

TEXT PROCESSING STRATEGIES

Predicting

We can read better and faster if we are able to predict what we are going to read even before we see the actual words on the page. To do this, we can make use of orthographical, grammatical and semantic information – that is, we can activate our knowledge of how words are spelt, how they combine together in sentences, how they make sense in the context of what we are reading, and how a particular text is organized.

1. Can you reconstruct the following words and phrases?

1. D _ CT _ _ N _ RY
2. IM _ ED _ AT _ _ Y
3. I _ FO _ M _ TI _ N
4. AU _ _ MAT _ C
5. _ M _ R _ C _ N ENG _ I _ H
6. F _ _ TB _ LL P _ AY _ R
7. M _ RR _ CH _ IS _ M _ S
8. TH _ N _ XT ST _ P
9. TH _ _ K _ OU V _ _ Y _ U _ H

2. Can you guess some possible endings for these broken words?

swim-
clear-
imper-
post-
indi-
play-
ele-

3. Look at the broken words at the end of each line.

A. What part of speech can they be?
(noun? adjective? verb? pronoun? adverb?)

B. Can you guess a possible ending for each broken word?

1 but when I saw her, I realized that she was one of the most beau-

2 technology created the factory system of large-scale machine produc-

3 East of the Andes is a region of almost uninhabited tropi-

4 what she said to him. He felt that it was now complete-

5 course I understand what you mean, but there is still some-

6 revolution. A provisional government was formed and a republic was pro-

7 most popular winter resort areas. Tourism is the major in-

8 A quadrilateral is a trapezoid if it has one pair of par-

4. What part of speech are the missing words in the following texts? Can you guess what they could be?

1. But spelling differences between American English and (1) _____ English are few and slight and not really (2) _____ important. (3) _____ more important (4) _____ – still observable today – is that of vocabulary and usage. Early American settlers encountered animals and plants and features of the landscape that no English-speaking person (5) _____ ever seen before. They had to call them something. Sometimes, they used the Indian names (*moccasin, hickory, squash, skunk*) or French (6) _____ (*prairie, butte*) (7) _____ Spanish ones (*canyon, corral, chaparral, mesa*). Sometimes, (8) _____ made up (9) _____ (*rattlesnake, mockingbird*).

2. Until he was thirty years (1) _____, Fotheringay did not believe in miracles. Indeed he discovered his extraordinary powers when (2) _____ was saying that (3) _____ were quite impossible. He was (4) _____ a drink at an inn called the Long Dragon.

Toddy Beamish disagreed with everything (5) _____ Fotheringay said, and drove him to the limit of (6) _____ patience. 'So you say,' answered Beamish whenever Fotheringay spoke.

There were present, besides these two, (7) _____ very dusty cyclist; (8) _____ landlord, Cox; and fat Miss Maybridge, (9) _____ served the drinks. She was standing with her back to Mr Fotheringay, washing glasses; the others (10) _____ watching him.

(from H.G. Wells, *The Man Who Could Work Miracles*)

3. But by Friday Hugh still hadn't called.

IT'S NO GOOD SITTING AND WAITING FOR A CALL. I'LL HAVE TO RING HIM. HE DOESN'T LIKE ME RINGING HIS DIGS 'COS IT'S THE LANDLORD'S PHONE. BUT I'VE GOT NO CHOICE.

1 HUGH THERE?

NO, HE'S NOT. WHO'S 2?

IT'S SANDRA, 3 GIRLFRIEND. CAN YOU GIVE HIM A 4?

I COULD IF 5 LIVED HERE ANY MORE, HE'S MOVED OUT YOU SEE.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT, 6 YOU GOT A FORWARDING ADDRESS?

NO, HE DIDN'T GIVE ONE, OR A PHONE 7 IF THAT'S THE NEXT QUESTION.

OH NO, THAT'S 8 HE WON'T BE COMING BACK AT ALL. I'VE GOT TO 9 TO HIM, I'VE GOT TO!

