

TO THE INSTRUCTOR

This section provides suggestions for the use of the split editions of *Reading Processes and Structures*. Of course, instructors should personalize any text used in class, choosing topics and exercises that are of interest to them and that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the individual course. Since there are several reading passages in each unit, and more than 35 in the books combined, instructors may use the following notes to help them decide which ones to use.

Considerations on the Choice of Texts

One of the overriding principles on which the selection of texts was based was the goal of exposing students to American-based culture. In this regard, the authors of the texts and the subject matter are primarily American. In studying American English, students also learn American culture. In fact, attaining a cultural literacy is a fundamental scope of language acquisition. This knowledge is needed to comprehend current situations in the news; on television; at the movies; and in books, journals, and newspapers. When social commentators declare, “Iraq is no Vietnam,” students must understand U.S. involvement in Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s. Since another goal of the text is to prepare students for the reading content in mainstream college courses, exposure to the geography, history, government, and business practices in the United States is a key to their success in these classes, where they will sit next to American students with broad cultural literacy.

Many genres are represented in the text’s reading passages: journal and newspaper articles, textbook selections, encyclopedia pieces, and speeches, as well as short stories, poems, and fables. The breadth of exposure to fiction and non-fiction is important because advanced American language students will move on to many different majors. They will need to know what techniques are necessary to understand complex texts and to develop specific vocabulary for their courses. Since Composition I and II (or 101 and 102—the first-year college English sequence) usually concentrate on issues in the first segment and literature in the second, the focus on literary terms and analyzing fiction is a backbone for student success.

The Structure of the Books

Each book is divided into two parts: **The Basics** and **Reading Units**. Part One, The Basics, includes fundamental definitions and concepts, plus a general overview of the parts of speech, which students should reference throughout the course. The reading skills—pre-reading, skimming, scanning, inferences, and implications—are presented, and literary terms, which will form the basis of analysis and discussion for the fiction pieces in each unit, are introduced. Students will learn several vocabulary acquisition techniques and be introduced to the Reader’s Journal to be kept during the course. Finally, there is a segment on goals, objectives, and plans, as students are challenged to plan and map their progress in the semester ahead.

The **Reading Units**, Part Two, are based on themes: *Family Matters*, *Growing Up*, *Politics*, *Aspects of Culture*, *Business*, and *A Sense of Place*. There are six readings in each unit, for a total of 36 passages. Obviously, even with at-home reading and without discussion, it is unlikely that students will read all the passages. Suggestions for approaches and an overview of subject matter are provided to assist you in choosing readings suitable and propitious for the goals and objectives of your course. More information about the reading units is on pages xv–xviii.

Testing Academic Reading Processes offers cloze exercises, sentence completion, vocabulary in context, mystery passages, vocabulary development, vocabulary clusters, and ten reading comprehension quiz passages. These comprehension passages are also stand-alone readings and may be discussed in depth. Because of their length, they are also excellent practice for the new TOEFL® (iBT) and other similar tests (these passages are equal to and exceed the length of readings on the TOEFL® and tests like the SAT®). They introduce interesting elements of American culture: coffee drinking, the canned food revolution of the 1950s, urban department stores and suburban malls, performance-enhancement drugs and sports, and pet therapy, among others. The same may be said of the cloze passages, which feature the topics of leftovers, places to retire in America, the front porch and the backyard, the movies, and being stuck in traffic. The cloze passages serve the dual purpose of practicing grammar and vocabulary while at the same time broadening knowledge of American culture.

The online answer key supplies responses to the exercises on vocabulary development, reading comprehension, inference and implication drills, discussion questions, word searches, and crossword puzzles for both Books 1 and 2.

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

As students progress to more advanced levels of English, vocabulary presents an increasing challenge to their writing and reading. An increasing number of language concepts they encounter are abstract, and students are often required to read and write on a wide variety of topics. Students' vocabulary needs are also expanding exponentially: Either simultaneous to this course or immediately following it, students will take regular college courses in which they will have to develop a vocabulary specific to the subject area. So it might be said that this is the last course where they can acquire the fundamental general and academic vocabulary that will serve in all their classes.

