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BUILD IT UP

An Advanced Course in ESL/EFL Reading Comprehension

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PREFACE

The aim of this book is to prepare the university student for his or her confrontation with English texts. It is intended primarily for non-native speakers of English in both non-English- and English-speaking environments (EFL, ESL) who need to read professional material written in English in their fields of specialization.

Our classroom experience has shown that a non-native learner of English has to cope with difficulties on two levels, the level of sentence meaning and that of text interpretation. Thus, the methodology presented in the book integrates the teaching of English sentence structures with an emphasis on meaning and the teaching of reading comprehension skills with an emphasis on logical relationships and implications.

The book is divided into two parts: the first, "The Basic Elements of Reading Comprehension," presents specific strategies for the reading of English texts, while the second, "Reading Passages: Integrating the Elements of Reading Comprehension," gives the student an opportunity to integrate the strategies he or she has learned and to apply them to the reading of authentic texts.

The units in Part I move from the structure and meaning of sentences and words to methods of text organization. Unit One presents sentence structure as an aid to meaning. The student is taught to recognize the basic elements of the English sentence and is shown the ways in which a simple sentence can be expanded into a long, complex structure. A technique is provided for dividing these long, complex sentences into manageable units using connectives as markers of both structure and meaning. The student learns how to isolate the main clause and how to identify different types of logical relationship between clauses.

Unit Two introduces reference markers as a way of connecting ideas without the repetition of words or phrases. Unit Three describes a technique that helps students cope with unfamiliar words. Students are given guidance in deducing the meaning of words by using structural and contextual clues.

Having mastered comprehension on the sentence level, the student is shown how sentences are related to each other in the text. In Unit Four the student is brought to understand the rhetorical organization of ideas in paragraphs by being made aware of the way in which comparison, contrast, and cause-effect relationships are expressed as well as the way in which general statements are supported by specific details or illustrated by examples. Emphasis is placed on the use of markers as an aid in recognizing the writer's purpose, and thus the work begun in Unit Two is reinforced, extended, and completed.

Now that the student is equipped with the tools required to read and understand what is directly stated in the text, he or she is ready to learn how to extract information that is only implied and how to predict what is going to come. In Unit Five the student is introduced to the techniques of prediction and inference and is taught how the movement of the writer's argument and the content of an article can be predicted with only minimal reading. To prepare the student for different reading tasks, the techniques of skimming and scanning are explained and practiced. The student is shown how efficient readers use different reading strategies, depending on whether the task is to extract specific items of information or to get a general impression of the main ideas in a text. The last part of this unit seeks to aid the student in the comprehension and assimilation of material by showing how facts or ideas can be clarified, organized, and summarized in varied information transfer activities.

After having worked through the whole of Part I, the student should be aware of the way in which linguistic and discourse signals cooperate and reinforce one another.

In Part II all the skills acquired in Part I are integrated through their application to the reading of authentic texts. The reading passages are academic excerpts of varying lengths, covering a wide range of topics. Each text is introduced by two kinds of pretext activities. The questions for discussion may be used by either student or teacher to develop a "mental set" that facilitates the reading of the text. The prediction exercises provide practice in the technique of skimming for information and in educated guessing on the basis of minimal information.

The texts are followed by a battery of questions. The first set is intended for close reading, and the student is referred to specific paragraph(s) to avoid the distraction of searching for the relevant passage. These questions provide the student with the opportunity of integrating all the skills learned in Part I and give practice in careful reading for detailed information that is relevant to the main ideas of the text.

General comprehension questions are then provided to check the student's ability to cope with a full-length passage in its entirety on a global level (i.e., to extract the writer's message). Application questions are included here to get the student to apply textual information to extratextual

situations. In this way the student receives the training and practice necessary to cope with any reading assignment. The ability to read for different purposes is an absolute prerequisite for success in any university course.

The exercises that follow the texts are varied in their form and demands. There has been no attempt to force a repetitive pattern that would result in a lack of authenticity and a battery of mechanical drills. Instead, exercises have been devised according to the demands of each text, taking into account the writer's style and rhetorical purpose.

