

HOW TO CREATE AND USE READING MATERIAL

Assumptions this workshop is based on:

- 1. We can and should teach reading skills and strategies, even to non-native speakers of the language.*
- 2. Secondary and adult learners are motivated to read and understand high-interest, current materials (as opposed to artificially written reading programs or textbooks), even in a foreign language.*
- 3. Any (non-obscene) printed material for adults is fair game. It is the vocabulary, sentence structure, and language organization that need change, not the basic content or ideas.*

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Paraphrasing Language

by Elaine Kirn



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Common Types of Reading Material for Adults

Literacy Level of Reading Abilities	Beginning Level of Language Proficiency	Intermediate Level of Language Proficiency
1. Pictures	1. Pictures with Captions, Speech Balloons	1. Pictures to <i>Write</i> Stories for
2. Symbols	2. Less Common Symbols (Content Areas)	2. Advanced Symbols
3. Numbers	3. Arabic and Roman Numerals, Ordinals	
4. Letters of the Alphabet	4. Different Typefaces	4. Other Alphabets Compared with English
5. Words: Sight Reading	5. Phonics: Regular and Alternate Spellings	5. Recognition and Pronunciation of Words with Difficult Spelling
6. Phrases	6. Phrases: Topics and Titles	6. Phrases: Titles and Captions
7. Sentences	7. Sentence Captions; One-Liners (Proverbs, Witticisms, Quotes)	7. Sentence Captions; One-Liners (Proverbs, Witticisms, Quotes)
	8. Visuals with Words: Maps, Charts, Graphs, Schedules, Newspaper Children's Sections, Advertisements	8. Visuals with Words: Maps, Charts, Graphs, Schedules, Newspaper Children's Sections, Advertisements
	9. Short, Short Fiction (Fables, Folk Stories, Children's Stories, Anecdotes)	9. Short, Short Fiction (Fables, Folk Stories, Children's Stories, Anecdotes)
	10. True Stories (News Articles, Real-Life Narratives, Biographies)	10. True Stories (News Articles, Real-Life Narratives, Biographies)
	11. Factual Selections (Recipes, Self-Improvement and Practical Articles with Lists, Simple Textbook-Like Paragraphs)	11. Factual Selections (Self-Improvement and Other Practical Articles with Lists, Textbook-Like Readings)
	12. Short Adapted Books (Illustrated Classics, Reading Textbooks for Adult New Readers)	12. Short Adapted Books (Simplified Classics, Reading Textbooks, Content-Area Texts at Middle-School Level)

Usefulness of 12 Reading Types in Reading/Writing Instruction (Teaching or Learning Focus) Numbers 1-11 refer to types of reading material.

1-5: Pictures, Symbols, Numbers, Letters, Words): Decoding, Sight Reading	1-5: Pictures, Symbols, Numbers, Letters, Words: Pre-Reading, Sequencing	1-2: Pictures, Symbols: Writing Stimuli 4-5: Other Alphabets: Cultural Interest 6: Words: Accent Acquisition
6-7: Phrases, Sentences: Basic Literacy	6-7: Phrases, Sentences: Distinguishing Topics or Titles from Main Ideas	6-7: Phrases, Sentences: Distinguishing Topics or Titles from Main Ideas, Creating Concise Sentences (as Captions)
	8. Visuals with Words: Visual Orientation, Scanning for Information	8. Visuals with Words: Scanning Quickly for Information, (ads) Getting the Hidden Message
	9. Short Fiction: Sequencing (Time Order), Getting to the Point, Reading for Pleasure	9. Short Fiction: Sequencing, Prioritizing Events, Getting/Making a Point, Reading for Pleasure, Retelling a Story
	10. True Stories: Answering Essential Questions (<i>Who, What, Where, When, Why, How</i>), Making Sense of Reality	10. True Stories: Answering Important Questions, Making Sense of Reality, Distinguishing Relevant from Unimportant Details, Retelling and Telling Narratives
	11-12. Factual Selections, Texts: Recognizing Topic Sentences, Asking and Answering Main-Idea Questions	11-12. Factual Selections, Texts: Recognizing or Creating Topic Sentences, Asking and Answering Main-Idea Questions, Summarizing

Simplifying the language of authentic materials

by Judith H. Jameson

Authentic materials are being used with increasing frequency in adult ESL classrooms, especially in those with an employability, vocational, or workplace emphasis. But there are issues when simplifying the language of these materials aids learners both in understanding the content and in learning the second language. This article suggests three ways to use simplification techniques depending on the needs and language proficiency of the learners. It also provides five guidelines for simplifying language that can be used by instructors and by students.