This book approaches vocabulary development in several different ways: proficiency in the identification of parts of speech, using the dictionary skillfully, telling the difference between *denotation* and *connotation* and *literal* and *figurative* meaning, using context clues to help identify the connotation and meaning of words, and establishing word clusters to improve comprehension. The text offers a wide variety of exercises, including word searches, crossword puzzles, matching synonyms and antonyms, and contextual fill-ins.

Vocabulary building requires *active* interest and effort on the part of the student. Some instructors recommend that students keep a vocabulary journal or list in a separate notebook or in a separate section of a larger notebook. Students should certainly be encouraged to write down new words and to establish glossaries for certain themes and topics. They should always be directed to read with a pencil or highlighter (a pencil is preferable on the first reading because readers do not always recognize what is essential on the first go-through; the highlighter should be reserved for subsequent readings of the same passage). At any rate, the development of strong vocabulary acquisition skills is important in order to be a successful student.

PRE-READING EXERCISES

Each chapter begins with pre-reading exercises. These are usually based on questions to which students respond in writing. This prepares them for classroom discussion on the issues raised. The pre-reading work is meant to clarify the broad concepts to be introduced in the chapter. For example, in *Family Matters* (Chapter 1, Book 1) students are asked to define concepts such as *nuclear* and *extended* families. In *Business* (Chapter 2, Book 2), they define characteristics of good and bad jobs, and in *Growing Up* (Chapter 2, Book 1) they look back on their milestones, their fondest memories, and the stories that they loved the best. The goal of the pre-reading section is to ensure that students make a *personal connection* with the subject matter of the chapter.

GRAMMAR IN A READING CONTEXT

Students should be made aware of grammar in the reading process. Some instructors use reading passages as occasions to reinforce grammar. It works well, for example, to ask students to find the adjective clauses and phrases in a newspaper article (“Can McDonald’s Cook Again” in Chapter 2 in Book 2) or to trace direct and indirect speech and noun clauses in interview features (“Participatory Armchair Rivering” in Chapter 3 in Book 2, for example).

The focus of reading, of course, is not solely grammatical. It is the **awareness** of grammar points on the part of the students that is the goal. Students should closely analyze the passages for grammatical modeling. As instructor, you might point out what the writers have done well in terms of grammar. It is specifically the concept of **grammar in action** that gives reading class such potential for analysis—for vocabulary development, grammar points, reading techniques, and also (some would say primarily) for discussion.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATION: DEVELOPING VISUAL LITERACY

Each chapter has at least two major illustrations, and students should analyze them in the same way that they approach the texts. The goal of this activity is for students to develop **visual literacy**, which will help them to succeed in classes like art history, political science, and sociology. Many of the illustrations are issue-based, and students will learn to discern bias as they seek to understand the symbols used. The illustrations approach themes such as globalization, music censorship, birth-order theory, and space exploration. Others are interpretations of fiction, as in the illustrations for “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Lamb to the Slaughter,” and “When Uncle Artie Saved Christmas.” Exercises in symbolism are appropriate whenever the illustration is discussed. An excellent product of the analysis is a 12-sentence description/interpretation paragraph.

READING AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

Students taking a reading class necessarily seek to enhance their skills in making inferences, understanding implications, discerning context clues, and comprehending complex texts. It is also true that in many reading classes, and in most college courses, one of the principal purposes of assigning a reading to students is to foster a lively and comprehensive classroom discussion.

Reading class should be loud yet controlled, boisterous yet respectful. As opposed to the esoteric interest typically fostered in grammar class and the

creative but ultimately individual nature of the writing class, reading class is often a communal experience. This is because comprehension of a passage—especially an issue-based one—should be followed by reaction and discussion. Discussion doesn't just happen; it is the result of creating a classroom atmosphere conducive to the expression of different opinions. Students should be spontaneous in their thoughts and free to express themselves, but they must also respect the right of others to dissent from their views. The amount of time dedicated to classroom discussion and the nature of the discourse itself vary widely from class to class. It is advisable to have students finish the reading before they come to class, and also to write down some of their thoughts before the discussion begins. This is particularly valuable for the more reticent students (or those still uncomfortable with their language skills), who often must be gently urged to participate.

