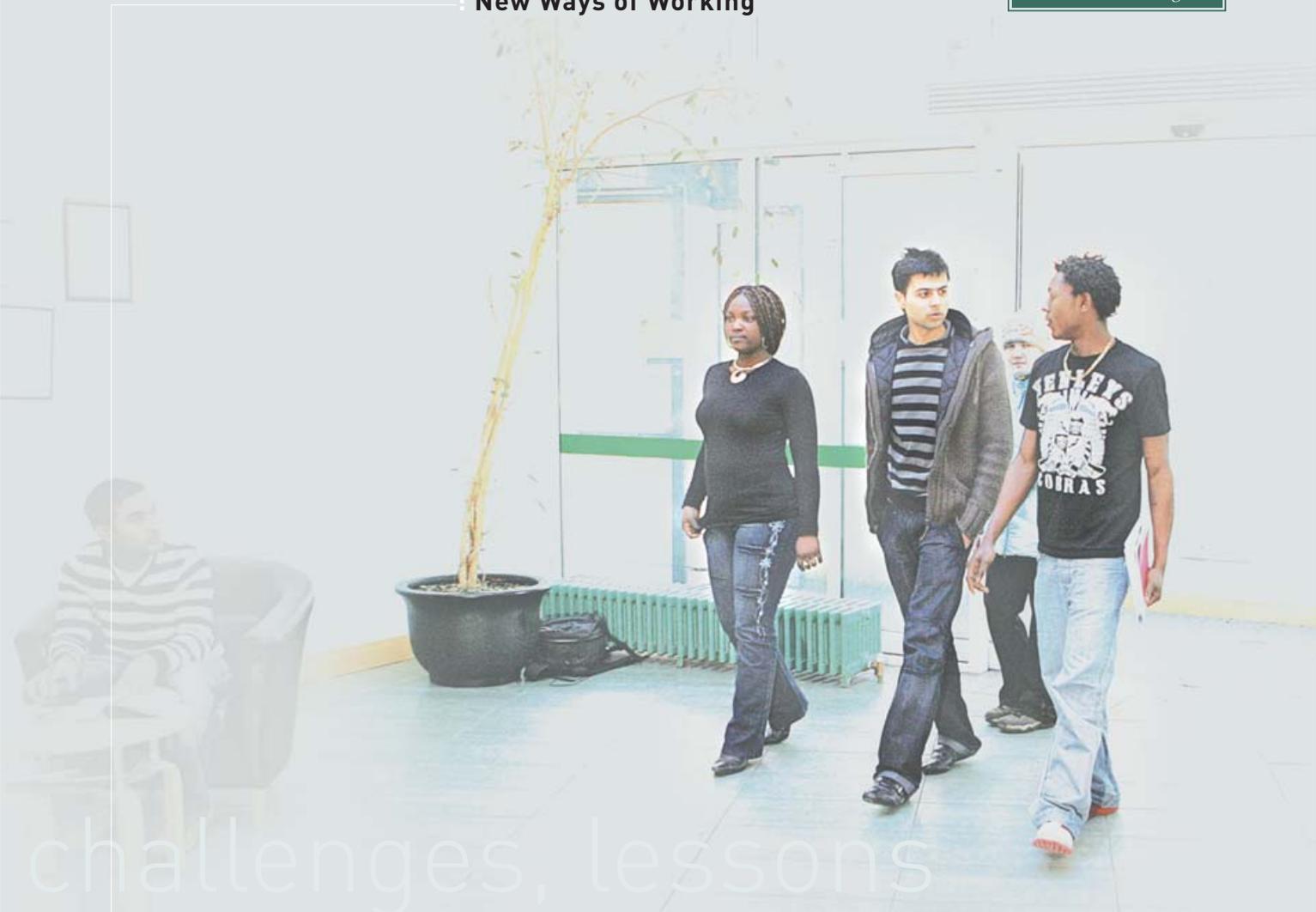


new lives

: New Ways of Working

ANNIESLAND
College



challenges, lessons

and changing perspectives
study skills

English Language Study Skills for Intermediate and above

seekers and young asylum
seekers in the Scottish
Further Education Sector

1

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Author: Vikram Seth

Title: *Two Lives*

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INTRODUCTION

For the past few years, Anniesland ESOL department has had a small, simple booklet of advice on study skills. The advice in it is sound, but the booklet is not long enough to let teachers and students explore particular issues, such as students' attitudes to pronunciation, in much depth. This book is a first attempt to push students to take more time thinking about the way they learn and practice. Its main limitation is that it is suitable only for good intermediate students and above.

Nevertheless, it offers a series of example worksheets of how students might

- (a) be drawn into a study skills topic initially by reading a literary or other text,
- (b) then discuss their own attitudes and abilities in, for example, pronunciation or grammar in pairs and groups
- (c) read through, or better still construct, a set of ideas for practice and improvement.

CONTENTS:

1	Studying a language _____	5
2	Speaking _____	13
3	Pronunciation _____	19
4	Listening _____	25
5	Reading _____	31
6	Vocabulary _____	37
7	Using a Dictionary _____	43
8	Writing _____	51
9	Spelling Rules _____	57
10	Useful places to study _____	65
11	Grammar _____	71

FEEDBACK:

Please give any feedback to Jeremy.Idle@anniesland.ac.uk

STUDYING A LANGUAGE

1

STUDY SKILLS 1:

STUDYING A LANGUAGE

> > >



STUDY SKILLS 1: STUDYING A LANGUAGE

1a LEAD-IN

You are going to read about the Indian writer Vikram Seth and his experience of language-learning. First check some vocabulary.

