To the Teacher

This book contains exercises that provide practice in basic reading skills for developing readers, whether native or non-native speakers. This text has three main goals:

1. To develop students’ reading skill by working on important reading skills
2. To foster rapid vocabulary growth through learning of key vocabulary words as well as practice in using context clues
3. To help students develop and use these skills through gradual, sequential practices (ranging from single sentences to real, longer reading selections)

The reading skills emphasized in this text include using word parts (affixes), employing context clues, using an English-English dictionary, identifying the main idea, reading accurately, drawing conclusions and inferences, reading rapidly, making predictions about a given text, reading for specific information, and reading for enjoyment.

This text consists of eight lessons. The material in this book can be covered in as little as 40 hours if some practices are done as homework, but the material could easily fit a course that meets for up to 60 hours.

Each of the eight lessons follows a similar format of 21 exercises. At the end of every lesson, there is an extended reading fluency practice. The text also has crossword puzzles after the even-numbered lessons to help students review and learn new vocabulary in a fun way.

The content of the material in each of the eight lessons revolves around a central theme. Having a loose overall theme for each unit facilitates schema building, which in turn facilitates readers’ ability to predict content and words. All of this facilitates the reading process, especially for a developing reader.

Language Featured in the Third Edition

This text was written especially for intermediate-level students. Obviously, the vocabulary employed has been controlled to match the students’ English ability. However, students need to stretch their knowledge of key English vocabulary. To this end, this edition of Intermediate
Reading Practices contains 265 of the 570 words (46%) on the Academic Word List* as well as 1,852 of the 2,284 words (81%) on the General Service List**. Because the key to learning second language vocabulary is the number of times a learner interacts with a new word, these words are recycled various times in the lessons following their initial presentation. The vocabulary taught in this book can be found, organized by lesson, on pages 344–52.

In addition to the careful attention to vocabulary, the grammatical structures used in the exercises and selections have been controlled to coordinate them with those most likely being studied in any intermediate curriculum. Thus, the exercises in this text provide not only indispensable practice of reading skills, but also further reinforcement of the grammatical structures most likely being emphasized at this level.

Lesson Themes

Each of the eight lessons in this book revolves around a central theme. These themes vary greatly to allow for the immense variety of interests among our students. The themes are as follows: Lesson 1: Language; Lesson 2: Living Things; Lesson 3: Inventors and Their Inventions; Lesson 4: Geography and Maps; Lesson 5: History; Lesson 6: Emergency Situations; Lesson 7: World Travel; and Lesson 8: Your Body and Your Health. Within each theme, the reading passages offer material on more specific topics that not only pique readers’ curiosity but also permit a natural recycling of key vocabulary. Again, one of the most important points in facilitating students’ acquisition of new vocabulary is the number of times that the students encounter and then retrieve the word. Structuring the units around a central theme helps to accomplish this naturally. More importantly, maintaining a loose central theme facilitates schema building in the pre-reading and actual reading phases.

Contents of a Lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Theme</th>
<th>all lesson material revolves around one theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicting</td>
<td>critical thinking about the likelihood that a certain topic is covered in that lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Reading</td>
<td>determining students’ real-world knowledge about topics before reading takes place</td>
</tr>
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*The Academic Word List contains the 570 word families (i.e., a word and its common forms: convince, conviction, convincing, convincingly) that occur in an academic corpus of 3.5 million words representing 28 academic disciplines. These words are important for academic study in English. To appear in the list, a word had to occur in more than half of the 28 disciplines and had to occur at least 100 times in the corpus. Thus, these words are used in many kinds of academic areas. The most common 1,000 words in English are not on this list. It is assumed that students already know these words.

