



GENERAL

ENGLISH

READINGS

Written by:

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A Book which is :

- ✓ Diverse in content**
- ✓ Presentable in EFL Classes**
- ✓ Unique in manner of presentation**
- ✓ Affluent in Synonyms and Antonyms**
- ✓ Coverable at tertiary level of education**
- ✓ Appropriate for General English Promotion**

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In the name of God

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Preface

The book **GENERAL ENGLISH READINGS** encompasses 12 units each of which entails seven sections as follows:

1. Reading-In this section a reading material is presented which should be propounded and expounded in the classroom. Before attending the class, dear students are advised to have pre-reading activities in relationship with the reading materials in the book.
2. Comprehension Check-In this section, 5-10 multiple-choice questions concerning the reading material are mooted. The aim is to check learners' rate of reading comprehension.
3. Synonym Exploration-In this section, learners are asked to explore the text and find synonyms for the words specified. The number of synonyms to be found is not fixed throughout the twelve units; it varies from unit to unit depending on the text which is being covered.
4. Antonym Exploration-In this section, learners are required to explore the text and find antonyms for some lexical items specified. The number of antonyms to be located is variable from one unit to another.
5. Sentence Completion-In this section, some incomplete sentences are presented. The learners are asked to complete them using certain words in a box. The words to be chosen are familiar because they have been encountered in the text. The aim is to check the ability to apply familiar vocabulary items in unfamiliar contexts.
6. Word Formation-In this section, learners are asked to fill in some given blank spaces using appropriate words chosen from a table. The table consists of four columns of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. In some units, the words whose appropriate forms to be used in the blanks, are presented in parentheses. However, the nature of the exercise makes no difference-the learner, with the help of his/her grammatical knowledge should decide what form of the word to utilize in the blank space provided.
7. Now Test Yourself-In this section, learners are provided with some multiple-choice questions varying from 10 to 20 in number. The aim is to check how well the student has learned the lexical items encountered and/or practiced in sections 1-6. In a nutshell, this section acts as a self-assessment.

The book is unique in some respects. First, unlike most general English related books, it avoids providing definitions in the name of synonyms. Instead, it presents single words as synonyms of some lexical items. The advantage of this method is the simplicity of memorizing the related synonyms. In this way, the learner is encouraged to increase and reinforce his/her vocabulary knowledge. Second, it presents and/or teaches a considerable number of antonyms to the learners. This is a task which is scarcely approached in similar books available in the market. Third, it challenges the lexical knowledge of respectable English instructors and motivate them to revise, revive and promote their vocabulary awareness. Fourth, it is also presentable to the students of English as a foreign language because it is affluent in view of vocabulary exercises. Sixth, it is compact. Most similar books are in possession of several lengthy texts which are not coverable during a semester. **GENERAL ENGLISH READINGS**, however, can be wholly covered in a period of 3 months. The last uniqueness of the book may be related to the existence of a self-assessment under the rubric of **NOW TEST YOURSELF** at the end of each unit. Although there exist certain general English books that provide the learners with the opportunity to appraise themselves, the number of such books is scarce in the market.

Mohammad Sharifi, M.A.

SECTION ONE : READING

WHO INVENTED THE ZERO?

The invention of zero has had a tremendous impact on the history of mankind because it made the development of higher mathematics possible. Although it is not known with certainty who invented it, there is no controversy about the claim that it was invented in India around 2nd-3rd century A.D.

Right from the beginning of civilization man has tried many different methods to write the numbers. For this purpose, Greeks used letters of their alphabet and Egyptians applied appropriate pictures. Romans used a complicated system. They used X, C, and M to represent 10, 100, and 1000 respectively. Also, they used I, V, L, and D for 1, 5, 50, and 500 respectively. For example, they used IV to express 4. If they wanted to write 1648, they wrote MDCXLVIII. This was indeed a complicated system.

Long before the birth of Jesus Christ, the Hindus in India, however, had invented a far better number system but without zero at that time. Later zero was invented. It was brought to Europe by the Arab traders in 900 A.D. It is called the Hindu-Arabic system.

In this system, all numbers are written within the nine digits 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and the zero (sunya). Here each figure has a value according to the place in which it is written. The Romans didn't have a zero in their system.

SECTION TWO : COMPREHENSION CHECK

Now that you have read the text and figured its meaning out, check the correct answers.

1. The best title for the text is-----.

- a. the civilization of mankind
- b. the complication of figures
- c. the presentation of systems
- d. the creation of zero