

PREFACE

Reading Skills for Success is unique in that it provides a guide for teaching reading skills to college and precollege students that can be used with most any freshman-level academic material, whether it be a textbook that students are using for another class (e.g., Introduction to Psychology), an eclectic mix of texts from a variety of outside classes, or other teacher-collected material. This textbook is designed so that teachers can work through specific reading strategies with students, use the general activities and sample academic chapters to practice the strategies being taught, and then have the students turn to their outside readings (e.g., academic texts, journals) to put into practice the strategies they are learning.

The goal of *Reading Skills for Success* is to help students make the transition from the “sheltered” reading material provided in many precollege and ESL classes to the material that they are expected to work with in mainstream academic settings. This text should be viewed, and used, as an adjunct text to assist students in comprehending the material they are expected to read in college “content” classes. *Reading Skills for Success* is designed so that students at the undergraduate, community college, and advanced high school levels can apply the strategies and skills introduced in this book to the reading materials they need to master in other courses.

Reading Skills for Success is aimed at students in the following contexts:

1. ESL and other precollege reading level students in reading classes connected to academic classes (e.g., Sociology, Psychology).
2. ESL and other precollege reading level students taking reading classes but also taking or preparing to take college-level academic classes for the first time.
3. Students in English for Special Purposes (ESP) courses that have no appropriate ESL textbook on the topic being studied.
4. Students in advanced high school and community college reading courses designed to prepare students for college-level reading.

Classes like these can be found in most ESL programs, community colleges, high schools, and college academic skills centers.

Approach and Overview

The chapters in *Reading Skills for Success* use as their foundation the current understanding that reading is an interactive and constructive process in which the reader uses personal and cultural knowledge to interpret the information presented in a text in order to “create” meaning. For many weaker readers and nonnative speakers of English, much of their miscomprehension when reading English academic texts is due to their inability to recognize word and structural clues that native speakers readily process. Particularly in academic settings, reading miscomprehension often occurs not so much because of a lack of cultural or content knowledge—in academic classes most information is new to all students—but because of a lack of text-based, linguistic preparedness necessary to quickly spot key information and organizational structure in texts.

Reading Skills for Success helps students focus on and develop these text-based processing skills while teachers provide the necessary assistance with background and interpretation for the specific materials students need to read. To this end, this book addresses in part 1 **word-level clues** that students need to learn to look for as they read. Part 2 is designed to introduce students to the **different types of expository text structures** they will need to recognize as they begin intensive analytical reading of academic prose. Last, part 3 focuses on helping students go about the job of **studying**. The goal when reading academic texts goes beyond simple comprehension; students are frequently required to take the information they are reading and apply it in some way, either in papers or in response to exam questions. Part 3 focuses on reading strategies that assist in the in-depth and long-term understanding of long and complex academic texts.

A major strength of this book is the extensive use of excerpts from actual textbooks used in first-year college courses, including complete chapters from a textbook on environmental sciences and from a textbook on human geography, which are found in the appendixes. Because the material in the appendixes is excerpted from full-length textbooks, these chapters contain cross-references to materials (figures, tables, textbook pages, etc.) that are not included in this book. These cross-references have been retained because students need to become familiar with the use of cross-references in academic material and because this maintains the integrity of the chapters as they were originally written.

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