Three ways that simplification techniques can be used in the classroom follow:

1. Sometimes, only the simplified materials are used (without reference to the original materials), especially with beginning ESL learners and when the content of the lesson is very important. For example, in a vocational class, a narrative description of a nursing procedure could be changed into a list of steps and the list then used to teach the ESL learners. This simplification can be done by the ESL teacher, a nursing instructor, or a more advanced ESL/nursing class.

2. Often times, the simplified materials may be used to help learners understand the content and language of the authentic material. For example, in an intermediate-level class, the list of steps describing a nursing procedure mentioned above could be used to preview a chapter in a nursing text. The learners would read the authentic text, supported by the list. The list could also serve as a

review or the outline for a study guide.

3. Finally, more advanced learners may work with the authentic text and simplify or paraphrase it themselves as part of the lesson and to check comprehension. For example, employees who need to communicate with limited English employees, and to the second language learners themselves.

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Five Guidelines for Simplifying Language

Guideline	Original Text	Simplified version												
1. Use short sentences and eliminate extraneous material	If following another vehicle on a dusty road, or driving in windy or dusty conditions, it is recommended that the air intake control button be temporarily processed in, which will close off the outside air and prevent dust from entering the vehicle interior.	Press in the air intake control button in dusty conditions.												
2. Change pronouns to nouns	Locate the item and match its number to the code number.	Locate the item. Match the item number to the order number.												
3. Turn narratives into lists	When you prepare a patient for a procedure, you meet with him/her to brief him/her on how to prepare for the procedure (what precautions to take, what he/she will experience during and/or after the procedure, etc.).	To prepare a patient for a procedure: a. Meet with the patient b. Tell the patient how to prepare for the procedure c. Explain the necessary precautions d. Explain what the patient might feel during the procedure e. Explain what the patient might feel after the procedure												
4. Underline key points or vocabulary	Housekeeper's Checklist: 1. Put clean towels in the bathroom 2. Vacuum carpet 3. Turn thermostat to 75 degrees	Housekeeper's Checklist: 1. Put clean towels in the bathroom 2. Vacuum carpet 3. Turn thermostat to 75 degrees												
5. Use charts and diagrams	The ABC Medical Plan covers general medical care. The Company pays part of the insurance cost. The employee pays \$22 a month for himself, or \$101-\$139 a month for himself and his family. The HMO Plan covers general medical care and the Company pays part of the cost. The employee pays \$22 a month for himself and \$85-\$115 a month for himself and his family.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>ABC</th> <th>HMO</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Covers general medical care</td> <td>general medical care</td> <td>general medical care</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cost for worker</td> <td>\$22/month</td> <td>\$22/month</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cost for family</td> <td>\$101-\$139/month</td> <td>\$85-\$115/month</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		ABC	HMO	Covers general medical care	general medical care	general medical care	Cost for worker	\$22/month	\$22/month	Cost for family	\$101-\$139/month	\$85-\$115/month
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Possible Kinds of Self-Made Reading Materials (with and without Adaptation)

- Large Picture Cards
- Picture Cards with Matching Word Cards
- Small Card Decks with Matching Pairs or Sets
- Pasted-Up Realia (Maps, Charts, Ads, etc.)
- Reading "Kits": Original or Simplified Readings of Equal Length, Pasted-Up on Separate