**The General Service List contains 2,284 words that are deemed to be of the greatest “general service” to English learners. The list was widely used to guide writers of graded readers for English learners. Students in an academic setting, however, should use materials that also offer vocabulary from the more recently developed Academic Word List.
**Word Parts**
(Exercises 1, 2, 3, 4)

- six affixes, their meanings, and sample sentences

**Context Clues**
(Exercises 5, 6, 7)

- different kinds of general contexts

**Dictionary Usage**
(Exercise 8)

- basic skills in using a monolingual dictionary

**Sentence Study**
(Exercises 9, 10)

- answering specific information or drawing conclusions from a single sentence

**Main Idea**
(Exercise 11)

- the main idea of a paragraph

**Scanning**
(Exercise 12)

- scanning for specific information

**Faster Reading**
(Exercises 13, 15, 17, 19)
(Exercises 14, 16, 18, 20)

- word practices
- timed reading practices

**Vocabulary Review**
(Exercise 21)

- multiple choice questions for rapid review

**Extended Reading Fluency**

- longer reading selections (various styles and topics)

Since the reading level and grammatical structures in each lesson gradually increase in difficulty, the lessons should be presented in numerical order whenever possible. This is especially true for the timed reading exercises.

The progress charts found after Lesson 8 are for the timed word and timed reading exercises. Students should be encouraged to record their progress, as this will help them see their improvement. The instructions for completing these charts can be found on page 341.

Also included are several pages on which students may write new vocabulary words as they are encountered. There is enough space so that the students may write not only the word, but also a definition and example. Students should be encouraged to use this part of the text, as they will certainly find many new vocabulary items within the text. Vocabulary enrichment is perhaps the single most important area of development for reading students at this level.

The Answer Key, which is available on the Web (www.press.umich.edu/esl/composite/irp3key/) provides responses for most of the exercises in this text (those omitted are Exercises 4, 13, 15, 17, and 19). These answers are provided so that students may check to see if their answers are correct. It is supposed that students will use the Answer Key after they have actually done the exercises. It is further hoped that students will use the Answer Key to detect their mistakes and then return to the exercise to discover the source of their error.
Using the Exercises in This Book

**Predicting**

Predicting and then verifying predictions is one of the most important skills that good readers have mastered. In this activity, students are given a list of eight topics from readings in *Intermediate Reading Practices*, but only four of these are actually covered in this particular lesson. First, students are instructed to scan the lesson title, subtitle, art and any other viable clues on the opening page of the lesson. After this, students read the list of eight topics (titles) and indicate which four of these are most likely found in that lesson.

Students should work alone and then compare their answers in small groups. This is an opportunity for learners to use appropriate vocabulary in real communication about the lesson topic. The teacher can then give the students the answers for this exercise or the teacher can require the students to scan the lesson to see which four topics are indeed covered. This second option provides real practice in scanning and locating answers.

**Pre-Reading**

We would like our students to be so interested in the topics and theme of every lesson that they will read the material eagerly and multiple times. However, the reality is that it is not possible to provide a topic that interests all learners equally. How, then, can teachers get students to want to read the material? One way is to let students see for themselves how much they already know or do not know about a topic.

One way to pique students’ curiosity is to give a pre-test on the content of the unit. This pre-test should not be a reading test; instead, it should test students’ content knowledge—i.e., their real world knowledge or (sometimes) their schema. In this activity, readers are given a list of ten questions that cover the content of the lesson. Some people will know some of the answers; a few will know only a few answers. However, everyone will actually want to know how well they have done on this pre-test.

There is a natural curiosity in the human mind regarding this type of activity. In this case, the activity will help to generate student interest in the reading of the material. In going over the answers with students, teachers can also see if there are areas in which students need background work in content or in language to read or talk about that content (e.g., appropriate vocabulary).

**Word Parts**

The first four exercises of each lesson provide practice in basic word parts. The word parts included in this text are those that are most important for developing readers yet are still within their linguistic grasp. The list that begins each lesson has been designed so that new words introduced in later lessons require students to recall previous learned word parts.

Each lesson contains six new word parts. There is a brief definition and a contextualized example for each. The following example is from Lesson 1.
Exercise 1. In this exercise, students must use the knowledge that they have gained in the presentation to form new words from the parts.

Exercise 2. For many students, this exercise may be the most difficult and at the same time the most important of all of the bottom-up exercises in each lesson. In this exercise, students must complete several charts with new words using the roots and affixes provided. They will run across many new words that are common in academic material.

Exercise 3. Students must form a new word using the correct word part according to the context. This exercise is slightly more difficult than Exercise 1 because it requires students to select a word part based on the context of the sentence.