Reader Response Theory of Stanley Fish focuses on what happens in readers' minds as they read. In the stories "When Uncle Artie Saved Christmas" and "Grandma's Shoes" (both in Book 1) and "Perfume" (Book 2), for example, students should be able to associate with the concept of a tight-knit and characteristic neighborhood. They should, as they read, make connections with their own experiences. This is also true with the two "coming-of-age" pieces, "Eleven" and "My First Concert" (Book 1). Readers should place themselves squarely in the stories.

The readings and themes progress in terms of fostering classroom discussion. The first two reading units in Book 1, Family Matters and Growing Up, are, for the most part, personal and non-controversial. Students do not have to make decisive choices when they discuss their place in the birth-order of their family ("Personality and Birth-Order Theory") or describe the typical funeral customs of their culture ("Grandma's Shoes"). Nor do they risk much when they talk about the time when they first felt grown up ("My First Concert") or belittled ("Eleven"), or when they tell about the most colorful member of their family ("Uncle Artie"). At the end of Book 1, the theme is Politics, which is broader and less personal.

In Book 2, the themes of Aspects of Culture, Business, and A Sense of Place are also broader and less personal. Now students should express their views on issues: censorship ("Music Censorship" in Book 2); race relations ("Africa" in Book 1 and "Everyday Use" in Book 2); war ("How to Tell a True War Story" in Book 1); parental involvement in youth athletics ("Referee of the Year Award" in Book 2); globalization ("Can McDonald's Cook Again?" in Book 2 and "Globalization and Traditional Architecture" in Book 2); space exploration ("Inertia and Indecision at NASA" in Book 2); urban, suburban, and rural America ("The Neighborhood Thief," "Nebraska," "Pershing Field", all in Book 2), and the role of individual citizens in the democratic process ("On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" in Book 1).

Part 1: The Basics

The first part provides the foundation for the book, introducing the terms and concepts that the students will need throughout the course.

PARTS OF SPEECH

The section on parts of speech is meant to provide a detailed introduction (or review) that students will use in all their reading and writing work. Since it is difficult to understand passages without a comprehension of the majority of the words, when students learn new words they should be aware of their part of speech and function. While the identification of parts of speech is both a reading and writing skill, the knowledge of which particular part of speech fits in a specific position in a sentence is essential in comprehending sentence development. Thus, it is advisable to focus on the part-of-speech exercises and to continue to ask students about the part of speech of new words throughout the course. This work should be reinforced with an exercise every other week.

THE READER'S JOURNAL

The Reader's Journal introduces or reviews the concept of outside reading. Students have little choice of reading from the text, and, in general, are assigned passages for homework in this and every other college class. For this reason, they should be encouraged to keep a journal of their reading, writing an entry at least every week or every other week. For the Reader's Journal, students choose their own articles that interest them. This might afford a good opportunity for them to read in their major in an attempt to develop competence and familiarity with the material in English (they might already have knowledge in another language). Or, they can read the front page of the newspaper or the lead article in a weekly news magazine for current issues.

With the Reader's Journal, they will use a two-entry format. In the left-hand column, they write a summary of what they have read, including key points and specific quotes. In the second column, they present their reactions to the reading and their opinions on the topic. Finally, they should find five new vocabulary words and indicate part of speech, connotation, prefixes and suffixes, a definition, and a sentence using the word. They should turn in the journal entries (with the clipped article) either every week or once per month. It is recommended that you evaluate them in the same way you evaluate writing journal entries, for completeness and evidence that they have taken the assignment seriously.