IF HE DOES CALL BACK FOR MAIL OR SOMETHING, I'LL 10 HIM YOU RANG. IT'S ALL I 11 DO.

But Hugh hadn't left at all.

DON'T EVER ASK ME TO 12 THAT AGAIN.

THANKS, MATE, YOU REALLY GOT ME OFF THE HOOK THERE.

And four miles away a heart was breaking.

HE'S LEFT ME. I KNOW HE'S LEFT ME!

5. What helped you to guess the broken and missing words in the previous exercises?

6. A. Can you predict how the following paragraphs will develop? Choose the most appropriate alternative.

1. You have often heard the word *mineral*. To most people, it means «any material which comes out of the earth». «Mineral water» is supposedly health-giving water from natural springs; coal is often called a «valuable mineral». But the word has a special meaning for an earth scientist.

The paragraph then

- a) gives other *examples* of «minerals»;
- b) *describes* what an «earth scientist» is;
- c) gives a scientific *definition* of «mineral».

2. By 1939 it was possible to fly from Britain to the United States, Egypt, India, Africa and Australia. The Second World War speeded up aircraft development again. Soon there were planes for lots of different tasks.

The paragraph then

- a) gives *examples* of various kinds of planes used in World War II;
- b) *explains* why World War II speeded up aircraft development;
- c) *describes* how planes developed after World War II.

3. Television has become very powerful, and not everybody is happy about some television programmes.

The paragraph then

- a) *explains* why television has become so powerful;
- b) gives *examples* of television programmes;
- c) gives *examples* of negative opinions on television programmes.

4. Before it became a British Crown Colony in 1842, Hong Kong was a barren land made up of steep unproductive hillsides. It was an inhospitable environment. However, Hong Kong soon became a very important port.

The paragraph then

- a) *describes* Hong Kong's «inhospitable environment»;
- b) *describes* how Hong Kong became a British Crown Colony;
- c) *explains* why Hong Kong became a very important port.

5. Heinrich Schliemann was only seven years old when his father gave him the Christmas present that changed his life and started an important chapter in the history of archaeology.

The paragraph then

- a) *explains* what the Christmas present was;
- b) *describes* the «important chapter» in the history of archaeology;
- c) *explains* who Heinrich Schliemann was.

6. When you think about the first human beings, it seems surprising that they survived, and even more surprising that they became the most powerful animals on the Earth.

The paragraph then

- a) *describes* the period when the first human beings appeared on the Earth;
- b) *describes* the weak points of human beings in comparison with other animals;
- c) *describes* the advantages of human beings over other animals.

7. No one person invented the «movies». The Lumière Brothers certainly did not. They were showmen, not inventors. And, of course, a «moving» picture does not really move.

The paragraph then

- a) *describes* what the Lumière Brothers actually did;
- b) *explains* how a «moving picture» works;
- c) *mentions* the people who helped to develop the «movies».

8. Perhaps you know that the code *Na* stands for sodium. The element got its name from *soda* – a mineral used in washing and baking. The Latin name for soda was *natrum*. Sodium is a metal – but not one that you could use to make knives and forks.

The paragraph then

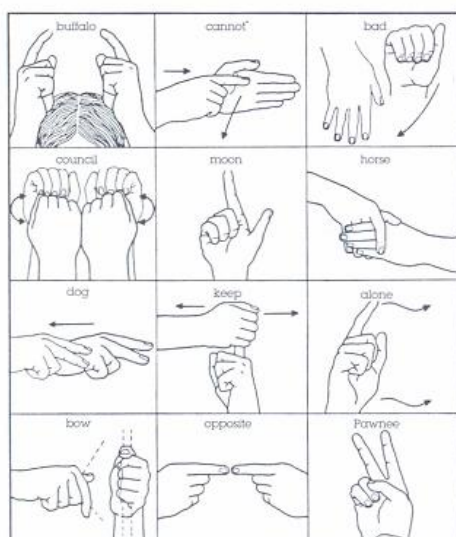
- a) *describes* the uses of sodium;
- b) *mentions* the metals that can be made into knives and forks;
- c) *explains* why sodium can't be used as a «normal» metal.

