixes), and on actual application in natural, conversation-like sentences. Dictionary use is encouraged throughout, but a simplified pronunciation guide is furnished for immediate student help in dealing with words that might pose a

pronunciation problem. Mini-reviews for prefix, root, and suffix elements are an added feature in this edition.

Comprehension tests are provided for all forty-five selections, with attention to reading for both facts and ideas. Application exercises follow each instructional selection, moving the reader directly from theory into practice.

The selections following each instructional article are ordered, insofar as possible, from the easy to the more difficult. As with previous editions, all selections are relatively easy reading, the average being close to the Standard English level of difficulty on the Flesch Reading Ease scale. Furthermore, all the selections are short, over 50 percent being 1,200 words or less. At the same time there is a desirable range of lengths—from 560 to 2,150 words, the average being 1,278 words in length. The selections also touch on a wide variety of subjects, serious and humorous: personal and social problems, listening, sports, pollution and change, history, folklore, mysteries, hypnosis, pain, wealth, marriage, self-improvement and values.

At the end of the book a progress record sheet is included to help the reader visualize improvement, along with a conversion table for use in converting reading time in minutes to word-per-minute rate, and answers to permit an immediate check of comprehension accuracy.

In short, this book is eminently practical, emphasizing both reading and study procedures. Flexibility is a central concept, with specialized techniques, different kinds of comprehension questions, and a wide variety of short, highly interesting articles contributing to that objective. The book is designed to lead the reader step by step toward achieving his or her full potential as reader and student.

I wish to thank my wife, Ruth, who went over every page of the manuscript, making valuable suggestions and perceptive criticisms during its preparation. Her training and experience as a certified tutor and teacher of reading provided important insights.

J.I.B.
Prescott, Arizona

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I The Check-up

Getting Ready for Words

Now for your first step toward greater word power! It's the first of forty-five such word power workouts, each with an in-depth coverage of ten of the most difficult words from the selection that follows. Complete all forty-five; make your vocabulary 450 words richer.

At first in every exercise you'll meet each word in the briefest of contexts, exactly as found in the selection to be read. Sometimes that context supplies no more than an indication of part of speech. You match words and definitions with context help. Next you make the words yours by turning to the longer sentence-length contexts, approximating the English you yourself might use. Fit each word into its appropriate sentence. Then repeat the sentence a time or so to make it seem natural. These steps sharpen your awareness of meaning and provide useful reinforcement before you meet the word for the third time as you read it in its full, complete context.

To make a word yours, use it three times. Once isn't enough. That's only a good beginning. Twice and it's almost within your grasp. It's the third time that does the trick—that makes it rememberable. That's the rationale behind these exercises.

To be sure, you already know some of those 450 words. Even so, the exercises will bring such words closer to the tip of your tongue or pen for easier use. That's called fluency—a very important facet of word power. After all, you don't want to waste time groping for words. You want them ready for immediate use.

In addition, starting with Selection 4, you'll find other vocabulary exercises over all-important prefix, root, and suffix elements—shortcuts to the meanings of over 15,000 words of desk dictionary size.

In short, when you finish this book, your vocabulary should be over 15,450 words stronger. That includes new words, new meanings for old words, old words raised to a more fluent level—plus some dramatically useful shortcuts to word meanings. That all adds up to increased confidence and satisfaction with your improved ability to communicate—in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

So—do each exercise carefully, checking your answers with the key. Clear up any word difficulties before reading on. If needed, get additional help from your dictionary. Always get a total word power score for yourself.

1 Reading Power—Key to Personal Growth**WORD POWER WORKOUT****A. Leaning on Context**

In each of the blanks provided, place the letter that precedes the best definition of the underlined word in context to the left.

FOR EXAMPLE:

0. ... must rely on knowledge

k. depend

Words in Context	Definitions
1. that <u>dependable</u> car	a. shocking; emotionally
2. reading power <u>generates</u> learning power	b. supreme; special
3. lying as in magic <u>preservation</u>	c. reliable
4. know your <u>potential</u>	d. essential
5. a recent comprehensive <u>survey</u>	e. detailed study; investigation
6. an <u>avid</u> reader	f. unchanged condition
7. not nearly so <u>traumatic</u> or unsettling	g. produces
8. of <u>crucial</u> importance	h. capabilities; capacity
9. serves as a <u>catalyst</u>	i. enthusiastic
10. make himself genuinely <u>indispensable</u>	j. way of hastening a result

Check your answers with the Key on page 352 before going on. Review any that you have missed. See the dictionary for further help.

Pronunciation aids: 6. av'id; 7. traw mat'ik; 8. krōō'shul; 9. cat'uh list.

KEY: add, āce; end, ēven; it, īce; odd, ōpen; pōol; up.

B. Leaning on Parts (begins with Selection 4)

C. Making the Words Yours

In each blank below, enter the most appropriate word from the ten words in context in the first exercise, substituting it for the word(s) in parentheses. Use these words: *avid, catalyst, crucial, dependable, generates, indispensable, potential, preservation, survey, traumatic*.

FOR EXAMPLE:

0. Can we (depend)rely..... on him?
-
1. Quick freezing keeps the food in perfect (unchanged condition)
.....
2. Being bitten by a snake can be quite (shocking, emotionally)
.....
3. He's an (enthusiastic) baseball fan.
4. Use this chemical as a (way of speeding up reaction time)
.....
5. Fastening your seat belt is of (special) importance as a safety measure.
6. He's the most (reliable) pass receiver we have.
7. You should make a (detailed study) of the job opportunities in that field.
8. This motor (produces) how much horsepower?
9. You should certainly know your (capabilities)
.....
10. Salt is a(n) (essential) ingredient in cooking.

For the 20 Items on These Pages,
5 Off For Each Mistake.
Word Power Score:
Answer Key on Page 353.

How Well Do You Read?

If you decide to make a trip by car, the first thing you usually do is to get out a map and figure out your best route. It's the same with reading. First, you have to see where you are, decide where you want to go, then lay out the best route for getting there.

As you start your reading improvement program, you have three all-important questions to ask yourself. (1) How fast do I now read? (2) How much do I comprehend? and (3) How much word power do I now have?

Those are the big three. Once you know the answers to those questions, you can see more clearly the best route to follow for maximum improvement. Obviously, you can't know when you've doubled your reading rate unless you know what your present rate is. And you can't know when you've improved comprehension or vocabulary unless you also know what they now are.

You'll find all kinds of combinations. After all, it's not only our fingerprints that are distinctively different. Some read fast and comprehend little; others read fast and comprehend much. With some, vocabulary is well developed; with others it is in need of major attention. What is exactly true of you? What are your own strong points and weak points?

These next few pages will begin to give you some answers. On the next page, you will find a selection which you are now to read. Use a stop watch or clock with a sweep second hand so that you can see exactly how long it takes you to read the entire 1,000-word selection. Read it once only—the way you normally read. Don't try to read either faster or slower than usual. When you have read the very last word, check to see how many minutes and seconds it took you. Then turn to page 346 to determine your word-per-minute reading rate.

Your next step is to take the ten-item test on the page following the selection to check comprehension. Don't look back at the selection. You want to know how much you comprehend with one reading, without further review or looking back.

After the comprehension check, you'll find a twenty-five item vocabulary test to check the third big question—how much word power do I have?

Now get ready to time yourself as you read the following selection—an exact timing. That's important if you are to have an accurate beginning rate score.