

Stepping Stones

An Advanced Course
in
Reading Comprehension

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2011-1390

- سرشناسه : خداپرستی، سهیل، ۱۳۴۴.
- Khodaparasti, Soheil
- عنوان و نام پدیدآورنده: Stepping Stones, an advanced course in reading comprehension/ Soheil Khodaparasti
- مشخصات نشر: تهران: انتشارات راه، ۱۳۹۰=۲۰۱۱م.
- مشخصات ظاهری: ۲۵۶ ص.؛ مصور، جدول.
- شابک: ۶۰۰۰۰-۶-۷۴-۶۲۷۰-۶۰۰-۹۷۸؛ ریال
- یادداشت: انگلیسی.
- آوانویسی عنوان: استپینگ استونز...
- موضوع: زبان انگلیسی - کتاب‌های قرائت (دانشگاهی)
- موضوع: زبان انگلیسی - راهنمای آموزشی (عالی)
- رده‌بندی کنگره: ۱۳۹۰-۵ الف ۴ خ/PE۱۱۳۲
- رده‌بندی دیویی: ۴۲۸/۶۴
- شماره کتاب‌شناسی ملی: ۲۵۳۵۴۹۲

● نام کتاب: Stepping Stones

- مؤلف: سهیل خداپرستی
- ناشر: راه
- لیتوگرافی: طراوت
- چاپ: زلال کوثر
- سال نشر: ۱۳۹۰
- نوبت چاپ: اول
- شمارگان: ۱۰۰۰ جلد
- قیمت: ۶۰۰۰ تومان
- شابک: ۶۰۰۰۰-۶-۷۴-۶۲۷۰-۶۰۰-۹۷۸
- ISBN: 978-600-6270-74-6



www.rah-pub.ir

کلیه حقوق این کتاب برای انتشارات راه محفوظ است.

هیچ شخص حقیقی یا حقوقی حق استفاده از عنوان کتاب تجلیلی و همچنین چاپ و نشر تمام یا بخشی از این اثر را به هر صورت اعم از فتوکپی، چاپ کتاب یا جزوه و حتی برداشت به صورت دستنویس ندارد و متخلفین به موجب بند ۵ از ماده ی قانون حمایت از ناشران تحت پیگرد جدی قانونی قرار میگیرند.

Preface

Comprehension: "Intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader."

The aim of *Stepping Stones* is to help the advanced learners of English to achieve mastery of efficient and critical reading comprehension by developing and strengthening the various skills necessary for successful reading comprehension. Authentic, scientific texts of widespread interest have been carefully selected to build up students' confidence to draw conclusions, evaluate, and critically interpret articles or chapters for overall comprehension in college reading. The informative and thought-provoking articles chosen are rather lengthy to get students accustomed to reading longer passages. This does not necessarily mean a much more difficult task on students' part because the difficulty of a reading exercise does not depend on the length of a text but on the activity required of students. In fact, it is a practice to prevent comprehension failure and to prepare students for effective tackling of longer academic texts. Besides, a lengthy article provides students with ample opportunity to better analyze the structure and organization of the whole text and approach it as a unified and cohesive unit of meaning rather than viewing it as a series of independent units. This can encourage students to have a tendency to infer the meaning of sentences or paragraphs from what comes before and after rather than being dependent on understanding every single sentence in a text when not necessary.

There are 10 units in *Stepping Stones*. Each unit contains an academic article preceded by a picture or pictures related to the topic of the unit as well as pre-reading questions. Then come True-false questions, Analysis of Ideas and Relationships, Interpretation of Words and Phrases, Comprehension Questions, Synonyms, Completion Test, Cloze Test, Rearrangement Test, Collocation, and Topics for Discussion and Composition. TOEFL, SAT, and GRE reading comprehension tests are also included. Finally, the answer key makes this book ideal for self-study learner.

Stepping Stones: Exercises

True-false questions, measuring students' ability to differentiate between forced-choice statements, have been developed to improve their recognition of correct or incorrect information by helping them be aware of their understanding as well as their simple logic and identify specific errors in understanding. The true-false questions, designed to test significant material, are demanding and substantial to avoid encouraging reliance on rote memorization of trivial facts or general knowledge, to increase the cognitive demands upon the students, and to more

effectively differentiate between high and low ability students.

Analysis of Ideas and Relationships is targeted at helping students develop skills in active, critical reading by improving a number of abilities. It enhances the reading ability to distinguish between main ideas or key concepts, serving as the larger conceptual framework of the article, and supporting ideas, major and minor. Grasping main ideas leads to better understanding of the purpose of the details, which further strengthens the understanding of those main ideas. Locating main ideas and supporting details can increase students' comprehension since it helps them understand the points which the writer is attempting to express. It also helps students acquire the ability to recognize implicit facts, which are more difficult to spot than explicit ones, through clues in the text. Textually implicit comprehension questions of this part require students to infer information, to interpret facts, and to draw conclusions about the major points in the article by putting together different text parts to induce information implied and by thinking about what connections and associations can be made from different or related pieces of data throughout the text.

Interpretation of Words and Phrases is designed to extend students' vocabulary, to clarify the precise meaning of important and difficult words and phrases, to provide the other meanings of words, and to help students grasp the nuances of words in order to facilitate deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the article. Of course, it is worth mentioning that it is not always necessary to understand the meaning of every single word to get the overall impression of a text, but some unfamiliar words may appear vital for the full and detailed understanding of a text.

Comprehension Questions, developed to help students with a thorough, literal understanding of the text and with reorganizing information in the text, are very helpful in aiding students to become interactive readers.

Synonyms exercises have been designed to expand students' vocabulary through a study of word similarities in the context of the reading topic.

Completion Test develops the reading comprehension skills of students by requiring them to complete the blank spaces in a reading text through concentrating on linguistic clues supplied in the text. Students' comprehension of the whole text determines the degree of success in completing the blanks. In this part, any appropriate filler satisfying the semantic and syntactic constraints is acceptable.

Cloze Test, an extensive variation of completion test, develops students' ability to understand context and vocabulary in order to identify the correct words or type of words that belong in the deleted passages. It focuses on receptive and productive skills and requires students to perform some specific skills which strengthen their abilities underlying the skills. In fact, supplying the missing words is a practice of using linguistic knowledge and textual knowledge. These tests enhance an awareness of semantic cues and cohesion in a text, involving the interdependence of phrases, sentences, and paragraphs within the text.

Rearrangement Test helps students identify the central theme, around which the passage is framed, and trace the logical sequence, describing the central theme.

Collocation part has been included to expand students' collocational knowledge so that they can learn and use natural language and express themselves in alternative and richer ways. Collocational knowledge can also facilitate and enhance reading comprehension to some degree.

Topics for Discussion and Composition, giving practice in a productive skill, provide students with the opportunity to formulate and articulate ideas and to use some of the newly learned vocabulary as well as collocations.

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