Match words 1-8 to meanings A-H . . .

words	meanings
1 requirement	A complete (verb)
2 exemption	B way
3 method	C wait; hesitate
4 standard	D important test
5 exam	E what you need to do
6 fulfil	F when you don't need to do something
7 authorities	G important people who make the rules
8 pause	H level

Complete the gaps in this part of the story, and answer questions 1-5.

It was dec_ded [when I was 17 and at an English private school] that I should take the special entrance ex_ms for Oxford. A little later, however, I disc_v_red that I had to study a European language to O-level standard to be accepted at the university. I wrote to the auth_r_ties, r_qu_sting an exemption, explaining that I had studied Hindi to the required level but that I had never had the _pp_rt_n_ty to study European l_ng_g_s at my school in India. But Oxford said no. I had to study a European language.

Vikram Seth, **Two Lives** (2005)

- 1 Why do people study at Oxford University? What's the difference between Oxford's University and its Colleges?
- 2 What was an 'O' level?
- 3 Why do you think Oxford wanted a European language?
- 4 How do you think Seth felt about this requirement?
- 5 How long do you think it took Seth to learn 'a European language'? Which language would you choose?

I was now in a panic. Learning any language to the required standard in the ordinary way meant about 4 or 5 years' work, and it was only six months to the 'O' level exams. There was also a translation paper for the Oxford exams.

But [my German aunt Henny] sat me down with a cup of tea and said I would have to fulfil the requirement. She and uncle would be able to help me. Immediately after she'd announced that I would have to learn German, Aunt Henny began to speak to me in the language. 'Was ist das?' she asked, pointing at a picture, and I had to reply, 'Das ist ein Bild, Tante Henny.' I didn't like the sound of the language. After a while, German spread to the dining-table and I would have to ask for bread or butter or whatever it was in German before it was offered to me. It was a game, sometimes interesting and sometimes tedious.

Aunt Henny also sang German songs to me, and lessons were also arranged with the German wife of an Indian friend of Uncle's who lived nearby. She taught me the basics of grammar, and I worked very hard.

[...]

In the end, I did well in my German O level and then took the more difficult Oxford entrance exam, including the German translation paper. In December I went to an interview at Corpus Christi, one of the Oxford colleges. The two men and one woman who interviewed me were very relaxed. When I asked them how I'd done in the German translation paper, one said, 'Oh, we don't know.'

'But didn't anyone look at it?' I asked.

'Not really. But we notice you have a German 'O' level. Why did you study German?'

I paused for a second, and then told them everything.

'Oh, you needn't have worried about the University authorities,' said one of the men. You should have come to us. We'd have told you we didn't care.'

'So, in a way, my study of German has been completely unnecessary?'

'Completely.'

Perhaps noticing the look on my face, he quickly added: 'In a way, that is.'

1b LANGUAGE STUDY AND YOU . . .

- 1 What qualifications do you have? How useful are they?
What languages can you speak? How useful are they?
- 2 Are you learning the right language? Are you on the right course?
How do you know?
- 3 What qualification in ESOL do you want to get (a) soon and (b) eventually?
- 4 Look at these ways to learn language:
 - (a) practical conversation,
 - (b) listening to songs
 - (c) grammar work.
 - (d) reading newspapers
 Which method do you prefer for language learning? And do you have other good ideas for other students about how to learn a language?
- 5 How hard are you going to work at language learning? How much time can you spend on English outside class?
- 6 Some people plan their language learning. Have you planned any of yours – in the past or just now?
- 7 We have material about different kinds of study outside the classroom to improve your English without the teacher. Here is a list of some of them. Tick the 3 areas you are most interested in and compare with a partner.

Reading
Writing
Speaking
Listening

Vocabulary
Grammar
Pronunciation
Spelling

Using Dictionaries
Places to Learn

SPEAKING

2

STUDY SKILLS 2:

SPEAKING

> > >



STUDY SKILLS 2: SPEAKING

2A Lead-in

If you want to ask someone to marry you, what should you do?

- A**
- 1 Ask the person you love first or the parents first?
 - 2 Stand, sit or kneel?
 - 3 Look him/ her in the eye or look away?
 - 4 Speak for a long time or a short time?
 - 5 Prepare what you are going to say or just 'go for it'?
- B** What films can you think of with proposals of marriage in?
- C** You are going to read from a novel about this situation. Complete the letter gaps in the text.
- D** Answer these TRUE OR FALSE questions about the text:
- 1 He asks her to marry him.
 - 2 She loves him.
 - 3 They are alone.
 - 4 They are both interested in mushrooms.
 - 5 The conversation doesn't follow Sergey's plan.
- E** WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Could you have behaved like Sergey or Varvara?
Do you think they are stupid or normal?
Will Sergey have another chance to ask her later?

"Varvara, when I was very young, I imagined a picture of the woman I loved and should be happy to call my wife. Now for the first time I have met what I was looking for. I love you, and offer you my hand." Sergey was saying this to himself while he was ten yards from Varvara.

