

ENCOUNTERS

A Basic Reader

Second Edition



Paul Pimsleur Donald Berger Beverly Pimsleur

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Encounters

A Basic Reader

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Preface to the Second Edition

Professor Paul Pimsleur, coauthor of *Encounters*, died in 1976. This new edition was prepared by his wife, Beverly Pimsleur, who had worked with him on this and other language texts, and by his coauthor, Donald Berger.

No fundamental changes have been made in Professor Pimsleur's original concept—a graded reader based on articles from current periodicals. However, the book has been generally updated to reflect new dimensions in American culture, and major changes have been made in the design and picture program. The number of exercises has been increased by more than a third, and greater emphasis has been placed on vocabulary practice. In addition, special dictation exercises have been prepared and are included in the Instructor's Manual.

We would like to thank William Pullin for his advice and support in the preparation of this edition, and Clarice Wilks Kaltinick for her suggestions and comments during the early stages. Our special thanks go to Elaine Bernstein, William Dyckes, Robert Karpen, and Arlene Kosarin of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich for their careful work and dedication, and to Joel and Terry Pimsleur for their unique contributions.

Donald Berger
Beverly Pimsleur

from the Preface to the First Edition

This is a book of journalistic articles, simplified and arranged for students desiring to improve their reading of English. The aim is to familiarize students with American magazines and newspapers, and to help them progress step by step toward reading fluently.

The vocabulary consists of some 1500 basic words, with the less common words defined in the margins. Exercises following the articles stress vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Our intention is to encourage students to know more, not just about the English language but about interesting or unusual aspects of life in North America.

*Paul Pimsleur
Donald Berger*

Introduction

The selections in this book are drawn from magazines and newspapers like *Newsweek* and *The New York Times*. They are adapted to meet space and vocabulary restrictions, and to maintain a gradation of difficulty from the beginning of the book to the end. In every case, we have tried to keep the style and spirit of the original articles alive, so that they will be as interesting to new readers as they were to us when we first read them.

In short, students will find here the kind of reading matter they might encounter daily—the kind they would want to read for their own information and enjoyment—but simplified to the point where they can truly *read* and not merely decipher it.

Gradation

Reading with understanding depends on the interplay of three factors: vocabulary, structure (grammar), and meaning. If the meaning of a sentence is obvious, most students will understand it in spite of a difficult word or structure; if the meaning is unclear, even knowing all the words and structures may not suffice to interpret it.

In sequencing the articles in this book, we have tried to control this three-fold measure of difficulty. We assume from the outset that students are at least somewhat familiar with a basic vocabulary, and that they have covered in class the chief grammatical structures of English. Having learned these words and structures one by one from a textbook, they are now ready for the next step in learning to read: encountering them in real life. The earliest articles in this book are the simplest ones; they gradually grow more complex in vocabulary, structure, and meaning, but with an attempt to compensate for any special difficulty in one area by simplicity in the others. Our point is to give students extensive practice in understanding natural English prose, at a rate of difficulty that will challenge but not overwhelm them.

Vocabulary

The basic vocabulary of *Encounters* consists of approximately 1500 high-utility words.* A certain number of other words also appear, but these are limited to no more than one new word in thirty-five familiar ones. Students should be able to read several lines, picking up speed and fluency, before they encounter an unknown word. Once introduced, a new word generally recurs several times, in different contexts, to help ensure retention.

* The basic vocabulary, with which students are assumed to be familiar, is taken from words with the highest frequencies in lists found in: Michael P. West and James G. Endicott, *The New Method English Dictionary*, 4th ed. (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1961); John B. Carroll, Peter Davies, and Barry Richman, *The American Heritage Word Frequency Book* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1971); and John R. Shaw and Janet Shaw, *The New Horizon Ladder Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: New American Library, 1970).

Exercises

The exercises are designed to channel the students' enthusiasm into useful language-learning activities. Some exercises reinforce points of vocabulary and grammar; others challenge the students to answer questions and to express views. The exercises are brief and varied, so as not to risk dulling the students' zest for reading.

Vocabulary Exercises

At least two vocabulary exercises appear after each story, using such techniques as requiring definitions using words from the story ("If many cars use a street, there is heavy *traffic*"). In most cases, the students should supply the missing words or phrase from memory. It is best to go on to the next item if the answer cannot be found quickly.

In responding, the student should say the whole sentence, not just the missing word. The instructor should insist on accurate pronunciation, modeling the pronunciation for the class when necessary. Choral (whole-class) and individual repetition are both valuable in exercising pronunciation.