This book has been designed to adapt the latest findings in ESL/EFL learning to the specific needs of the university student. It is hoped that by isolating and contextualizing problems of reading comprehension, we have provided for the learner of English, as well as for the teacher, a workable program. In this way, we hope that the student of ESP will be helped in his or her struggle toward a meaningful use of the English language.

Adina Levine • Brenda Oded • Stella Statman

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SOURCE MATERIAL

- Unit One, Activity 12, p. 23. Adapted from Bruno Bettelheim, *The Anatomy of Academic Discontent*, 1969.
- Unit One, Activities 13, 14, pp. 24, 25. From Florence Roswell and Gladys Natchez, *Reading Disability: Diagnosis and Treatment*, 1971.
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- Unit Three, Activity 11, p. 51. From F. L. Marcuse, *Hypnosis; Fact and Fiction*, 1959.
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- Unit Four, Activity 9, p. 63, and Unit 5, Activity 3, p. 100, Paragraph 1. Adapted from Oscar Lewis, *The Culture of Poverty*.
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- Unit Five, Activity 5, p. 122. Adapted from Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, 1961.

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Reading Passages: Integrating the Elements of Reading Comprehension

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PART I

The Basic Elements of Reading Comprehension

The Basic Elements of Reading Comprehension

The purpose of this book is to provide a systematic and comprehensive treatment of the basic elements of reading comprehension. It is designed for use by teachers and students in the field of reading education. The book is divided into two main parts: Part I, which deals with the basic elements of reading comprehension, and Part II, which deals with the application of these elements to the teaching of reading.

Part I is divided into four chapters. Chapter I, "The Nature of Reading," discusses the nature of reading as a complex process involving the integration of various skills and knowledge. Chapter II, "The Role of the Reader," discusses the role of the reader in the reading process, emphasizing the importance of the reader's background knowledge and motivation. Chapter III, "The Role of the Text," discusses the role of the text in the reading process, emphasizing the importance of the text's structure and content. Chapter IV, "The Role of the Teacher," discusses the role of the teacher in the reading process, emphasizing the importance of the teacher's guidance and support.

Part II is divided into four chapters. Chapter V, "The Teaching of Reading," discusses the teaching of reading as a systematic process involving the selection of appropriate texts and the use of effective teaching strategies. Chapter VI, "The Assessment of Reading," discusses the assessment of reading as a process involving the use of various assessment tools and techniques. Chapter VII, "The Remediation of Reading Difficulties," discusses the remediation of reading difficulties as a process involving the identification of the underlying causes of the difficulties and the use of appropriate remedial strategies. Chapter VIII, "The Evaluation of Reading Programs," discusses the evaluation of reading programs as a process involving the use of various evaluation tools and techniques.

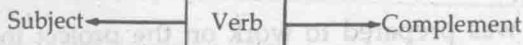
The book is written in a clear and concise style, making it accessible to both teachers and students. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the field of reading education.

UNIT ONE

Understanding the Structure of Sentences

To understand a sentence written in English, it is not enough to know the meaning of the words. The structure of the sentence can be a clue to its meaning if we know how separate parts of a sentence are related to one another.

When the meaning of a long sentence is not clear, it is helpful to begin by finding the main elements of the sentence—its subject and its verb. We isolate the main verb first. The part of the sentence preceding the verb is the subject of the sentence (it answers the question *who?* or *what?*). The part of the sentence following the verb gives additional information (it completes the main idea*).



Read the sentences in the following table. Note the different types of subjects. All of them answer the question, "What requires concentration?"

*To make sentence analysis simpler, we refer to this part of a sentence as a complement without distinguishing among subject complements, object complements, and adverbial complements.

Subject ←	Verb →	Complement
Hard work	requires	concentration.
Reading	requires	concentration.
To study a foreign language	requires	concentration.
To study English at university level in order to read professional material	requires	concentration.

When looking for the main verb of the sentence (the verb of the whole structure) remember that the subject position may be filled by a sentence (clause) with a subject and verb of its own. This subject clause is introduced by *that*, *who*, *what*, *why*, *when*, *where*, *how*, *whether*, *whoever*, and *whatever*.

Read the following sentences. Pay special attention to the noun clause in the subject position and to the question it answers.

