

# How to Use This Book

This book is for high-beginning level ESL/ESOL students. It is written at a first- to third-grade reading level, yet the content is written for adults, about adult needs and interests, and with adult characters. It contains 16 units, each based on a reading adapted from an actual newspaper or online article. The readings were selected for their engaging storylines and for content relating to information adult students want and need to know. Each unit incorporates listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Each unit has nine sections: **Survey, Think, Read, Understand, Listen, Talk, Write, Apply, and Homework.** Each unit can be completed in one week, with the homework assignment occurring over the weekend. The lesson format is consistent throughout the book, so once students have mastered the directions, they will be able to complete activities with a large degree of independence.



## Survey

Each unit begins with a survey. Surveys provide students with practice in all four language skill areas. They contribute to learner persistence through community building. The survey introduces the theme of the reading and is designed as a pre-reading activity to stimulate interest and activate learner background knowledge about the topic. The survey also sets the stage for developing the vocabulary necessary to understand the reading.

Students first complete the survey by entering their own information, aided by the illustrations to promote understanding. While each question at this level has an accompanying illustration to aid in comprehension, it is also good to provide picture and bilingual dictionaries so students can look up words they do not understand. After students enter their own personal responses, students ask the survey questions to three other classmates and record their answers on the survey form. This is a good beginning-of-class activity as learning will take place even if the survey is not totally completed. Arriving students can begin as soon as they enter the classroom, and latecomers can complete as much as time allows.

Help students to become familiar with the survey activity. Direct their attention to the questions and elicit some answers orally. Encourage students to guess what the questions ask, using the pictures as clues. This is a good reading strategy for beginning learners to understand and use. Ask students to write their own personal answers in the first column. Tell students that they need to walk around the room and talk to three classmates and then record their information on the chart.

Once the surveys are completed, students can share the information in small groups. They can provide the information to the teacher who can graph it on the board. Students can use the information for writing short sentences about their findings.

**Extension:** Students can be asked to predict the teacher’s answers to the survey questions and compare their predictions to the teacher’s actual answers. This personalization of the activity helps students to get to know their teacher and is usually enjoyable for the students.



## Think

Three questions follow the survey. These questions help to introduce important vocabulary and essential concepts needed to understand the reading. Students can think about the questions on their own, can write answers to the questions, and can share answers with a partner, or the teacher can use the responses as a basis for classroom discussion. In this discussion, the content of the story should be introduced and the connection made to the discussion questions. Teachers might want to use additional questions that encourage students to speculate on the content of the upcoming reading to ensure that the students have enough background knowledge to understand the story. Use this time to introduce other vocabulary that might be problematic to your students. A vocabulary profile can be found in this teacher’s guide for each reading. It provides information on where each word in the reading appears on lists of most frequently occurring words. It indicates whether the word occurs in the first 1,000 most common words, the second 1,000 words, the Academic Word List, or is an off-list word. Use these lists as a guide to selecting the vocabulary your students might need to know. Vocabulary is best introduced in a context rather than in isolation. After the word is introduced, share other contexts for the word, using the same definition. Then encourage the students to find personal contexts for the word. This step is very important in helping to implant the word in memory.



## Read

The reading level of the readings in Book 2 ranges from first and second grade in the early readings and from second to third grade in the later readings. The number of words per story averages around 100. The readings are written using vocabulary and grammar appropriate for beginning-level students. The names in these readings have often been changed for easier readability, and some place names have been changed to reflect the most common place names in the United States

so that more students can identify with the readings. The other content remains as true as possible to the originals. Research indicates that the use of adult-oriented content material is useful for developing vocabulary and improving comprehension.

Read the story to or with the students initially. This first reading is for global understanding and to allow the students an opportunity to ask questions about areas that are not clear to them. Discuss the photo or illustration that appears with the reading. Using illustrations to aid in comprehension is a good reading strategy that beginning readers may not be aware of so, while it may seem natural to you, it is not always intuitive to new readers and should be taught.

After reading the story aloud, give students time to read the story silently. Encourage students to highlight unfamiliar vocabulary so they are actively interacting with the text. Clarify these words for the students connecting to students' personal experiences as much as possible.

**Extension:** Students can now tell the story to a partner and then reread the story to make sure their retelling is correct. They can be given the story in sentences or paragraphs to arrange in the correct order. They can be given a short list of words from the story and be asked to arrange them in the order they believe they appeared in the story. Then students can go back to the text to verify their positioning.