Grammar Exercises

Two or more grammatical exercises called *Structures* follow each article. These are "pattern drills." They progress in difficulty during the course of the book and touch upon many important points of English grammar. An exercise from an article on bicycling in New York City will illustrate how they can be used.

MODEL

More people use bikes. → **If more people used bikes, we'd all be happier.**

1. Store owners support the idea.
 2. The city paints special bicycle lanes.
 3. The government decides what to do.
 4. Hundreds of people ride bicycles to work.
-

To begin, the instructor says the model stimulus and response several times, at normal speed, both to show the students what to do, and to model the correct intonation. Then the instructor

says the stimulus alone ("More people use bikes.") and indicates by a gesture that all the students are to respond, in chorus ("If more people used bikes, we'd all be happier."). The instructor then says sentence one ("Store owners support the idea.") and waits for a choral response from the class ("If store owners supported the idea, we'd all be happier."). The correct response is confirmed by repeating it after the students. If the drill proves easy, the instructor may call on individuals to respond to the remaining sentences; if it is difficult, the choral work may be continued, giving the class added practice. The drill can be lengthened by reusing the same sentences in random order. As a final step, the instructor might go through it a second time, having individual students say the stimuli and the responses.

It is possible to do these drills in writing, and even to use them as tests, but it is important to first do them aloud quite thoroughly, so that the grammatical point is mastered by sound as well as by sight.

The easiest of the comprehension exercises are those called *True or False*. These consist of statements about the article, some true, some not. If a statement is true, students should repeat it aloud, possibly prefacing it with an expression of agreement like "That's true," or "That's right." If the statement is false, they should make whatever changes are necessary to make it true. This type of exercise is meant to be easy enough so that all students can participate in it successfully.

Next in difficulty are the *Questions* found after every article. They test the students' understanding of the article's main ideas, rather than its details. Students should be encouraged to attempt the fullest answers they feel capable of expressing, and to give natural answers, substituting pronouns for nouns, for example.

The most challenging exercises appear under the headings *Points of View*, *Discussion*, and *Imagination*. Here, the students are invited to express their own views on topics suggested by the article. These exercises often elicit lively classroom discussion. Later, after the discussion has helped the students to formulate their ideas, these topics can be assigned as compositions.

A special category of exercises called *Cross-Cultural Topics* invites comparisons between life styles in various parts of America and/or other parts of the world. These are always placed last and may be omitted if they are inappropriate.

Comprehension Exercises

Dictation Exercises

Dictation exercises are very helpful in giving students practice in writing. These exercises, however, appear only in the Instructor's Manual. The instructor may omit any of these or may add other dictation exercises taken word for word from the articles, or with minor changes, as desired.

Dictations should be scheduled for a time after the students have become quite familiar with the article and have completed most or all of the accompanying exercises.

Teaching Suggestions

Prereading

It is often helpful to prepare the students for the article they are about to read. Instructors, speaking from their own experiences, can offer some details about the magazine, the topic, or the circumstances surrounding the article. They can also present words and constructions that the students may have difficulty in reading, by making up examples that are similar, but not identical, to the difficult ones. Further, they can focus the students' attention and help them to read with a purpose by asking in advance two or three questions to which the students are to find the answer in the article.

Mechanics of Reading

Reading is usually done silently, as a form of covert speech, and the instructor needs to make certain that the sounds the students make while reading silently are correct ones. If not, poor speech habits may be reinforced. Learning the mechanics of reading includes:

- acquiring the habit of making accurate correspondences between sounds and printed letters
- learning to read in meaningful thought groups rather than deciphering word by word
- acquiring sufficient speed to make fluent reading with comprehension possible

Certain classroom techniques can help to further these objectives.

1. The instructor can periodically read aloud to the students, phrase by phrase, while they follow in their books and repeat each phrase immediately afterward, in chorus. The phrases may be short at first, and gradually grow longer. The instructor can encourage the students to continue reading in this manner, even when reading silently, by occasionally having one student read aloud.
2. Reading aloud will be more effective if the other students do not follow along in their books. While one student reads, the others should have their books *closed* and should try to grasp the meaning entirely from the reader's voice. Classes unused to this method find it challenging at first, but soon grow accustomed to it if the instructor perseveres. The instructor can also interrupt the reader from time to time to question the class on points of vocabulary, grammar, and meaning.
3. The instructor may prepare language laboratory tapes to supplement the readings. One method is to read an article phrase by phrase onto the tape, leaving a pause between each phrase so that the student can repeat what was said. A valuable variation on the repetition method is to have the student try to *anticipate* the instructor's phrasing on the second (and subsequent) passes through the tape. If the student reads the phrase *before* the instructor does, the instructor's voice will serve as a confirmation. This method also trains the student to read in meaningful thought groups.