Seeing Sergey approaching, she did not get up and did not change her position, but everything told him that she felt he was there and was glad of it.

"Well, did you find some mushrooms?" she asked, turning her handsome, gently smiling face to him.

"Not one," said Sergey Ivanovitch. "Did you?"

She did not answer, busy with the schoolchildren who were all around her. "That one too, near the stick," she pointed out to little Masha a little mushroom. She got up. "This brings back my childhood," she added, moving apart from the children beside Sergey.

They walked on for some steps in silence. Varenka saw that he wanted to speak; she guessed what it was, and felt happy but nervous. They had walked so far away that no one could hear them now, but still he did not begin to speak. It would have been better for Varenka to be silent. After a silence it would have been easier for them to say what they wanted to say than after talking about mushrooms. But accidentally, Varenka said: "So you found nothing? In the middle of the wood there are always fewer mushrooms though." Sergey Ivanovitch sighed and made no answer. He was annoyed that she had spoken about the mushrooms.

[.]

Half by mistake, Sergey then said "What is the difference between the 'birch' mushroom and the 'white' mushroom?"

Varenka's lips trembled with emotion as she answered:

"In the top part there is scarcely any difference, it's in the part below."

And as soon as these words were said, both he and she felt that it was finished, that what could have been said would not be said; and their emotions, which had up to then been continually growing stronger, began to subside.

2b SPEAKING AND YOU**Find someone who . . . (and ask extra questions too)**

Characteristic	Name
1 . . . likes speaking to strangers	
2 . . . doesn't like speaking to strangers.	
3 . . . has had a job involving a lot of telephone communication.	
4 . . . knows the difference between 'murmur' and 'mumble'	
5 . . . has told a 'white lie' recently.	
6 . . . has told three people 'I love you' in the last year.	
7 . . . thinks reading is a better way to learn a language than speaking.	
8 . . . wants to do more speaking in class.	
9 . . . tries to practice real English conversation outside class every day.	
10 . . . doesn't speak English outside class.	
11 . . . could say a few words before his/ her first birthday.	

1 . . . likes speaking to strangers

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10 . . . doesn't speak English outside class.

11 . . . could say a few words before his/ her first birthday.

2c MORE IDEAS

- Practise speaking English with your friends or your family. Arrange to talk in English with them for at least 20 minutes a day five days a week.
- Talk to people in small shops – just one or two sentences about the weather or football. It may help you make longer conversations.
- Do voluntary work in a charity shop like Cancer Research or Shelter.
- Find Scottish friends – get information from local libraries about joining clubs for sport or
 - chess
 - hill-walking
 - salsa-dancing
 - stamp-collecting
 - or anything else you are interested in.
- Talk silently to yourself. For example, describe what you see as you are walking along a road or looking out of a window.

THINKING ABOUT PRONUNCIATION

3

STUDY SKILLS 3:

THINKING ABOUT PRONUNCIATION

> > >



STUDY SKILLS 3: THINKING ABOUT PRONUNCIATION

3a LEAD-IN:

Complete each gap in the extract from **Dracula** below with one of these six phrases a-f.

- a the Count entered and said:
- b You know and speak English very well
- c The common people know me, and I am master
- d have been good friends to me
- e I may learn the English intonation
- f a vast number of English books

In the library I found, to my great delight, 1 _____, whole shelves full of them, and many magazines and newspapers. A table in the centre was full of English magazines and newspapers [. . .] While I was looking at the books, the door opened, and 2 _____

"I am glad you found your way in here, for I am sure there is much that will interest you. These," and he laid his hand on some of the books, "3 _____. Through them I have come to know your great England, and to know her is to love her. I long to go through the crowded streets of your mighty London. But as yet I only know your tongue through books. To you, my friend, I look that I know it to speak."

"But, Count," I said, "4 _____!" He bowed.

"I thank you, my friend, for your praise. True, I know the grammar and the words, but yet I know not how to speak them."

"Indeed," I said, "You speak excellently."

"Not so," he answered. "Well, I know that, if I moved and spoke in your London, everyone would see me as a foreigner. That is not enough for me. Here I am important. 5 _____. But a stranger in a strange land, he is no one. Men do not know his or care about him. I am content if I am like the rest, so that no man stops if he sees me, or pauses in his speaking if he hears my words, 'Ha, ha! A stranger!'

I have been so long master that I want to be master still, or at least that none other should be master of me. You shall stay here with me a while, so that by our talking I _____ . And I want you to tell me when I make any error, even the smallest, in my speaking.

Answer the questions:

- 1 The man telling the story is called Jonathan Harker. What makes him happy at the beginning of the text?

- 2 Where does Dracula want to go?

- 3 What is Dracula most worried about? His vocabulary, his grammar, or his pronunciation?

- 4 How good does Dracula want his English to become? How will he measure how good his English is?

- 5 Do you have the same plans as Dracula? Why/ why not? What do you think about Dracula's plans?