The teacher can read the story aloud, making some changes in the story. For example, change the name of one of the characters, a location, an action verb, a descriptive adjective, or other information depending on the level of the students. Students follow along in their texts and indicate when a mistake is heard. A similar activity can be done in print by giving students a copy with changes in it and asking them to try to identify the changes and then compare it to the original to verify their choices. All of these activities provide necessary additional interactions with the text for deep learning to occur.

The levels of reading for the series are based on my experience as well as Flesch-Kincaid readability levels, word counts, and Sprache readability. Flesch-Kincaid and Sprache consider the length of sentences, the number of syllables per word, and other elements such as the use of passive voice to determine appropriate grade levels. The scores range from grades 1 to 12. The lower the grade-level score, the easier the text is to read. The Sprache also provides information on vocabulary level and the number of new words. The words are taken from lists of the 2,000 most frequently used words as well as the Academic Word List of 570 words commonly used in academic subjects. The words in the word bank are listed in the order of their frequency of use in everyday writing. The first 25 words are used in 33 percent of everyday writing, the first 100 words appear in 50 percent of adult and student writing, and the first 1,000 words are used in 89 percent of everyday writing. Thus these are the words that students need to know and be able to use. Information about each unit is provided in this teacher's guide for each story. Included is the Flesch-Kincaid grade-level score, which measures readabil-

ity as a grade level, the total word count, and a list of words as they occur on lists of the most frequent words in the English language. Use this information to guide your decisions about which vocabulary to teach.

These readability levels guided decisions in terms of the readings, but experience, the amount and usefulness of new vocabulary, and the use of dependent clauses, passive voice, and higher-level grammar also was considered. Note that the irregular past tense is introduced in Book 2 as there is research that supports the fact that irregular past tense words are often learned before the regular past tense.



## Understand

Reading consists of four components—alphabetics (phonics and phonemic awareness), fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Thus, the activities that follow the reading consist of a comprehension or vocabulary activity and an alphabetics activity. The word count is provided in this teacher’s guide for each reading so that students can do timed readings for fluency.

One or two readings of a text is not sufficient for deep learning to occur, so this section provides a number of questions that require the learners to reread or refer to the text several times and also to identify personal connections with the text.

The first five questions are comprehension questions, sometimes asking for personal connections to or opinions about the story. These questions assess students’ understanding of the story while developing skills such as scanning, rereading, and identifying the main idea. The comprehension activities are varied but include sentence completions, true/false, matching, and sequencing activities.

The next five questions are phonemic and alphabetic questions. In these activities, the focus is on specific words, letters, or sounds. These questions require the student to refer to the text to locate specific words, letters, grammar points, affixes, and syllable and spelling patterns. Research indicates that learning alphabetics is most successful when instruction follows a sequence of increasing difficulty. At the high-beginner level, instruction is focused on helping the students to focus on letters and letter combinations with the sounds they represent and the ability to recognize high-frequency words. Each unit has a suggested phoneme to work on.

Both sets of questions require the learner to reread or refer back to the story to look for answers. In this way, the students gets the repetitions necessary for true learning to take place but are not bored because of the variety of activities asked for.

The answers to these questions can be found in this teacher’s guide. These can be posted for the students to self-correct or used by the teacher to correct individually or with the class. Students can check their answers with a partner as well.



## Listen

This is a cloze activity. It can be used as a listening cloze, where the teacher or a student reads the story aloud and the students enter the missing words using the word bank provided. Research suggests that it is difficult for students to remember a word they cannot pronounce, and being able to pronounce a word requires being able to hear it correctly. If the teacher or tutor reads the cloze, this listening activity provides another opportunity for students to hear the words spoken correctly. Listening also helps students to internalize the rhythm, stress, and flow of English. If used as a listening cloze, model the activity the first few times so students understand what they are to do. Read the first sentence. Ask students to look at the words and identify the one that would make the sentence correct. Ask students to write that word on the blank line in the story and then cross out the word in the word bank. Continue in this manner. Stop after each sentence or blank so students have time to locate the word and fill it in correctly.