Subject ←	Verb →	Complement
What he said about the visiting scholar (What surprised Peter?)	surprised	Peter.
Whether he will agree to the plan or not (What does not concern the mayor?)	does not concern	the mayor.
That he was prepared to work on the project for two years without being paid (What puzzled me?)	puzzled	me.

Note that when a noun clause functions as a subject, it is often extraposed (put at the end of the sentence) and its position is filled by *it*. The meaning remains the same.

Example:

That he was prepared to work on the project for two years without being paid puzzled me. → It puzzled me that he was prepared to work on the project for two years without being paid.

In both sentences, the answer to the question remains the same. What puzzled me? *That he was prepared to work on the project for two years without being paid.*

ACTIVITY 1

Read the sentences below. Answer the question that follows each of them.

Example: That we need much more practice in English is clear.
What is clear?

That we need much more practice in English

1. What the woman said was of great interest to her rival.
What was of great interest to the woman's rival?

2. How the book will sell depends on the reviews.
What depends on the reviews?

3. That he should fail to conduct the investigation seems very strange.
What seems very strange?

4. Whoever lived through that period will never forget it.
Who will never forget it?

5. It has not been decided yet how the company should promote the new product.
What has not been decided yet?

6. It is now generally accepted that there may be life on other planets.
What is now generally accepted?

7. For a slow-track child to become a well-adjusted and successful student is likely to be difficult.
What is likely to be difficult?

8. Writing about citizens and their voluntary services to the needy is a good way to record official appreciation.
What is a good way to record official appreciation?

9. Why she decided to invest in an unstable currency is a mystery to me.

What is a mystery to me?

10. That the water has become polluted is a matter of grave concern.

What is a matter of grave concern?

11. It is difficult for sociologists to obtain reliable samples in a public opinion survey.

What is difficult?

12. To report on a crime without becoming involved in the criminal justice system is hardly possible.

What is hardly possible?

13. To see an accident and not be able to help the victims is a disturbing experience.

What is a disturbing experience?

14. Whatever you invest in this company will be put to good use.

What will be put to good use?

15. Whether the witness actually fired the gun or not does not interest the judge.

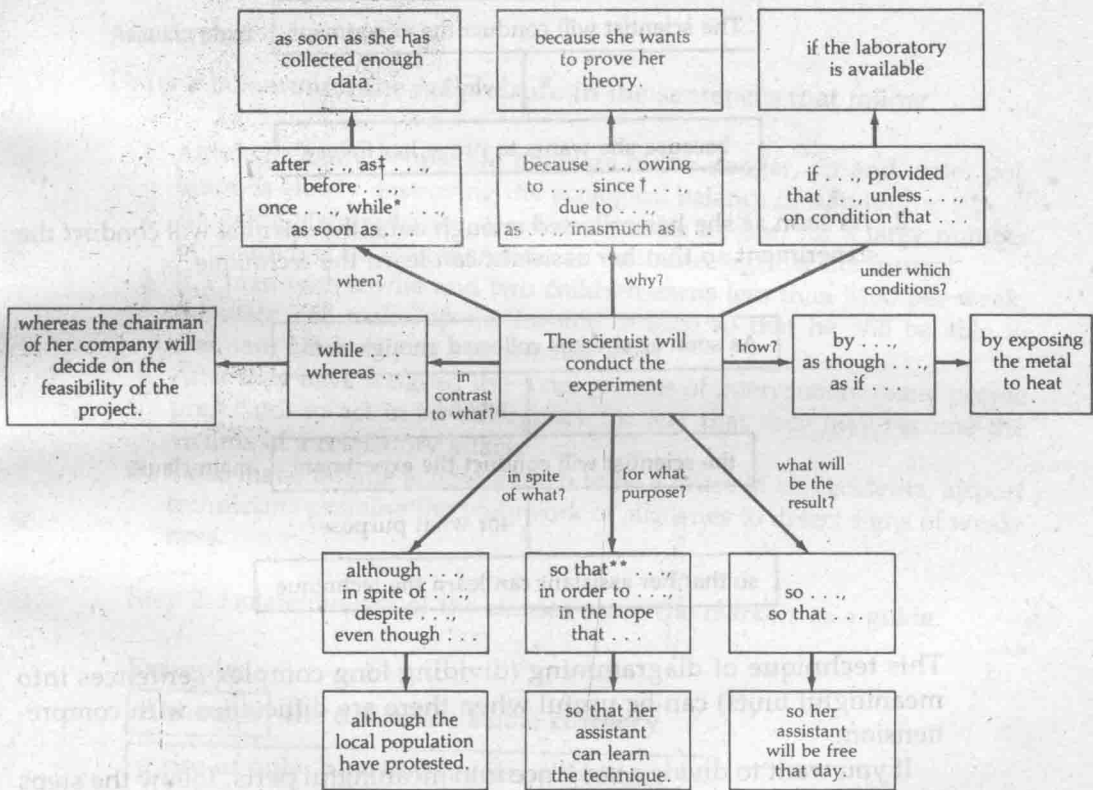
What does not interest the judge?