3b PRONUNCIATION AND YOU

- 1 When you are talking in your own language with a foreigner, are you disappointed if their pronunciation is inaccurate? Are you honest with foreigners if this happens?
- 2 Where are you planning to use your English in the future? Which career? Which country? How important is good pronunciation for this?
- 3 How good is your pronunciation? What do you find difficult about English pronunciation?
 - Individual consonants?
 - Individual vowels?
 - Certain words?
 - Word stress?
 - Intonation?
- 4 In what situations in everyday life is it most important to pronounce English well?
- 5 If someone has very good grammar and vocabulary but quite a strong accent that makes some words hard to understand, would you be happy if they got a job here as . . .
 - A** an English teacher?
 - B** a nurse?
 - C** a doctor?
 - D** an airline pilot?
 - E** a plumber?

Explain why.

3c MORE IDEAS

How can you improve your pronunciation?

- 1 Listen carefully when people correct it.
- 2 Record yourself speaking on tape cassette, computer etc. Play it back. Listen carefully or, better still, get a friend to sit with you and check which words are pronounced unclearly or incorrectly.
- 3 Sit with different people in class different days so that you have to speak carefully to be understood by a students from a variety of countries.
- 4 Use the pronunciation material in the English Study Centre. Try **Ship or Sheep** and **Tree or Three**? Both books have cassettes with them.
- 5 Check the pronunciation of all the words you look up in the dictionary.
- 6 To do 5 (dictionary checking) it helps to practise your understanding the International Phonetic Alphabet. This isn't very difficult if you try and practise. You could ask your teacher to help you with this.

4

STUDY SKILLS 4:

LISTENING

> > >



STUDY SKILLS 4: LISTENING

4a LEAD-IN

Answer the questions a-f about the dialogue (lines 1-19) below.

- What does 'indistinct' mean?
- Why do Blair and Bush laugh?
- In line 19, can you complete Blair's question with just ONE word?
- How do you think Blair and Bush felt when they discovered people were listening to them?
- How much do you understand of this conversation?
- Which of these adjectives correctly describe (i) Bush and (ii) Blair in their conversation? Can you think of others?

formal	relaxed	humorous	
simplistic	articulate	rude	confident

- Bush: Yo, Blair. How are you doing?
- Blair: I'm just...
- Bush: You're leaving?
- Blair: No, no, no not yet. On this trade thingy...[indistinct]
- Bush: Yeah, I told that to the man.
- Blair: Are you planning to say that here or not?
- Bush: If you want me to.
- Blair: Well, it's just that if the discussion arises...
- Bush: I just want some movement.
[...]
- Bush: Thanks for the sweater - it's awfully thoughtful of you.
- Blair: It's a pleasure.
- Bush: I know you picked it out yourself.
- Blair: Oh absolutely - in fact I knitted it!!!
(they laugh)
- Bush: I felt like telling Kofi to call, to get on the phone to Assad and make something happen.
- Blair: Yeah
- Bush: [indistinct]
- Blair: [indistinct]
- Bush: We are not blaming the Lebanese government.
- Blair: Is this...? [Blair taps microphone in front of him.]

4b LISTENING AND YOU**Find someone who . . .**

Characteristics

Name

1 Can understand conversations on TV quickly

2 Can understand Glaswegian speech most of the time.

3 Can name their favourite singer in English and sing a line of one of the songs.

4 Can say a line of dialogue from one of their favourite English films.

5 Regularly watches the same TV programme in English every week.

6 Listens to BBC radio.

7 Knows how to get listening practice on the internet.

8 Is really frightened of listening tests.

9 Has really good ears.

10 Is not very good at hearing, even to words in their own language.

11 Spends more than 3 hours a week listening to live English outside the classroom.

Think of follow-up questions such as 'Why . . .?'

4c MORE IDEAS

- (a)** Choose programmes you like from radio (maybe news) or TV (maybe a quiz show like 'Who wants to be a millionaire') Record them. Choose short pieces of speech, and play and replay them until you understand as much as you can. If you're still not sure, check with someone who has good English.
- (b)** Pick a pop star who sings in English. As above, listen to their songs until you understand every word. You can probably find the words on the internet or the booklet that comes with the CD. Practise singing the song!
- (c)** Listen to the radio and TV and don't always worry about the words: just relax and get used to the rhythm and intonation of the words.
- (d)** Press 888 on your TV remote to get subtitles for many programmes: you can then listen and read TV English at the same time.
- (e)** Try these websites for listening practice:
 - www.bbc.co.uk
 - www.channel4.com
 - www.iteslj.com
 - www.esl-lab.com
 - www.npr.org
- (f)** Use a Penguin 'graded reader' with a tape cassette – read and listen at the same time. Try the library or buy one from one of the bookshops in the city centre.
- (g)** If someone phones you up trying to sell you something, ask them a lot of questions -- just for practice. Put the phone down when the salesperson starts really annoying you.

READING

5

STUDY SKILLS 5:

READING

> > >



STUDY SKILLS 5: READING

5a LEAD-IN

Look at the following bits of text 1-6 below. Match each one to the kind of text a-f that it is from. Which kind of text do you prefer to read?

