

ENGLISH READING COURSE



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COURSE OVERVIEW

English Reading Course

Objectives

The goals of this English Reading Course are as follows:

- To improve the participants' academic English skills especially reading,
- To help the participants to develop reading skills needed to succeed in their studies or in their jobs,
- To provide English learning atmosphere.

Targets

The materials in the course book are relevant for academic/administrative members of non-English departments from various disciplines. It is assumed that at the beginning of the course, the participants have intermediate proficiency of English, have passed General English courses and would like to enhance their academic reading skills.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH

Study Skill

Skimming

Objectives

- Participants understand the concept of one of the reading techniques, i.e. skimming.
- Participants are able to find out what a text is about by using skimming technique.

Skimming

Skimming is a very fast-paced reading. The readers skim to obtain an overview of the form and the contents of a text, including information such as the writer's main point, the overall organization of the material, and how the text relates to the needs and interests of the readers. Skimming is necessary to decide whether or not one has to read a text more in details, or to review a text already read.

So how should an effective reader skim a text?

- Read the title, subtitles, subheadings or illustrations (if any) to find out what the text is about.
- Determine the main points which are usually stated at the beginning of a paragraph, section or chapter.
- Read as fast as possible while leaving out large chunks of material. Read only key sentences and phrases and a few of the details.
- Read the summary of the text.

Skimming is a comprehensive work. It should be done when the readers do not have much time and wish to cover materials at the fastest possible rate.

(176 words)

Exercise One

Look at the following text / paragraph carefully. There are only some key phrases of the text that are given. Can you deduce what the text is about?

There can be no doubt now that English is one of the world's most widely used languages. 60 percent of the world's radio broadcasts 70 percent of the world's mail international cooperation in science and technology. international meetings, seminars English most used understood.

Check your answer by reading the reproduced text / paragraph presented at the end of this chapter.

Exercise Two

The following paragraphs have key sentences that indicate what the text is about. Identify these sentences by underlining them.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">•	<p>The importance of a language can be judged according to several things. The first is the number of native speakers that a language happens to have. The second is how widely the native speakers are distributed over the world. The last one is the cultural, economic and political influence of those who speak the language as their mother tongue. These three points are the indicators of the importance of a language.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•	<p>English is commonly used as a medium for the communication of information and news. Three quarters of all telex messages and telegrams are sent in English. Eighty percent of computer data are processed and stored in English. Much satellite communication is carried out in English. Five thousand newspapers, more than half of the newspapers published in the world, are published in English. Even in many countries where English is a minority language, there is at least one newspaper in English. In many countries, television news is broadcasted in English. These data show that English is important for communication.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English is also very important for international travel. English is spoken in large hotels and tourist attractions, at airports, and shops that tourists frequently visit. Tours are almost always available in English. Even in countries where few people speak English on the street, people who work with tourists generally speak English. In some countries even drivers of buses or streetcars and sellers speak English well. These data show clearly that English plays an important role in international travel.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The formal teaching of languages in Indonesia begins at elementary school. Children learn the national language, Indonesian, by the time they enter the first grade of elementary school. When they reach the fourth grade, they are introduced to English language. In some schools, the children also start to learn Arabic or Chinese language. At the elementary level, the language lecturers usually teach vocabulary and simple grammatical structures. It can be said that at the elementary level, Indonesian students have learnt at least two languages.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of English written and spoken by Filipinos studying in private schools varies according to which schools they attend. Filipinos who attend private schools most likely speak and write grammatically correct English and can carry conversation with relatively correct diction. The very expensive private schools produce students who can speak and write English almost like a native. These students often claim that they can express their feelings and ideas clearly and fluently only in the English language. It can be concluded that the choice of private schools determines the quality of one's written and spoken language.

Exercise Three

Answer the following questions by skimming the second text below as fast as possible. Time your activity.

- What is the second reading passage about?
- What are the advantages of studying English?
- What is the main idea of the:
 - 1st paragraph:
 - 2nd paragraph:
 - 3rd paragraph:

- What are some of the key words / phrases that are used to find out the main idea of the text?

The Importance of English in Asia

Nowadays, today's primary, middle, senior and university students in many Asian countries are required to learn English. In China, the government says the language is a mandatory subject in junior one — the equivalent to grade eight in Canada — but now many primary schools are prepping students with English starting in grade two. The case is different in other Asian countries like Singapore and the Philippines where all of the subjects are taught in English. By learning and mastering English as the international language, these students will gain advantages not only for themselves, but also for their country.

The first benefit that can be obtained is economic power. In 2001, many people in China started to learn communicating in English; and the country's economic development has been growing stronger ever since. In the Philippines where English becomes one of the national languages, there are many foreign wealthy western countries and companies investing their businesses. In addition, many Filipinos have opportunities to work in international companies because they are able to communicate in English. Mastering English clearly brings benefit for the economic condition of the people and the country.

Mastering an important international communication tool is another benefit of learning English. People can use English, as the most common language of trade and commerce, for the common ground of communication in multi-national businesses. Students, who are not using English in business situations, can use the language to watch movies, listen to songs in English, and look up information on the Internet that might not be available in their mother tongue. It can be said that mastering English means mastering a very important medium for international communication.

Fluency in English brings some advantages at least in the fields of economic and communication. English can bring people wealth and will help them catch up with the rest of the world. Thus, English is obviously no longer the exclusive property of the Anglo-Saxons. It has become a language that every nation should know.

(328 words)

Exercise Four

Choose a text from the appendix. Ask other course participants to skim and get the main idea of the text. A class discussion to reveal the correct answers should be conducted afterwards.

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Answer of Exercise One (the complete reading text)

There can be no doubt now that English is one of the world's most widely used languages. English has become the language of international trade and transport. It is said that 60 percent of the world's radio broadcasts and 70 percent of the world's mail are in English. English has also become the language of international cooperation in science and technology. The most advanced results in space, nuclear and computer research are published in the language. At international meetings, seminars, and other occasions, English is undoubtedly the language most commonly used and widely understood.