This cloze can also be used as a reading cloze where the students enter the missing words by reading the story themselves and filling in the blanks using the word bank. Reading cloze activities provide a comprehension and vocabulary check. Students need to be able to make sense of the text and word choices in order to fill in the blanks. Using the cloze as reading cloze is a good form of assessment. It could be used a week or two following the reading as a review, too.

You can check the answers by: putting students in pairs to compare answers; reading the completed paragraph and asking students to check their own answers; eliciting the answers and writing them on the board; or asking students to look at the original story in their books and compare it to their answers. Students can also read the story aloud to a partner who listens for the correct words.



## Talk

This section has three questions for students to discuss with a partner or in a small group, giving every student a chance to participate. The students can think about or answer the questions first in writing so that are better prepared to speak with a partner. The questions allow students to share information about themselves and also to share knowledge or opinions they have on the topic. Students can talk in small groups without needing the involvement of the teacher.

**Expansion:** After students have had the opportunity to talk with a partner, place the students in two lines facing one another. One line asks the question and the people facing them in the other line answer. Ask the answerers to move down two places. Now the questioners have a new person to ask. After several rounds, lines should switch roles.



## Write

The writing activity asks students to complete or interpret a replica of an authentic document. It may be completing an order form, a check, a classified ad, an insurance form, or other written material that relates to the reading and that is useful for adult learners to be able to complete. In instances where the material may be unfamiliar to the students, a sample is provided. Allow students time to look at the document silently. Then review the example or create one that is applicable in your area. Model the activity. You may need to read the document out loud, pausing for students to fill in the information. Students can review their answers with a partner before discussing the responses as a class.



## Apply

One of the necessary skills for adult learners is to learn to function in the world in which they live. This section contains questions or an activity using an authentic document, related to the content of the reading. These activities help students in their roles as parents, workers and community members. The life skill tasks are related to the CASAS competencies.

Bring additional real materials into the classroom for students to work with, such as catalogs and order forms, change of address forms, and appointment cards. This practice boosts student confidence in their ability to function in the world outside the classroom. In addition, research indicates that retention is improved when students see that what they are learning in the classroom is valuable to them in the outside world.

**Extension:** These authentic writing and application activities can lead to authentic conversation practice. For example, one student can take the catalog order that the second student places. Or one student can call 9-1-1 to report a fire to a second student role playing an operator.



## Homework

This activity is always a writing or journaling activity in which students can practice the grammar and vocabulary of the lesson. It provides an opportunity for learners to share their knowledge and personal experiences with the topic of the reading. An example is provided to make it easy for learners to recall and understand what is expected of them once they are at home. Lower-level students can copy the example, changing a word or two to make it more personalized. Encourage

students to use the vocabulary you have introduced for this unit. This reinforces that vocabulary and is important in cementing it in their memories. This homework activity is especially important in programs where the students meet only four to six hours a week. Programs that provide only a limited number of hours especially need the additional hours at home to be able to achieve measurable gains in English.

Always look at the homework. It can be read and responded to or it can be corrected. Make only a few corrections or model the correct sentence structures in your responses. Students can then make the corrections and read their homework to a partner. Call on volunteers to read their homework to the class.

## **Dictation (not in student book)**

Dictation involves every student in active learning. It provides great practice and requires few materials. It can be used to introduce content, practice content being learned, or review learned content. It can be used for assessment. This teacher's guide for each unit contains dictation sentences. The sentences are sometimes open-ended where the student writes the dictated prompt and then completes it/fills in with personal information. Other dictations are complete sentences. The dictations reuse the important vocabulary from the reading so the students have a chance to meet them again. The dictations can be used on the day following the reading as a follow-up activity or on the day preceding the reading as a prior knowledge activity.

## **Word Families (not in student book)**

Word families, also called phonograms or chunks, consist of one or more vowels followed by one or more consonants that produce a pattern of sound that rhymes. When developing reading skills, patterns are important. Word families help students analyze the patterns of sounds within words and parts of an entire word. Recognizing word families can assist students with decoding words more fluently, as well as develop spelling skills. Each unit contains a suggested related word family, most of which are taken from the list of the 38 most common phonograms. The example words selected are the most common of the more than 600 one-syllable words these families make up.

White boards are an excellent way to work with word families. Students can write one word and then easily change the first letter to write a new word. This helps them to see that most of the letters remain constant and only the initial letter or pair of letters change. It also helps them with phonics and listening skills.