- a thriller
- b romance
- c gossip magazine
- d history
- e fantasy
- f quality newspaper

- 1 Queen Elizabeth was dying. Her ministers walked up and down nervously outside her room, worrying about who would be next on the throne. Would it be James of Scotland or someone different?
- 2 'I love you.' He said. 'Don't you love me too?'
'Yes', she replied. 'But it's impossible. I'm engaged to Douglas.'
'I know,' he said, 'and I'm engaged to Kirsty. But nothing is impossible for two young people in love.'
- 3 In a statement yesterday, the Prime Minister claimed that people had 'nothing to fear' from the police if they were innocent and law-abiding. The only ones with something to fear, he said, were 'those who want to destroy our society.'
- 4 The man was still walking towards him: 40 yards away, then 30, then 20. Still no sound and no sign of trouble. Was Gordon going to meet Europe's second most important spy? Now the man was ten yards away. 'Good evening,' he said, in heavily accented English. But suddenly a shot rang out in the night. The man crumpled, fell, and did not move.
- 5 Does Jodie think her fame and her TV show has changed her?
'Not at all! People think I'm rich and posh, but what I like best on a Saturday night is going for a curry and then getting hammered in the pub.'
- 6 Now he was flying again, with the help of a friendly eagle. Anniesland Castle was far below him. He had escaped the Possil giants, but now he had to be careful of the Hillhead wizards. 'I need strong magic,' he thought to himself.

5b READING AND YOU**A Think about when you lived in your own country and when you read in your own language . . .**

- 1 What reading did you do for fun? (novels, romance, gossip magazines etc.)
- 2 What newspapers did you read?
- 3 What things did you read to look after your house/ car (decorating/ plumbing instruction books etc.)
- 4 What reading did you do for work? (reports, instructions, etc.)
- 5 What reading did you do for academic study? (coursebooks etc.) Did you like doing this?
- 6 Did you read for other reasons? (poetry; intellectual books)

B 1 Now think about questions 1-6 above for your reading in English. Do you do a lot less? Why? Shouldn't you change your personal reading interests from your first language into English?

- 2 How many hours a week do you spend reading in English? Why?

5c MORE IDEAS

Generally:

If you're on your own, try reading out loud to improve your speaking fluency and pronunciation. Maybe even practise with a helpful partner.

TV:

Press the teletext button on your TV remote control for short news and weather information.

Newspapers:

Intermediate level: Read the **Metro** – it's free. Don't try to read everything . . .
 Advanced level: Read a quality newspaper like the **Glasgow Herald**, **Guardian**, or **Times**.
 Upper Intermediate: TRY a quality newspaper.

When you've got your newspaper:

- (a)** choose a headline or photo
 - THEN think about the questions you have about this topic
 - THEN read the first and last paragraphs
 - THEN decide have the paragraphs answered your questions?
- (b)** write a heading for each paragraph in a news story
- (c)** write any interesting words or phrases into your vocabulary notebook
- (d)** find ten nouns or adjectives; can you find a synonym for each one?
- (e)** you could try being the teacher – use the text to make up reading questions (like True or False or Multiple Choice) for someone else.

Internet:

Try the following websites for reading practice:

- www.bbc.co.uk
- www.guardian.co.uk
- www.timesonline.co.uk
- www.theherald.co.uk
- www.eveningtimes.co.uk
- <http://depts.gallaudet.edu/englishworks/exercises/main/reading.html>
 (tell your teacher if you find another really good website for reading)

VOCABULARY

6

STUDY SKILLS 6:

VOCABULARY

> > >



STUDY SKILLS 6: VOCABULARY

6A LEAD-IN

VOCABULARY CHECK:

Before you read an extract from the novel **Jude the Obscure**, check you can explain the differences between . . .

A sad and miserable?	D writing and scribbling?
B an employee and a slave?	E amazement and surprise?
C wishing and wanting?	F grammar and vocabulary?

Jude Fawley is a poor teenager from the countryside of the West of England. He wants to learn Latin. He works hard to get some books to help him learn. Eventually, a package arrives and he opens it . . .

Now read the next part of the story and do two things:

--- Fill in the gaps with the missing letters

--- Answer these questions:

- a** Why do you think this boy wanted to learn Latin?
- b** Why did he become so sad?
- c** What adjectives from the box could you use to describe him?

stupid	ambitious	optimistic	negative
modest	carefree	lazy	angry
confused	intellectual		

- d** Imagine you are Jude's aunt. He comes to you after the experience he has just had. What do you say to him?

Complete the words with the missing letters.

He cut the string, opened the books, and turned to the Latin grammar. He could hardly believe his 1 e__s.

The book was an old one — 2 th__ty years old, dirty, 3 scri__led over with a strange name in every variety and marked with dates twenty years 4 __rlier than his own day. But this was not the cause of Jude's 5 __azement. He learnt for the first time that there was no simple rule for 6 trans__ting Latin to English, but that every word in both Latin and 7 Gr__k was to be individually 8 mem__ised at the cost of years of hard 9 w__k.

Jude 10 thr__ down the books, lay backward along the trunk of the tree, and was a completely miserable boy for the space of a 11 __arter of an hour. As he had often done before, he pulled his hat over his face to keep out the sun.

This was Latin and Greek, then! The fun he had 12 __pected for himself was really slave labour.

What 13 br__ns they must have in Oxford, he thought, to learn words one by one up to tens of 14 __ousands! There were no brains in his head equal to this task; he 15 wi__ed he had never seen a book, that he might never see another, that he had never been born.

Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (1895)

6b VOCABULARY AND YOU

- 1 How many English words are you going to learn? How many English words do you know?
- 2 Some people learn words 'one by one'. Is this the best way? Is it better to learn groups of words? How many at a time?
- 3 Which words have you learnt in class recently?
- 4 How do you learn new words?
- 5 What different things do you have to learn each time you learn a new word?
- 6 Where do you write new words down? Do you have a notebook?

