

► Reading to Improve Reading

An EFL Reader for University Students

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► Introduction

Reading comprehension is believed to be one of the most useful and important skills for the university students. It is useful, because most of the students at the college level obtain bulk of information about their major through reading in professional journals, websites, and satellites. Therefore, policy makers have decided to give priority to reading skill in their programs.

In spite of the fact that a good number of reading comprehension books have been published locally or internationally, the number of books that are convenient for students at general English course levels is limited. Firstly, the volume of some books is too much to be covered in the formal university courses. Secondly, some of these books contain texts that seem to be culturally inappropriate for the context of Iranian educational system. Thirdly, some subskills, strategies, and techniques that are involved in reading comprehension skill are ignored in some books.

Therefore, we have decided to select various reading passages from internet and other books and make some modifications in the context, organization, and length of texts to make them more useful and convenient for the purpose of improving the reading skills of university students.

Reading to Improve Reading is a reading text for university students to study in general English courses. In **Reading to Improve Reading**, reading passages serve as springboards for reading skills, vocabulary building, grammar points and writing skills. **Reading to Improve Reading** might be used as a course book to teach in the classroom or it might be referred to as a self-study source. It includes fifteen chapters that deal with miscellaneous subjects. Each chapter in **Reading to Improve Reading** includes seven sections described below.

1. Reading Skill

The purpose of this page is to bring the theme and the content of the chapter into the readers' focus of attention. At the beginning of each *Reading skill* section, students encounter a short explanation of the skill in focus and, when appropriate, an example of how that skill relates to the reading in the chapter. The task following this explanation asks the students to go to the reading to think about and apply the new reading skill.

2. Reading Passage

In general, the readings become increasingly longer and more complex as the chapters progress. To help learners tackle each passage, challenging words and expressions are glossed throughout the readings. In many cases we have glossed expressions (e.g., to get into a rage) instead of individual vocabulary item (e.g., rage). This approach helps students develop a better sense of how important context is to understanding the meaning of new words. The teacher may ask students to circle words, write questions in margins, and take notes. These are the ways in which students can make reading a more active and meaningful experience.

For easy reference, every fifth line of each selection is numbered.

3. Reading Comprehension

Following each reading, there are post-reading activities that give learners the chance to clarify their understanding of the text and work through on their own. These activities include comprehension questions which can be done orally or in written form, true/false statements, crosswords based on the vocabulary used in the same chapter, and/or multiple choice items.

4. Vocabulary Comprehension

We pay careful attention to develop students' vocabulary learning skills in each chapter of the book. The exercises that follow the reading comprehension passage are intended to develop and improve learners' vocabulary span. These activities include vocabulary review to match synonyms, crossword puzzles, multiple choice items, fill-in exercises and vocabulary practice in new context. The latter is a fill-in exercise designed as a way to determine whether students are capable of using the vocabulary in a new context but with the same meaning. This exercise can be done for homework or in class as a group work.

5. Vocabulary Skill

Following each *vocabulary comprehension* section, vocabulary-building skills such as understanding prefixes and suffixes, using a learner's dictionary, and a variety of other vocabulary-building skills are taught throughout the book. Like the reading skill activities, each vocabulary skill section starts out with a short explanation and, when appropriate, examples of the skill in focus and goes on with tasks to be carried out.

6. Grammar Digest

The next skill-building section in each chapter calls attention to important grammatical structures and functions that occur with some degree of frequency. The goal of this section is to focus students' attention on grammatical points as they occur and are used in context.

7. Real Life Skill

At the end of each chapter, the students are given an opportunity to strengthen their language abilities through learning various vocabularies, punctuation rules, units of measurement, etc. in order to be able to use language effectively in real life situations.

This common project grows out of several years experience in teaching reading comprehension to university students. We hope you enjoy teaching and reading with **Reading to Improve Reading**.