OUTSIDE READINGS: LONGER TEXTS

It is also advisable to assign students to read novels at home during the course. You might give them a month or more to complete the book and compose brief comprehension questions on individual chapters to be submitted as they go along. This work will culminate with a classroom discussion of the book and a test. Some of the novels that have been successful in my course are:

O' Pioneers (Willa Cather)

The Old Man and the Sea (Ernest Hemingway)

Sweet Thursday (John Steinbeck)

The Firm (John Grisham)

Having Our Say (The Delaney Sisters)

Saint Maybe (Anne Tyler)

Tales of Terror and Detection (Edgar Allan Poe)

The Color of Water (James McBride)

Waiting to Exhale (Terrence McMillan)

Breakfast at Tiffany's (Truman Capote)

The Great Gatsby (F. Scott Fitzgerald)

The Joy Luck Club (Amy Tan)

Part 2: The Reading Units

CHAPTER 1: FAMILY MATTERS

The intention of this chapter is to present a balanced portrait of a complex network of relationships. The traditional and idealized nuclear family is no longer the predominant social structure in America: More than 50 percent of all marriages end in divorce, and more than one-third of all the children born in the United States do not have married parents. Thus, a realistic picture of the family in America must take into account various and variant guises. “Personality and Birth Order Theory” introduces a concept of personality based on a person’s position in terms of birth. Students should be urged to reflect on their own natures and their place in the birth order of their families. This activity may be expanded to include their relatives, friends, co-workers, and acquaintances. The most complicated relationship within a family, and, according to Adrienne Rich, the one least discussed in psychology and sociology, is between mother and daughter. It is interesting to contrast the inherent connotations of the father-son and the

mother-daughter relationships leading to the concept of *matrophobia*. The reading on this theme, an excerpt from Amy Tan’s *Joy Luck Club*, presents the mother-daughter relationship with the additional element of assimilation into American culture.

The “Lessons from Gay Marriages” passage may be approached as fact-based writing: There are several reasons why gay marriages are less prone to divorce than heterosexual marriages. This issue is quite current, and students should be directed to newspaper and magazine treatment of the concepts.

Students often react well to poetry, and “The City” is a rather traditional love poem. Ask students to find their favorite love poem from their culture and, if necessary, to translate it into English (translation itself is an excellent activity to increase linguistic awareness and to practice writing skills). A good idea here is also an exercise on symbolism. Ask students to identify and discuss the symbols prevalent in their lives (e.g., ring, cross, flag, diamond, golden arches).

The “Lamb to the Slaughter” story introduces delicious irony. After assigning them the story for at-home reading, make sure to discuss the title. Since this is a period piece—the 1950s is the setting—you might point out the aspects of the story that tie it to the decade: The wife does not work and eagerly awaits the return of her husband, who is always punctual; the predominance of drinking (one of the resounding sounds of the 1950s is the clink-clink of ice cubes in a glass); the presence of a deep freezer in the basement. This story was filmed by Alfred Hitchcock as an episode of his television program *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, so you might point out the “surprise and ironic ending” as a trademark of the famous director (used in so many of his films such as *Psycho* and *Vertigo*).

Finally, “Grandma’s Shoes” takes a very serious situation (a funeral) and makes it the source of humor when Grandma’s plans for a perfect impression are ruined. Obviously, weddings and funerals are fundamental to every culture, and ceremonies differ widely. Ask students to work in groups to explain a typical funeral ceremony in their family or culture. This is also an excellent opportunity for a text-based writing assignment.

CHAPTER 2: GROWING UP

How long would we like to live? In discussing the passage “180 Years Old,” it is advisable to introduce the concept of *quality of life*: the ability to live a long, active, and happy life. This might dovetail into a discussion of what happens to the elderly in a particular society (who traditionally takes care of them?) and what their expectations in life are. Since this differs broadly from culture to culture, it might spark an interesting classroom discussion.

One of the keys to understanding literature is to grasp “narrative voice.” The fables “Little Red Riding Hood” and “Little Red Cap” were obviously written by adults with an agenda: to delight but more importantly to teach

(Horace's *dulce et utile*). This is an exercise on understanding comparison and contrast writing. Students should be encouraged to make qualitative judgments on the successful fulfillment of the goals of teaching (scaring, terrifying) youngsters, and warning them not to venture off the straight path in life. It is obvious that the death of the young girl in the English version is much more dire than in the more forgiving German version, where the girl is rescued by the hunter.