6c MORE IDEAS

Just trying to remember a word and a meaning can be a bit boring and is not the best way to learn vocabulary.

Discuss with a partner: Have you learnt words in the last year by . . .

- A putting them in word-groups?
- B using pictures?
- C putting them in whole sentences or making a whole story using some of them?
- D writing in, or colouring, important words in your dictionary?
- E saying or writing them repeatedly?
- F putting the words around your house or flat?
- G writing clues in your language which help you remember the words?
- H getting a family member or flatmate to test you ?
- I some other way ?

DICTIONARY WORK

7

STUDY SKILLS 7:

DICTIONARY WORK

> > >



STUDY SKILLS 7: DICTIONARY WORK

7A LEAD-IN

Student A

(You need a good dictionary for this exercise, either just for yourself or to share with one other person.)

Look at your word below – check everything the dictionary says about it. Make sure you can answer these questions that student B will ask you about your word.

CITIZEN

- 1 How do you spell your word?
- 2 What does it mean?
- 3 How do you say it?
- 4 Which syllable is the main stress on?
- 5 Can you give me an example of how it is used?
- 6 What word class is it?

When you are ready, ask student B questions 1-6 about his/ her word.

STUDY SKILLS 7: DICTIONARY WORK

LEAD-IN

Student B

(You need a good dictionary for this exercise, either just for yourself or to share with one other person.)

Look at your word below – check everything the dictionary says about it. Make sure you can answer these questions that student B will ask you about your word.

PARTICIPATE

- 1 How do you spell your word?
- 2 What does it mean?
- 3 How do you say it?
- 4 Which syllable is the main stress on?
- 5 Can you give me an example of how it is used?
- 6 What word class is it?

When you are ready, ask student A questions 1-6 about his/ her word.

7b DICTIONARIES AND YOU

Answer these questions in pairs or groups.

- 1 Do you own a bilingual dictionary? A monolingual dictionary? If not, why not?
- 2 What are the advantages of using a monolingual dictionary? A bilingual dictionary?
- 3 How often do you use a dictionary in class?
- 4 How often do you use a dictionary outside class?
- 5 Do you always check all of questions 1-6 on the previous page that you asked and answered ?
- 6 What other things can a dictionary help you with?

7c MORE IDEAS

Things to do outside class with dictionaries:

1 Use the Cambridge online dictionary:

www.dictionary.cambridge.org

2 Read a short story in English, maybe from the English Study Centre.

- Look up the new words in a monolingual dictionary.
- Write the translations of each word in your language.
- Check in a bilingual dictionary.
- If you haven't got something right, decide why: was your dictionary unhelpful? Were you not careful enough?

3 When you use a bilingual dictionary, check both ways: when you look up the English 'win' in Spanish and it says 'ganar', check in the Spanish section that 'ganar' means 'win'.

4 Good dictionaries also show you which words derive from the base word:

- From citizen we get citizenship.
- From participate we get participant, participation and participative.

Therefore, whenever you learn a new word, check which other words derive from it.

5 With any dictionary, check if has extra sections. Some can help you with:

- Irregular verbs
- Some grammar rules
- Phrasal verbs
- Understanding the phonetic alphabet
- Lists of very common words you should know

More ideas (continued)**Which dictionary should I choose?**

There are a number of good learner dictionaries published by (for example) Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Collins, Longman and MacMillan. Look at them in a bookshop or library and think about . . .

- 1 Is it too big? Is it too small?
If you are intermediate level, it will be hard to use an advanced dictionary – but maybe good practice for the future. If you are advanced level, you need a dictionary which is big and calls itself advanced – otherwise you will look up words from your high level reading material but not find them!
- 2 Is it up to date?
- 3 Is it easy to follow? Some dictionaries have too much confusing material for long entries for words like 'do', 'make' or 'get'.
- 4 Are the definitions clear?
- 5 Does it tell you if a word is formal or informal ?
- 6 Does it help you with pronunciation and stress?

WRITING

8

STUDY SKILLS 8:

WRITING

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STUDY SKILLS 8: WRITING

8a LEAD-IN

Employers say most CVs are badly written.

Tell a partner:

- What do you put in a CV?
- How well-written is your CV?
- How important do you think a well-written CV and personal statement is? Why?
- How much time should this class spend practising writing CVs and personal statements? Why?

Look at the list of jobs below.

Write a number against each of A-L according to the following code:

- 1 no written English needed
- 2 basic written English needed
- 3 good written English needed
- 4 excellent written English needed

- A** doctor
- B** cleaner
- C** newsagent
- D** hairdresser
- E** travel agent
- F** shop assistant
- G** computer technician
- H** engineer
- I** businessperson
- J** care worker
- K** nurse
- L** chip shop worker

What about you and your future plans? Are you 1,2,3 or 4?

Compare your choices with your partner's.

