

ACTIVE READING SKILLS BOOK 3

Compilers and Editors

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ACTIVE READING SKILLS BOOK 3

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Active Reading Skills, books 1, 2, and 3 are reading texts intended for academically oriented students of English as a foreign language who have had at least some exposure to English. It encompasses such areas as health, history, science, and technology. Experience has shown that college-bound students are interested in working with more academic subjects than are often found in EFL texts at the lower level. At the same time, beginning EFL students need to work with topics that they have some familiarity with—those topics for which they have background knowledge to draw on. *Active Reading Skills* focuses on reading skills. The complete series has been designed to meet the needs of students from the beginning to the advanced levels and includes three books or levels.

Active Reading Skills provides students with essential practice in the type of reading skills they need in an academic environment. Foreign students are rarely exposed to this type of reading material. These texts have real-life activities that give students specific tasks to complete.

This text consists of fifteen chapters that deal with related subjects. At the same time, each chapter is entirely separate in content from the other chapters.

The opening illustrations encourage the students to think about the ideas, facts, and vocabulary that will be presented in the passage. Discussing illustrations in class helps lower level students visualize what they are going to read about and gives them cues for the new vocabulary they will encounter. Working in groups to activate and discuss prior knowledge of a subject helps enhance reading comprehension.

Readers, specially beginning foreign language readers, vary considerably in their strategy use and comprehension monitoring activities. Some readers benefit more from focusing on reading one or two paragraphs at a time and checking their comprehension before continuing to read. Other readers may prefer to read an entire passage and then consider questions related to the reading. Consequently, in order to provide maximum flexibility, all the read-

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ing passages are followed by questions on content and vocabulary. The teacher and students may read the passage first, then attend to the following questions.

The exercises that follow the reading passage are intended to develop and improve reading proficiency (including the ability to learn new vocabulary from context) and comprehension of English sentence structure. The activities give students the opportunity to master useful vocabulary encountered in the articles through discussions and group work and the students to comprehension of main ideas and specific information.

Many of the activities are of the type that enable students to manipulate the information in the text and supplemental information.

Much of the vocabulary is recycled in the exercise activities in any given chapter, as well as throughout the book. Experience has shown that students especially need repeated exposure to new vocabulary and word forms. Repetition of vocabulary in varied contexts helps the students not only understand the new vocabulary better, but also helps them remember better.

As the students work through the text, they will learn and improve reading skills and develop confidence in their growing English proficiency skills. At the same time, the teacher will be able to observe their steady progress towards skillful, independent reading.

How to use these books

Every chapter usually consists of the following:

Reading Passage

Fact-Finding Exercise

Reading Analysis

Word Forms

Dictionary Skills

Vocabulary in Context

Crossword Puzzle

Cloze Quiz

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Although each chapter can be done entirely in class, some exercises may be assigned for homework. This, of course, depends on the individual teacher's preference, as well as the availability of class time. Classwork will be most effective when done in pairs or groups, giving the students more opportunity to interact with the material and with each other.

Reading Passage

The students will read the passage for the first time. They should be instructed to time themselves and to try to aim for a higher reading speed the second time they read the passage. They should also be encouraged to read *ideas*, not just words.

Fact-Finding Exercise

After reading the passage again, the students will read the True / False statements and check whether they are true or false. If the statement is false, the students will rewrite the statement so that it is true. They will then go back to the passage and find the line(s) that contain the correct answer. This activity can be done individually or in groups.

Reading Analysis

The students will read each question and answer it. The first question in this section refers to the main idea. There are three possible answers. Two answers are incorrect because they are too general or too narrow, they are not mentioned in the passage, or they are false. When going over the exercise, the teacher should discuss with the students why the other two answers are incorrect. The rest of this exercise requires the students to think about the structure of the sentences and paragraphs, and the relationships of ideas to each other. This exercise is very effective when done in groups. It may also be done individually, but if done in groups it gives the students an excellent opportunity to discuss possible answers.

Word Forms

In order to successfully do the Word Form exercises, students will need to understand parts of speech, specifically nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Teachers should point out each word form's position in a sentence. Students will develop a sense for which part of speech is necessary in a given sentence. Because this is a low-level text, the Word Form exercise simply asks students to identify the correct part of speech. They do not need to consider the tense of verbs or the number (singular or plural) of nouns.

Vocabulary in Context

This is a fill-in exercise designed as a review of the items in the previous exercises. This exercise may be done for homework as a review or in class as group work.

Crossword Puzzle

Each chapter contains a Crossword Puzzle based on the vocabulary used in that chapter. Crossword Puzzles are especially effective when students work in pairs. Working together provides students with an opportunity to speak together and to discuss their reasons for their answers.

If pronunciation practice of letters is needed, students can go over the puzzle orally. The teacher can have the students spell out their answers in addition to pronouncing the words themselves. Students invariably enjoy doing Crossword Puzzles. They are a fun way to reinforce the vocabulary presented in the various exercises in each chapter, and they require students to pay attention to correct spelling.

Cloze Quiz

The Cloze test is the passage itself with some vocabulary items focused on the previous exercises and question sections omitted. The Cloze Quiz tests not only vocabulary but also sentence structure and comprehension in general. The students are given the words to be filled in the blank spaces.

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