Exercise 4. Students are asked to write simple definitions without dictionaries for terms that contain some of the word parts studied in the lesson. Students will practice rapid recognition of word parts and their meanings. It is important that students not use their dictionaries since the idea here is to help students to overcome their dependence on their dictionaries.

Context Clues

Exercises 5–7 provide practice in using context clues. This ability is an invaluable asset to the student of English as a second language.

Exercise 5. Often skills are best learned when they are needed to solve a problem. In this exercise, students practice using context clues to solve the meaning of a key word. They must read a sentence and then complete it with any word that is logical based on the context provided. Several answers may be possible; teachers should go over this exercise in class to check students’ answers. When they have completed this exercise, students may turn to the end of the lesson to find possible answers as well as explanations of the sentences. Each lesson focuses on a different kind of context clue.

Exercise 6. Students will be able to see the importance of context clues when they do this exercise. Each problem consists of a sentence that has been lengthened twice; thus, a problem consists of three sentences. There is an italicized word in each sentence, and there are three definitions given for the word. The students must read the word in the three different contexts and decide if the suggested meaning is possible in the given
context. The students must circle the letter of the word to indicate whether the suggested meaning is appropriate. By the time the students reach the third sentence of each problem, the context should be specific enough so that only one meaning is appropriate. The teacher should ask students to indicate the key words in the context that allow them to guess the meaning of the italicized word.

**Exercise 7.** This exercise consists of ten problems, each of which has an italicized term. After each problem, there are three possible meanings given. Students will read the problem and then use their knowledge of context clues to determine which of the three given meanings is correct.

**Dictionary Usage**

Being able to use a dictionary is a necessary skill for all students trying to improve their reading skills. Invariably, readers will come across unknown vocabulary and have to consult a dictionary to find not only the word and a meaning but—more important—*the* one meaning that is appropriate for the original context. Learning to use an English-English dictionary requires mastering several steps, including alphabetizing, understanding the part of speech, interpreting pronunciation guides, and determining the most appropriate meaning.

The dictionary skills practiced in Exercise 8 of this text are those most helpful to students who are developing their reading skills. No attempt has been made to teach every aspect of dictionary use; that is not the purpose of this book. The skills have been arranged in a logical order for the proficiency level of the students using this book and to correspond with other skills being practiced in the other exercises within a given lesson to facilitate recycling of material. For example, the dictionary skills in Lessons 3, 4, and 5, *parts of speech*, correspond to the word parts practiced in exercises in those and earlier lessons.

**Sentence Study**

Understanding a given sentence is often the key to understanding an entire paragraph. For this reason, sentence study (Exercises 9 and 10) is an important reading skill to master, especially at this level.

**Exercise 9.** In this exercise, students read a sentence and then demonstrate how well they have grasped the details by answering a question about the sentence. The format is multiple choice (A, B, C, or D).

**Exercise 10.** In this exercise, students indicate how well they can understand a given sentence and form a conclusion about it. Students read a statement and four conclusions. They must indicate which of the conclusions is correct based on the information contained in the original sentence.
Finding the Main Idea

In Exercise 11, students must read a short paragraph rapidly, trying to discover the author’s main idea. This exercise also uses a multiple-choice format.

Scanning

In Exercise 12, students will practice scanning for specific information. Before each paragraph, there are two multiple-choice questions that test the students’ understanding of details. This exercise helps develop reading comprehension while encouraging improvement of reading rate.

Improving Reading Speed

After general reading comprehension, perhaps the most serious problem encountered by developing readers is a slow reading speed or reading rate. This might be true for many reasons. The most likely culprit here is students’ lack of knowledge of or inability to recognize discrete vocabulary items. Good readers have good vocabulary knowledge. While neither “causes” the other, we know that they are intricately related. Students must work toward expanding their vocabulary knowledge through explicit practice with words and through both intensive and extensive reading. In addition, students should practice with context clues (Exercises 5 to 7) since even the best readers encounter unknown vocabulary and must rely on context clues to facilitate their reading. Slower reading rates could also be due to a limited knowledge of English sentence structure. In addition, low reading rates could be due to the tendency of some readers to fixate too long on unknown words instead of continuing to attempt the reading. The Timed Word Selection Exercises (13, 15, 17, and 19) will work on these last problems. Finally, the Timed Reading Exercises (14, 16, 18, and 20) allow students an opportunity to test all their reading skills, including reading rate, since each of these last exercises is timed.