8b WRITING AND YOU

What do you do before/ when/ after you write? Tick ✓ any of 1-13 which are true for you:

- 1 just put the pen onto the paper and see what happens
- 2 do some reading to get good ideas
- 3 talk with other people about what you are going to write
- 4 plan what you will do in different paragraphs
- 5 check spellings in a dictionary
- 6 check meanings in a dictionary
- 7 check collocations (which word goes with which) in English
- 8 spend a few minutes editing your work for spelling when you've finished
- 9 edit for grammar
- 10 edit for vocabulary
- 11 edit for punctuation
- 12 rewrite everything immediately if it looks like a mess
- 13 rewrite everything later if your teacher shows you there are a number of mistakes

(Obviously you can't do all these things all the time. But you should do a lot of these some of the time.)

8c MORE IDEAS

Your teacher will try to mark anything you write. You can write as often as you like and give it to them. You could practice writing in these ways:

- Write a letter to a friend or the council.
- Write a job application letter or form.
- Describe a friend
- Describe your city
- Tell the story of your first day at school/ college/ work/ in Britain/ Glasgow
- Say what you think about a news story.
- Re-tell in English traditional stories from your country.
- Or write about anything you like – what other ways to practise can you think of?

SPELLING

9

STUDY SKILLS 9:

SPELLING

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STUDY SKILLS 9: SPELLING - THE MOST IMPORTANT RULES

9a LEAD-IN/ FORMING THE RULES

1 Can you pronounce these words correctly?

- women
- tough
- stomach
- gnome
- hymn
- psychology
- diarrhoea

Which letters here cause problems for some people?

Which words do you know that are difficult to spell? In groups, think of 5 words to give other groups for a spelling test.

1

2

3

4

5

It's impossible to fix all the spelling problems in English quickly, because there are so many. However . . .

- There is a teachers' book, Teaching English Spelling, which helps classes how to spell different sounds. Ask your teacher about it.
- There are a few really important rules. You are going to look at them on the next three pages.

2 Look at ALL OF the words in the box.

A	B
cod	code
cut	cute
bit	bite
let	delete
tap	tape

FIRST: Use each one to fill a gap from 1-10.

While I was working in my job as a midwife last night I met this nice couple and their new baby -- she was so 1_____ -- not like some ugly ones I've seen! I 2____ the husband 3____ the umbilical cord between mother and baby -- he looked so happy. We also let the husband check how tall the baby was with a measuring 4____. She was 50cm long. Then I turned the 5_____ on to get some warm water to wash the baby. I picked her up and, amazingly, she already had two teeth and she tried to 6_____ me! Then the doctor came, got a 7_____ of paper, and wrote some instructions. I couldn't understand the writing -- it was like some strange 8_____ that only doctors could understand. I asked him to put it on the computer. He did, but then he pressed the 9_____ key by mistake and the information was lost. Finally, I left work at midnight and got some 10_____ and chips to eat on the way home.

NEXT: How are the sounds of the words in column A different from the words in column B? What is the sound-spelling rule?

3 FIRST: Check the next part of the story for 9 spelling mistakes

When I got home I found a letter from my bosses explaining that the biggest changes ever were going to happen to Glasgow's hospitals because the government was cutting health money. Some hospitals were closing. I felt scared of losing my job. The next day I saw some other midwives. Some of them were sader than me because they had families to look after. One of them suggested writting to the Scottish government. Another midwife suggested moveing to another city. Everyone thought that the government decision was the meannest that they had experienced.

NEXT: Complete these 4 rules:

- 1 If a verb ends in -e, when we add -ing we have to

- 2 If a verb ends in a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern, we have to

_____ when we add -ing.

- 3 If an adjective ends in a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern, we have to _____

_____ when we add -er or -est.

- 4 If a verb ends in a consonant but not in a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern, when we add -ing, -er or -est we

4 FIRST: Find the 5 spelling mistakes.

Later at work, I saw the young mum I'd met before. 'How are you doing?' I asked.

'Fine!' she answered.

'I think you're lieing' I said.

'Yes, I know, I feel terrible' she said. 'I'm dieing for a cigarette but I know it's wrong. I'm trying to give up.'

'Well,' I said. 'It does get easier. Keep trying, and ask people here to help you. This is the friendlyest hospital in Glasgow.'

She looked down at her trainers. 'Sorry,' she said. 'I can't reach down at the moment. Would you mind tieing my shoelaces for me?'

NEXT: Think about the mistakes and complete the rules:

1 For verbs ending in _____, when we add _____ we have to change _____ to _____.

2 For adjectives ending in _____, when we add _____ we have to change _____ to _____.

9b/c: SPELLING AND YOU/ MORE IDEAS

Ask and answer with a partner:

- 1 How good are you at spelling in English?

- 2 Are there particular English words or sounds which give you trouble?

- 3 Are you good at spelling in your own language?

- 4 Do you think that English spelling is important if you are good at grammar and vocabulary? Why/ why not?

- 5 Do you think that company bosses get annoyed with bad spellers? Do you think that bad spelling disadvantages you in an exam?

- 6 What ideas do you have to remember difficult spellings? Can you remember any relevant tips from STUDY SKILLS 6 on vocabulary learning?

10

STUDY SKILLS 10:

PLACES TO READ AND LEARN

> > >



PLACES TO READ
AND LEARN

STUDY SKILLS 10: PLACES TO READ AND LEARN

10a LEAD-IN

Below is an extracts from a book about the difficulty of finding a place to sit down to write and study. Complete the gaps with the words from the box:

money	down	soundproof	were
past	bark	interrupt	difficult

[It has always been really 1_____ to sit 2_____, concentrate, and write a good book]. Dogs will 3_____; people will 4_____; 5_____ will be have to be made; health will break down . . . But for women in the 6_____, the difficulties 7_____ much greater. To have a room of one's own, let alone a quiet room or a 8_____ room, was out of the question.