These are only a few of the many techniques that experienced instructors use to develop reading skills in an atmosphere of lively oral give-and-take. We would enjoy hearing from any users of this book who may want to tell us about teaching techniques that they are using successfully.

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1 Everybody's Jogging

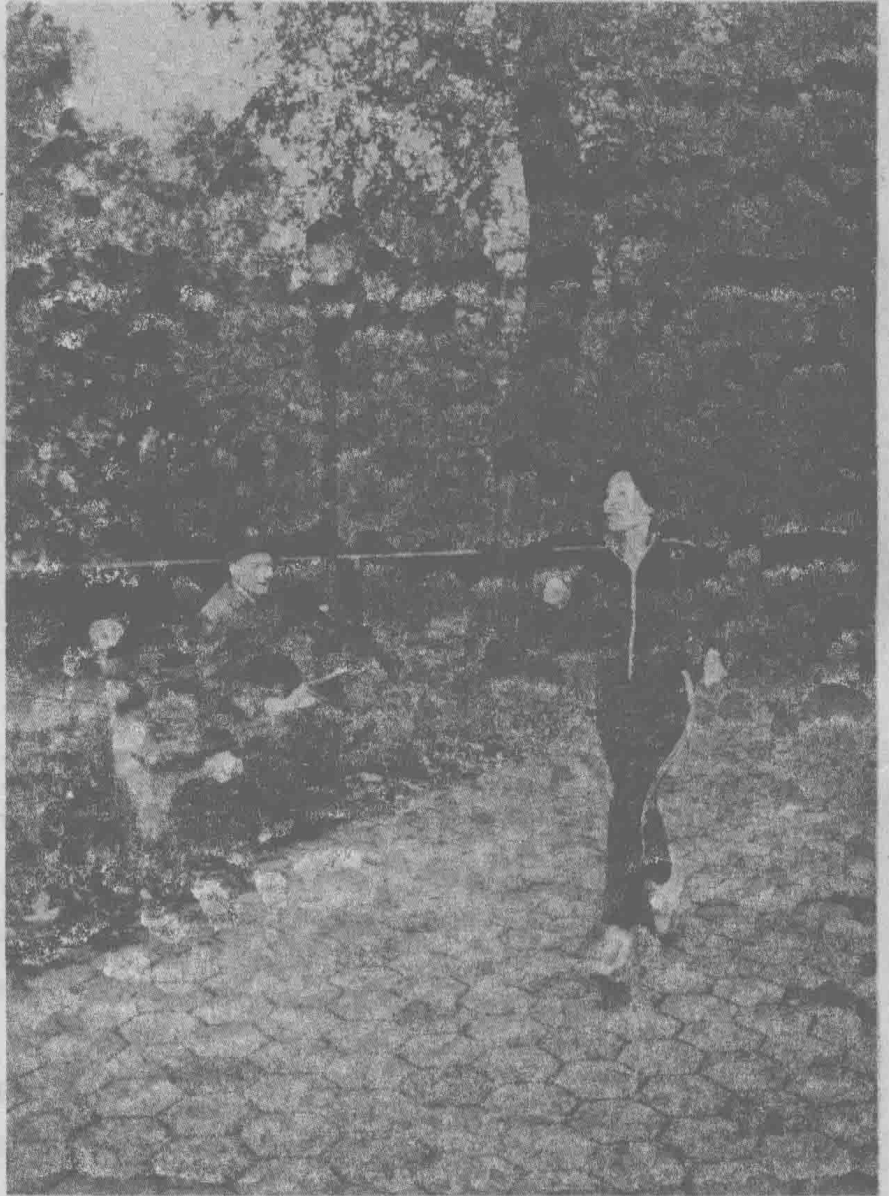


bench

Jogging has become a popular form of exercise.

As the young woman ran by, the old man sitting on the park bench° asked, "What are you running for?" The woman smiled. "I'm not running, I'm jogging," she said, and she continued her slow run through the park.

Every day, in all kinds of weather, many thousands of men and women jog. Why has jogging—running slowly for long distances—become so popular? Most joggers begin because they





Joggers are out in all kinds of weather.

hear it is very good exercise. Jogging makes the heart stronger and helps people lose weight. It can also help them feel better about themselves.

Donald Robbins, who is forty-two years old and works in an office, began jogging a few years ago because he felt he was too fat. At first he could only run about 100 yards. It took him three months to be able to run a mile. But two years later, he ran in a marathon race—over twenty-six miles. Many joggers, like Donald Robbins, feel that if they can succeed at jogging, they can succeed at other things also, and quite often this feeling helps them at their jobs.°

the work a person does