The three short stories concluding the chapter introduce an uncommon point of view: In “My First Concert,” “Eleven,” and “When Uncle Artie Saved Christmas,” the narrator is a young person. You might ask students to discuss how the stories would be different if they had been seen/written from the point of view of an adult. Also, the narrator of “Eleven” is a young girl, while “My First Concert” and “Uncle Artie” are narrated by boys. Are there gender differences in the way a story is told? You might talk about the concept of *essentialism* as presented by Harold Bloom in his introduction to the *Book of J*. According to this idea, the “essence” of a writer comes out on the page. Thus, it is often possible to tell whether a piece of fiction is written by a woman or a man. Are there techniques and themes that are more commonly used by men than women in writing (war, sports, violence) or by women than men (love stories, sensitive approaches)? Or are these just stereotypes? A very stimulating exercise to go along with “My First Concert” is to ask students (perhaps first in writing, then in discussion) about the first time that they felt like grown-ups. The classroom discussion often leads people from disparate backgrounds to find a great deal of common ground. Similarly, students should be asked to recall a negative experience, based on “Eleven,” when they were misunderstood and made to feel trivial by adults. Based on “Uncle Artie,” students should be asked to describe the most colorful person in their family and to reflect on the most important holiday of the year. A discussion of *humor* in its various guises might also be appropriate here.

CHAPTER 3: POLITICS

On the one hand, the political situation in the United States might seem very simple to students from different cultures: There are only two major political parties, and the country has had the same constitution for more than 200 years. On the other hand, the method of choosing the president is beguiling even to students of political science. The first piece in the chapter, “The Government of the United States,” is an example of necessary information presented in textbook format (multiple sub-headings, charts, and graphs). It might be dry and filled with statistics, facts, and lists, but it is good preparation for the type of reading that students will need to do in history classes. Academic reading is not always enjoyable and often serves to prepare students to take tests and to build a foundation of knowledge.

The U.S. Government piece is an example of **cultural literacy** that second language students need to function better in college classes. I recommend lingering on this passage to make sure that students understand it well. Ask them to work in groups and make charts of the parts of the government and their responsibilities.

The chapter on politics is issue-based. The “Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl” excerpt concentrates on race relations and the politics of power. It’s a good idea to have students conduct research on the institution of slavery in the United States before they read the passage to better acclimate themselves to the milieu in which Jacobs wrote her autobiography (begun in 1853). Students could do the same research on slavery that they will do on Vietnam later in this chapter, perhaps writing a one-page summary of the rise and fall of the insidious institution.

The purpose for including a difficult text such as *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* is to give a preview of a typical English I or English Composition reading assignment. The first college English course is usually based on issues analysis. It is really the ability to understand philosophical concepts that is the goal of reading a text like Thoreau’s. Students, for better or worse, will encounter many similar essays, especially in the general education, core-curriculum segment of their college education.

Tim O’Brien’s piece, “How to Tell a True War Story,” is pertinent because the discussion of the Vietnam War seems to continue unabated, the subject of political debate, films, television programs, and song lyrics. Consider asking students to conduct research on the Vietnam War before they read the story. This is an excellent opportunity for a class trip to the library to explore the many resources available in books, magazine and journal articles, and in Internet sources. As with the U.S. government information, a knowledge of the key points concerning America’s Vietnam experience will provide students with an important cultural background that may reap benefits in subsequent classes and in respect to their participation in history-based discussions.

Maya Angelou’s “Africa” also touches on race relations and may be approached historically through a brief discussion on how this piece offers another view of slavery in America.

To provide a balance to the necessarily serious nature of a chapter based on hot issues (war, race, religion, politics), the last piece, “George McGovern in Mrs. Oasa’s Kitchen,” explores the political campaigning that focuses on the visual image of the candidate, providing a more humorous approach.