Timed Word Selection Exercises

In Exercises 13, 15, 17, and 19, students must read a word and then find that same word in a group of five words that look similar. For example, the students must circle the word say in the following example.

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  say  |  sea  says  stay  say  sag
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The goals of these exercises are to train students’ eye movements in a left-to-right pattern and to provide practice in recognition of similarly shaped letters and letter combinations.

To improve reading speed, these exercises should be timed, thus encouraging students to
work as rapidly as possible. It is recommended that teachers give students 30 seconds to complete the 25 problems in these exercises. Students should then correct their answers. Since it is difficult for students to catch their own errors in this kind of proofreading exercise, it is recommended that they exchange books and check each other’s work to ensure accurate correcting. For each incorrect answer, students lose one correct answer. This penalty will encourage students to work carefully as well as rapidly. Afterward, students should record the number of correct answers on the progress chart at the end of the text.

**Timed Reading Exercises**

Each of Exercises 14, 16, 18, and 20 consists of a short reading selection (usually two to four paragraphs) followed by five multiple-choice questions. Students have four minutes to read the selection and answer the questions. They may look back in the section for answers if necessary. However, the teacher should point out that this is a time-consuming process. After not finishing this exercise once or twice, students will realize the importance of reading the selection carefully the first time. There is no penalty for incorrect answers, thus the score is the number of correct answers. Students should record their scores on the chart at the back of the text. Though this is primarily designed as a test of an individual’s silent reading ability, oral reading skills can be practiced by having students read parts of the selection aloud after time has been called and all answers have been checked.

The questions have three possible answers (A, B, or C). Because choice C is sometimes “both A and B,” students are encouraged to read all the answers very carefully before making their final choice. These timed reading exercises require students to use the skills that they have been practicing in the other exercises, e.g. understanding details, forming conclusions, and using context clues. Whenever possible, each of the five questions emphasizes a different reading skill. Teachers should use the following chart in counseling students concerning their reading improvement:

- **Question 1.** Main idea of a paragraph (see Exercise 11)
- **Question 2.** Context clues (see Exercises 5, 6, and 7)
- **Question 3.** Conclusions (see Exercise 10)
- **Question 4.** Information (Details) (see Exercises 9 and 12)
- **Question 5.** Information (Details) (see Exercises 9 and 12)

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*Four minutes is merely a suggested time limit. It is a time restriction that has worked well with intermediate ESL students who have used this text. The actual time limit used can be increased or decreased to fit the average or above-average student in a given class. It should be noted that the timed readings gradually increase in individual sentence length, overall length, lexical difficulty, and syntactical difficulty. Therefore, it is highly recommended that instructors select one timed reading rate to be used throughout the entire text. Since it is supposed that students’ reading skills will improve as the timed reading exercises become more difficult, they should have little difficulty working within the given time restrictions of these exercises.*
Before attempting to do a timed reading exercise, it is highly recommended that teachers do some type of pre-reading activity in order to increase student interest in the reading selection as well as develop their anticipation skills. The acquisition and subsequent development of good anticipation skills is a key factor in reading proficiency. The value of such skills, especially to ESL students at this level, cannot be underestimated.

For example, if the reading is about a country, the teacher should write the name of the country on the board and ask the students if they know its location, people, language, weather, etc. The instructor should also ask the students to come up with a list of vocabulary words (or concepts) that they expect to find in the selection. For example, in a reading about a nation, many students will come up with the concept of border, but very few will actually know this term at this level. In addition, they will probably not know the word lie (meaning “to occupy a place”) at this point either. Teachers may elect to tell their students these words outright or help them to learn to anticipate such words through this previewing activity and then let them guess the meaning through context by themselves.