TYPE OF READING MATERIAL: KIND OF SELF-CREATED "KIT"	INSTRUCTIONS FOR CREATING REUSABLE CLASSROOM MATERIALS	INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLASSROOM USE OF MATERIALS
<p>1-5. Pictures, Symbols, Numbers, Letters, Words: Small Card Decks Containing Matching Card Pairs or Sets</p>	<p>See Handout with Title "Doing Without the Photocopier: Focus on Literacy and Early Reading"</p>	<p>See Handout with Title "Doing Without the Photocopier: Focus on Literacy and Early Reading"</p>
<p>6-7. Phrases/ Sentences: Large Picture Cards with Worksheets (Lists of Topics or Captions)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect a set of pictures: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. One-frame cartoons OR b. Photos (perhaps from newspapers) OR c. Prints of famous paintings OR d. Miscellaneous appropriate drawings 2. If there are titles or captions, remove them from the pictures. In list form, paste up the titles of captions or copy them on a piece of paper. (You can simplify the language, if necessary OR write more appropriate titles or captions of your own.) Don't number the items. Instead, include a blank or small box before or after each item. Duplicate this list—one for each person or group. 3. Paste up the pictures on card stock. On each page, write a large number in sequence 1 to ? Put them in a neat stack. 	<p>NOTE: For literacy-level learners, simply introduce vocabulary and talk about the pictures together.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hand out the title or caption worksheets, one to each person or group. 2. Pass the pictures around the class—all at the same time. (You may have to help learners "keep the pictures moving.") Participants work as fast as they can to match each picture to a title or caption. On the line or in the box next to each worksheet item, they write the number of the corresponding picture. Does the person or group that finishes first get a prize? Or should there be a time limit for this activity? 3. If necessary, go over the answers or hand out an Answer Sheet. 4. Ask for the pictures back, one by one, according to the number. Hold up each picture. Can learners recall the titles or captions? Or can they create even better ones? <p>NOTE: Intermediate-level learners can write titles or captions of their own before comparing their creations with the originals.</p>

WORKSHEET INSTRUCTIONS: To match the captions with the cartoons, write the letters on the lines.

A. ___ Thanks for fluffing up my pillow, nurse.

B. ___ Thank you, nurse, but nothing seems to help hospital food.

C. ___ And who referred you to us, please?



TYPE OF READING MATERIAL: KIND OF SELF-CREATED "KIT"	INSTRUCTIONS FOR CREATING REUSABLE CLASSROOM MATERIALS	INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLASSROOM USE OF MATERIALS
<p>7. Sentences (One-Liners): Long Sentence Cards</p> <p>No news is...</p> <p>Don't judge a book...</p> <p>Practice what....</p> <p>Marry in haste,</p> <p>It's never over...</p> <p>Short visits...</p> <p>A watched pot...</p> <p>...by its cover.</p> <p>...never boils.</p> <p>...till it's over.</p> <p>...you preach.</p> <p>...repent at leisure.</p> <p>...make long friendships.</p> <p>...good news.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect a set of one-sentence traditional proverbs, sayings, witticisms, or quotes appropriate in sophistication to the level of the learners. If necessary, simplify the language or adapt the words to make the meaning clearer. 2. In large print, type the one-liners in a list, perhaps in "landscape" format. Or print them lengthwise on a piece of card stock. To create more than one set of cards, make copies of the original. 3. Cut the one-liners apart, lengthwise. Then cut each one-liner in half vertically as well—so that the first half is on one card and the second half on another. (OR: When typing the one-liners, align the first half with the left margin and the second half with the right margin so that there is space in between. OR: Put the first half of each sentence on one color of card stock and the second half on another.) 4. You may want to keep one list intact as an "Answer Key." 5. You may want to prepare a "Worksheet" for the proverbs or quotes. The Worksheet should consist of the same number of numbered items as there are proverbs or quotes. The items should be in list form. The items can be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. paraphrases of one-liners b. explanations of the points c. speakers of the famous quotes OR? 	<p>NOTE: This activity is probably not suitable for Literacy Level learners.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Count out a number of half proverb or quote cards equal to the number of learners in the group or class. Make sure they match (can all be put together to form complete one-liners). 2. Each participant receives a card. As fast as possible, everyone looks around the room to find his or her partner—the person with the matching half of the proverb, saying, or quote. 3. In pairs, learners talk about the one-liner they have put together. They try to agree on its meaning. Then they write it on the chalkboard after the appropriate number. 4. In turn, each pair of learners reads aloud their one-liner and explains it to the whole group. They tell if they agree or disagree with its "wisdom," and why. Encourage them to give examples from their own experience. 5. Now hand out the Worksheet with the list of matching items—paraphrases or explanations of proverbs or the speakers of famous quotes. Learners work on their own or in pairs or groups to match the one-liners from the board to the items on the list. They copy each one-liner after each item on the Worksheet. <div data-bbox="911 1491 1534 1938" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>WORKSHEET INSTRUCTIONS: Copy proverbs from chalkboard after the matching explanations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ___ Do what you tell others to do. 2. ___ If you marry too quickly, you'll be sorry. 3. ___ If we don't hear any bad news, we can assume things are all right. </div>