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929)

Now ask and answer with a partner:

- 1 How many rooms did your flat/ house have when you were growing up?
- 2 Did your Dad have a lot of free time? What did he do?
- 3 Did your Mum have a lot of free time? What did she do?
- 4 Did you have a lot of books in the house?
- 5 Did you watch TV together a lot?
- 6 Did you join in a lot with what your parents were doing at home, or did you do things separately?
- 7 Did you do your homework? If so, where did you do it?
- 8 Did you have your own bedroom or did you share?

10b YOUR PLACES TO READ AND LEARN

Tell a new partner:

- 1 Where do you learn best?
 - In college?
 - In a bookshop?
 - In a library?
 - At home? Do you have a room there where you can study properly?
 - In a café?
 - Somewhere else?

Do you study best . . .

- 2 . . . in silence, or with noise or music?
- 3 . . . in an upright chair at a table, or an armchair?
- 4 . . . with other people around you, or on your own?
- 5 . . . in the morning, afternoon, evening or night?
- 6 . . . in a cold room or a warm room?

In groups, make a list of all the bookshops in your town/ city.

Which bookshop . . .

- 1 is nearest you?
- 2 has the biggest variety of books?
- 3 is best for books to help you learn English?
- 4 will let you sit down?
- 5 will let you read for hours and hours without giving you any trouble?
- 6 is the cheapest?

10c MORE IDEAS

---- If you don't know enough about the bookshops in your area. visit them. Your local Yellow Pages will have a list.

---- Visit your local library. Joining is free (just show them two papers which show them your name and address, for example an electricity bill and a telephone bill). You can borrow up to 12 books, and CDs, cassettes, and videos.

---- All colleges have a library. Some have extra space where students can study quietly. What do you know about your college? Can you use these things in the library/ study space?

- Grammar exercise books to fix your grammar problems.
- Vocabulary exercise books.
- Computers: use the internet, type homework.
- Cambridge Exam material (FCE, CAE, IELTS, Proficiency)
- SQA past papers.
- Borrow one of the Penguin 'graded readers' to listen, read and experience great literature at the same time.
- Books to focus on pronunciation.

Is it possible to do these things?

- Get some English speaking practice with a teacher.
- Get more English speaking practice with your friends.
- Do some writing practice for a teacher to look at.
- Use a book to focus on your pronunciation.

11

STUDY SKILLS 11:

GRAMMAR

> > >



STUDY SKILLS 11: GRAMMAR

11A/b: LEAD-IN/ GRAMMAR AND YOU

Look at what five different students say about learning grammar:

-- George: 'I don't worry about grammar because I have a big vocabulary. If I use all the right words then people will understand me. It doesn't matter about word endings or word order.'

-- Maria: 'Grammar rules are really important, so I spend a lot of time writing them down in my notebook. Before a test I see if I can remember all the rules, and then I check in the notebook.'

-- Philippe: 'Every time we do a grammar point in class I write down all the examples that the teacher has written on the board. I spend quite a lot of evenings writing the answers to grammar book exercises, and then I check with my teacher.'

-- Kasha: 'I sometimes use grammar books but more often what I do is write maybe a story or a letter, using the grammar that the teacher has most recently taught us. Then I get someone to check it. I also try using the new grammar in conversations with friends and teachers.'

-- Ali: 'My speaking and listening are quite good but not my writing. I don't like learning grammar rules; grammar is really boring. I pick up English just by talking to people and reading the Metro. I think my writing will be OK one day – then I can get a job as an engineer.'

Discuss who . . . (1 person or maybe more)

- 1 . . . is unrealistic?
- 2 . . . studies in a boring way?
- 3 . . . should do more practice?
- 4 . . . uses grammar for real communication?
- 5 . . . might be hard to understand?
- 6 . . . will do well in exams?
- 7 . . . is a bit like you?

11c MORE IDEAS

THINGS TO DO

- Ask your teacher grammar questions. Answering them is part of our job.
- Do the grammar homework after you learn it in class.
- Each time you learn new grammar, practise using it over the next week(s), both in your speech and in your writing practice. If you don't get a homework to practise it, make up a writing task yourself. Use it or lose it!
- Most coursebooks have a 'grammar reference' section – maybe at the end of the book, maybe at the end of each chapter. Read them and take notes on the most important bits.
- Work together with another student. Make up tests for them, and get them to make up tests for you.
- Buy the grammar book that suits you . . .

BOOKS

Three good grammar practice books are:

Murphy, **Essential Grammar in Use** (red book – elementary level)

Murphy, **English Grammar in Use** (blue book – intermediate level)

Hewings, **Advanced Grammar in Use** (purple or green book – advanced level)

TRY ALSO:

Foley and Hall, **Advanced Learners' Grammar** (purple)

Swan and Walter, **How English Works** (yellow)

WEBSITES:

Try grammar websites such as www.world-english.org

challenges, lessons
new lives : New Ways of Working
and changing perspectives
in working with asylum
seekers and young asylum
seekers in the Scottish
Further Education Sector



study skills

English Language Study Skills for Intermediate and above



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