**Majid Darvish Hosseini
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Esmael Alijani**

July, 2011

Top 5 Tips to Improve Your Reading Comprehension

Strengthen reading comprehension with these easy tips

The ability to understand and remember reading material is important for success in school and everyday life. This is especially true for students with learning disabilities in reading, and language comprehension. Learn helpful tips to improve your ability and increase your success in reading and learning.

1. Improve reading comprehension with pre-reading tasks

Before reading the text, ask yourself what you already know about its topic. Try to recall as much information as you can. Think of related ideas you've learned in the past. Make brief notes about your thoughts or discuss what you remember with others.

2. Improve your reading comprehension by researching the topic

Background information may appear on book covers and inner flaps of book jackets. Many books include an introductory section and a mini-biography about the author. Book publisher's websites may also include background information. Think about the information you read. Ask:

- What kind of text is this?
- What new information did I learn, and what do I expect to learn?
- Is this text informative or entertaining, fact or fiction?
- What interests me about this book?

3. Learn new vocabulary words to improve reading comprehension

As you read, make a list of unfamiliar vocabulary words. Look up the meanings of the words in the dictionary, and write definitions down by hand. Writing definitions by hand will help you remember the definition much more than by typing or by reading alone.

4. Improve your understanding by reflecting on the material and asking questions

As you read, what questions come to mind? Read on to find the answers. You can think about the questions and answers or write them down on paper. Research indicates that writing notes by hand can increase

comprehension and recall among students who are not learning disabled in writing.

5. Test yourself to determine how well you've learned the material

After your reading session, quiz yourself on the main points. What was the main idea? Who are the characters in the story? What information did you learn? Jot down your thoughts in your own words to help you remember them and give you deeper insight into the topic.

www.ketab.ir

Phonetic Symbols (the standard set of phonemic symbols for English)

Consonants		Vowels	
p	<i>pen, copy, happen</i>	ɪ	<i>kil, bid, hymn, minute</i>
b	<i>back, baby, job</i>	e	<i>dress, bed, head, many</i>
t	<i>tea, tight, button</i>	æ	<i>trap, bad</i>
d	<i>day, ladder, odd</i>	ɒ	<i>lot, odd, wash</i>
k	<i>key, clock, school</i>	ʌ	<i>strut, mud, love, blood</i>
g	<i>get, giggle, ghost</i>	ʊ	<i>foot, good, put</i>
tʃ	<i>church, match, nature</i>	iː	<i>fleece, sea, machine</i>
dʒ	<i>judge, age, soldier</i>	eɪ	<i>face, day, break</i>
f	<i>fat, coffee, rough, photo</i>	aɪ	<i>price, high, try</i>
v	<i>view, heavy, move</i>	ɔɪ	<i>choice, boy</i>
θ	<i>thing, author, path</i>	uː	<i>goose, two, blue, group</i>
ð	<i>this, other, smooth</i>	əʊ	<i>goat, show, no</i>
s	<i>soon, cease, sister</i>	aʊ	<i>mouth, now</i>
z	<i>zero, music, roses, buzz</i>	ɪə	<i>near, here, weary</i>
ʃ	<i>ship, sure, national</i>	eə	<i>square, fair, various</i>
ʒ	<i>pleasure, vision</i>	ɑː	<i>start, father</i>
h	<i>hot, whole, ahead</i>	ɔː	<i>thought, law, north, war</i>
m	<i>more, hammer, sum</i>	ʊə	<i>poor, jury, cure</i>
n	<i>nice, know, funny, sun</i>	ɜː	<i>nurse, stir, learn, refer</i>
ŋ	<i>ring, anger, thanks, sung</i>	ə	<i>about, common, standard</i>
l	<i>light, valley, feel</i>	ɪ	<i>happy, radiate, glorious</i>
r	<i>right, wrong, sorry, arrange</i>	ʊ	<i>thank you, influence, situation</i>
j	<i>yet, use, beauty, few</i>	ɪ	<i>suddenly, cotton</i>
w	<i>wet, one, when, world</i>	ɪ	<i>middle, metal</i>
ʔ	<i>(glottal stop) department, football</i>	ˈ	<i>(stress mark)</i>