7. Turn to the end of this module. Look at how each paragraph actually develops and check your predictions. What helped you to predict correctly?

8. How do you think these paragraphs will develop? Discuss your opinions.

Then check at the end of this module how the paragraphs actually develop.

1. The common cold is the world's most widespread illness – which is probably why there are so many myths about it. The most widespread of these myths is that colds are caused by cold.
2. Fragments of bones of a prehistoric monster known as the iguanodon had been found in different parts of Europe during the 19th century, but never a complete skeleton.
3. Before the development of even the most elementary vocal language, primitive man used a combination of basic noises and simple, evocative signs to communicate with his fellow-men. Just as animals express basic emotions like anger, fear, aggression and contentment, early man used facial expressions and bodily gestures. But «sign language», which began as an aid to communication, has survived the evolution of complex languages.



American Indian sign language.



4. Atom bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Bombing raids by the Americans had already killed more Japanese than the 80,000 who died at Hiroshima. But the new atom bomb was different.
5. You wouldn't expect to see a penguin on a hot tropical island or a camel in Greenland – they are adapted to live in other climates. And they are very well adapted indeed. Compared with them, human beings have not adapted at all. In fact, of all the animals in the world, humans are the least well adapted to their environment.
6. If a country has greater and greater numbers of old people, there are many problems to solve. These problems are small as long as the majority of the population work, paying taxes to the government and local authority, to pay for necessary services.

9. Write a paragraph which could be the logical continuation of the following sentences. Then compare your work with a partner.

1. There are many reasons why I'd like to move into the country.
2. Andrew had met several girls at the club, but Liz was different.
3. Not everybody in the class is happy with the new Science teacher.
4. When she opened the door, she was surprised to see Alan.
5. Our town has changed a lot in the past few years.
6. Money is not the only thing which is important for me in a job.
7. The terms England and Britain are not interchangeable.
8. All through the night, I kept wondering why Chris had decided to leave me.

UNIT 2 – Text Processing Strategies – Exercise 7

1. A mineral is a natural material which has a *definite chemical composition*. That is, it is always made up of the same chemical elements in the same proportions. It is often found as crystals.
2. There were bomber planes, transport planes and famous fighter aircraft like the British Spitfire and Hurricane or the German Messerschmitt.
3. Some say that there is too much violence shown on television. Others think that advertising firms have too much to say in what sort of programmes are shown on Independent Television.
4. Why? Largely because British merchants wanted a base for their trade with China, and Hong Kong has one of the best natural harbours in the world.
5. The present was an illustrated book containing a picture of Troy in flames, after it had been captured by the armies of the ancient Greeks.
6. They had less hair and were less resistant to cold than most mammals. They could neither run as fast nor kill as quickly as the cat family, they were less agile than the monkeys, and much weaker than the bears.
7. It is made up of thousands of still photographs, each one slightly different from the one before. They flash before the eyes so fast that they seem to blend together into movement.
8. It breaks up if it is left in the air, and it explodes and burns if it touches water.

UNIT 2 – Text Processing Strategies – Exercise 8

1. They are not. The causes are viruses which are passed on from person to person. You catch a cold through coming into contact with someone who already has one. If cold causes colds, it would be reasonable to expect the Eskimos to suffer from them permanently. But they do not.
2. Then, surprisingly, in 1877, the skeletons of an entire group of the giant reptiles were found ... down a Belgian coalmine.
3. It is still found around the world today among primitive peoples, like the aborigines of Australia, and in modern society, as an extra mode of expressing moods, feelings and commands.
4. For weeks after it was dropped, survivors began to fall ill and die. They were being killed by the effects of radiation. The survivors sometimes passed on radiation diseases to their children.
5. So how do we survive? The answer is that of all the animals in the world, humans are the cleverest. We have learned to adapt our environment to ourselves.
6. The more old people there are, however, the more help is required, and the smaller the proportion of the population which work to pay for them.