EXPANSIONS OF THE BASIC SENTENCE

In most academic texts, you will find long complex sentences. It is helpful to remember that even a long and complicated structure can be seen as an expansion of a basic sentence. It contains a main clause and dependent (subordinate) clauses, each giving additional information. The dependent (subordinate) clauses are joined to the main clause by means of connectives. These connecting words, which we shall call *markers*, act as guides in the sentence. They help us to divide the long structure into manageable

units, and they show the logical relationship between the parts. Good readers use markers to predict what kind of information will be given in the sentence.

Look at the following diagram. It contains a simple basic sentence (in the center box), and it shows how this basic sentence can be expanded by units that give additional information.



Note the examples of markers that are used to introduce different types of dependent clauses and pay attention to the questions that they answer. (You will find more detailed lists of markers in Unit Four.)

Some markers can signal more than one type of logical relationship. For example,

*while can introduce clauses of (a) time, (b) contrast:

- The scientist will be conducting the experiment while her assistant will be collecting additional data. (When will the scientist be conducting the experiment?)
- While the manager is very ambitious, his assistant seeks no advancement. (What makes the manager different from his assistant?)

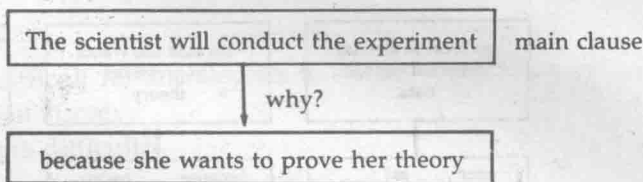
**so that can introduce clauses of (a) purpose, (b) result:

- The scientist will conduct the experiment so that his assistant can learn the technique. (For what purpose will the scientist conduct the experiment?)
- The scientist will conduct the experiment herself so that her assistant will be free. (What will be the result of the scientist conducting the experiment herself?) (footnote continues)

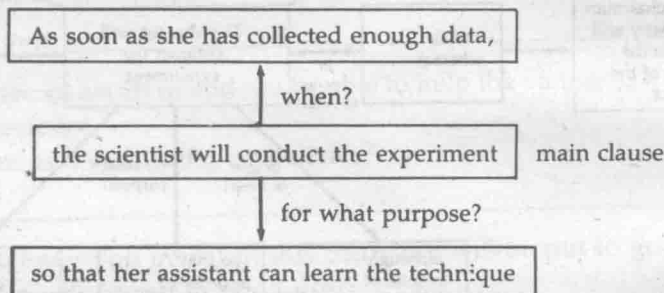
By combining the main clause (in the center box) with one or more of the clauses in the other boxes, we can form a complex sentence.

Example:

1. The scientist will conduct the experiment because she wants to prove her theory.



2. As soon as she has collected enough data, the scientist will conduct the experiment so that her assistant can learn the technique.



This technique of diagramming (dividing long complex sentences into meaningful units) can be useful when there are difficulties with comprehension.

If you want to divide a sentence into meaningful parts, follow the steps listed below.