TYPE OF READING MATERIAL: KIND OF SELF-CREATED "KIT"	INSTRUCTIONS FOR CREATING REUSABLE CLASSROOM MATERIALS	INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLASSROOM USE OF MATERIALS
8. Visuals with Words: Paste-Ups of Realia or Adapted "Mock Realia"	See Idea N of <i>Doing Without the Photocopier</i> : "Reading Authentic Material."	See Idea N of <i>Doing Without the Photocopier</i> : "Reading Authentic Material."
9-11. Fiction, True Stories, Factual Selections, and Other Kinds of Prose: "Reading Kits" of Material Pasted Up on Cards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect—and adapt if necessary—a set of readings of the same kind, approximate length, and level of difficulty. These can be fables, other short fiction, anecdotes, true news stories, factual articles, or another appropriate type of prose. 2. Paste up the selections on cards numbered in sequence 1-?. Keep them together in an envelope or with a rubber band. 3. As a handout or on an overhead transparency, prepare quiz questions for the reading selections. There should be no more than one or two questions per reading, and they should be "main-idea questions"—i.e., questions to elicit brief summaries of the important information. 4. You may want to create a Worksheet to enable learners to demonstrate basic comprehension of the material. In list form, it might consist of titles that match the selections, one-line summaries, or the like. 5. You might also want to create an Answer Key—a native speaker's answers to the questions you will ask learners. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. For the Small Group version of the "Expert Game," use only four of the prepared selections. (Make a copy of the four readings for group of learners.) Hand out the cards, <i>Reading 1</i> to the first person in each group, <i>Reading 2</i> to the second, and so on. 7. Allow participants time to read their selections and to prepare notes. They will use their notes to explain the point and the main supporting details to the other members of their group. 8. For beginners, write the four quiz questions on the board. Groups work together to compile answers to the questions—each person contributing the relevant information on his or her reading card. 9. The members of intermediate groups can "teach" one another the information from their reading selections before you write the quiz questions on the board or read them aloud. Then participants can write their answers individually—from the notes they took while listening to their classmates' "lessons." 10. For the Whole Class version of the "Expert Game," give a different reading to each person or pair of learners. Hand out a question list. Participants circulate around the room, finding out the answers from the "experts" on each topic. OR: Each person or pair "presents" their information in turn to the class.

SUGGESTED GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT FABLES, ANECDOTES, OR STORIES FROM THE NEWS

- A. In a few sentences, what are the main events of the story?
- B. What is the moral or message or point of the story or joke? Why do you think so?

SUGGESTED GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT BIOGRAPHIES

- A. What is the *focus* or *thread* or *main point* or *meaning* of this famous person's life (so far)?
- B. Which events in his or her life "support" the nearing focus or common thread? Explain how.

FOR FACTUAL MATERIAL, BE SURE TO ASK MAIN-IDEA QUESTIONS—THE ANSWERS TO WHICH "ENCOMPASS" ALL THE IMPORTANT INFORMATION.