A Note about the Timed Word Selection and Timed Reading Exercises

In general, the exercises in each lesson should be done in the same order in which they have already been sequenced. However, instructors may wish to digress somewhat when doing the timed word selection exercises (13, 15, 17, and 19) and the timed reading exercises (14, 16, 18, and 20). If teachers follow the existing numerical order (i.e., 13, 14, 15, 16, etc.), they will do these two types of exercises alternately. However, an equally valuable method (and somewhat easier, according to some teachers) involves having students do all of the timed word selection exercises first and then do all of the timed reading exercises (i.e., 13, 15, 17, and 19; then 14, 16, 18, and 20). The preference lies with the individual instructor, the students, and the teaching situation. Regardless of the sequence ultimately chosen as more appropriate, teachers should make every effort to see that students do not look ahead at any timed exercises as this will, of course, adversely alter their reading rate results.

Web Practice Supplements for Timed Readings

Exercises 14, 16, 18, and 20 (the timed readings) are designed to hone students’ ability to read rapidly and demonstrate a variety of reading skills (e.g., identifying main idea, using context clues to define an unknown word). However, each timed reading exercise contains at the same time a wealth of important information about sentence structure, paragraph structure, new vocabulary, and other information related to developing reading comprehension. For each timed reading, an additional exercise (14a, 16a, 18a, and 20a) is provided on the Internet (www.press.umich.edu/esl/compsite/irp3/) that requires students to analyze the material in each timed reading more carefully. The goal of this is to improve students’ familiarity with these features so they can use them to become a faster and more proficient reader.
**Vocabulary Recall**

Rapid word recognition and the acquisition of a good, solid vocabulary are fundamental to learning how to read effectively. **Exercise 21** tests vocabulary recall. Teachers may choose to have students do this in class, as homework, or as a test. This exercise reviews material that has been presented within the general lesson. It has a multiple-choice format. Students must choose a synonym or a common **collocation** (commonly occurring co-word, such as commit + a crime).

One short vocabulary quiz with 20 items will not suffice for learners’ vocabulary needs. Research has shown that one of the most important features of a sound approach to acquiring large amounts of new second language vocabulary is the frequency with which the learner recycles or “touches” the new words. For this reason, it is important to have numerous short vocabulary practices rather than just one short quiz or even one big test. For this reason, *Intermediate Reading Practices, Third Edition*, features five additional vocabulary activities for each of the eight lessons.

This additional set of practice material is called **More Vocabulary Practice on the Web**. Students are instructed to go to a certain website (e.g., for Lesson 3, [www.press.umich.edu/esl/composite/irp3/lesson3/](http://www.press.umich.edu/esl/composite/irp3/lesson3/)), and do the five vocabulary exercises there. They are then asked to record their scores in a grid on the last page of each lesson. The grid looks like this:

- Quiz 3.1. Your Score ___ / 20
- Quiz 3.2. Your Score ___ / 20
- Quiz 3.3. Your Score ___ / 20
- Quiz 3.4. Your Score ___ / 20
- Quiz 3.5. Your Score ___ / 20

**Extending Reading Fluency**

At the end of each lesson, there is a reading selection in which students can apply the reading skills that are being developed. These reading selections vary in type of reading (e.g., encyclopedia format, short stories, biographies), type of language (prose, nonprose, fiction, nonfiction), and level of difficulty. While most of the exercises focus on specific reading skills, the main purpose of this exercise is practical application in extended reading selections. In addition, the activities (both pre- and post-activities) are designed for reading fluency (as opposed to reading for accuracy).

**Writing Assignments**

Reading and writing are linked. Learning how to organize writing also leads to a better understanding of the organization of a reading passage, which in turn allows readers to improve their prediction skills and read more accurately and more quickly. To be able to use knowledge of rhetorical styles (e.g., narrative, comparative/contrast, definition, cause/effect, persuasion) to
predict content in a reading passage, readers must be familiar with these rhetorical patterns. To this end, there is a list of five suggested topics for writing assignments at the end of each Extended Reading Fluency, one topic for each of five different rhetorical modes. Because the writing expectations for individual classes will vary, it is up to the teacher to decide whether students will write essays, paragraphs, or perhaps even just a collection of sentences for this assignment.

Crossword Puzzles

There are four crossword puzzles in the text. These puzzles are located after the even-numbered lessons. While solving crossword puzzles can be fun, it is also an excellent student-centered learning and review activity. In addition, sometimes the puzzle clues direct students to refer to a certain reading selection in the text, thus practicing both scanning and rapid reading for a specific purpose.