Step 1: Isolate the main clause. In most cases, this is the clause that is not introduced by a connective. Note that when the main clause is separated from the rest of the structure, it can stand alone as a complete sentence. The main clause expresses the main point of the sentence.

tsince can introduce clauses of (a) time, (b) cause:

- a. The scientist has been very happy since the day he published the results of the experiments. (Since when has the scientist been happy?)
- b. The scientist could not report on the experiment since the final results had not arrived. (Why couldn't the scientist report on the experiment?)

tas can introduce clauses of (a) time, (b) cause, (c) manner:

- a. As the scientist was conducting the experiment, she encountered some unexpected difficulties. (When did the scientist encounter some unexpected difficulties?)
- b. The scientist could not report on the experiment as the final results had not been published. (Why couldn't the scientist report on the experiment?)
- c. The scientist will conduct the experiment as he pleases. (How will the scientist conduct the experiment?)

Example:

Although it is a stable currency, a rise of only 2 percent a year will reduce the purchasing power of the dollar by 45 percent in 30 years so that the pension or life insurance of one's youth will have lost nearly half its purchasing power before one has reached the age of retirement.

ACTIVITY 2

Draw a box around the main clause in the sentences that follow.

1. Although many people are unaware of the danger, air and water pollution is slowly destroying the ecological balance of nature.
2. As living standards rise, families decrease in size, for a large number of children is no longer seen as an insurance against the future.
3. If a man with a wife and two children earns less than \$100 per week, the state will make up his income to \$200 so that he will be able to maintain his family at a reasonable level.
4. After they have weighed the consequences of intervention, many people prefer not to act in an emergency for fear that they may become the victims of a retaliatory attack.
5. Since metal fatigue is now known to be a cause of air accidents, airport technicians examine the bodywork of airplanes to detect signs of weakness.

Step 2: Isolate the rest of the clauses using the markers as a guide.

Example:

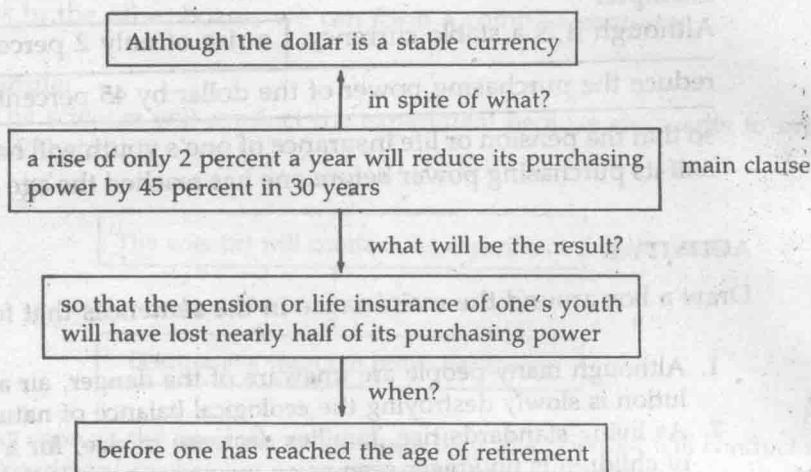
Although the dollar is a stable currency
a rise of only 2 percent a year will reduce its purchasing power by 45 percent in 30 years main clause
so that the pension or life insurance of one's youth will have lost nearly half its purchasing power
before one has reached the age of retirement.

ACTIVITY 3

Go back to the sentences in Activity 2 and isolate the rest of the clauses as in the example, using the markers as a guide.

Step 3: Draw a box around each clause. Then draw arrows to show the relationship between the main and dependent clauses with the arrows pointing to the dependent clauses. Ask questions to name the relationship among the parts. (Refer to the table on page 7.)

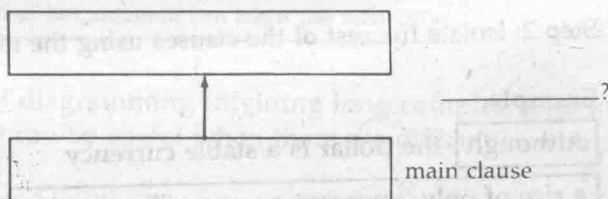
Example:



ACTIVITY 4

The sentences in Activity 2 appear next. Each is followed by a diagram. Complete all the stages by filling in the boxes and asking the questions that show the meaningful relationship among the parts.

1. Although many people are unaware of the danger, air and water pollution are slowly destroying the ecological balance of nature.



2. If a man with a wife and two children earns less than \$100 a week, the state will make up his income to \$200 so that he will be able to maintain his family at a reasonable level.

