

TEXT PROCESSING STRATEGIES

Previewing • Anticipating

The layout of a text can often help us to preview its contents: the types used (e.g. **bold**, *italics*), the division into sections or paragraphs, the pictures linked to the text can tell us a lot even before we start reading the text line by line.

1. Look at the text on the next page.

A. Copy and complete the following description.

In the top left-hand corner of even-numbered pages and in the top right-hand corner of odd-numbered pages you can often find, next to the page number, the title of the *book*, *chapter* or *section*. This page, for example, is taken from Chapter No. _____, which is entitled _____. The section of the chapter reproduced here is Section No. _____, entitled _____.

Some words in this text are printed in **bold**: they refer to basic terms like **primary producers**,

_____, _____, _____,
_____, _____ and _____.

Definitions are given of these terms: for instance, a **trophic level** is defined as _____; a food chain is defined as _____ and a **food cycle** is defined as _____.

Other important terms are printed in *italics*:

production, _____, _____,
_____, _____.

B. The text includes *pictures* and *diagrams*. Which words or sentences from the text would you use to describe each picture?

C. Copy and complete the following basic summary of the text. Pay particular attention to the words printed in **bold** and in *italics*.

Populations in a community can be classified into four groups: (green plants), which convert into ; (herbivores); (.....); and (.....). Trophic levels, i.e. the stages in , form a The taken together form a Since , the amount of energy is greater , and populations of are larger than

Titles, subtitles and illustrations can often help to predict the main ideas developed in a text. They may raise questions in our mind, activate our previous knowledge and stimulate our curiosity.

2. A. Work in pairs. Read the following titles of articles (which appeared in the «National Geographic Magazine») and look at the relevant pictures. Choose *three* of them and write at least *two* questions which you think each article may answer.

B. Compare your questions in groups. Then turn to the end of this module and check the summaries of the articles (which were originally published with the titles). What topics and ideas did you actually predict?

Bats—The Cactus Connection

Text and photographs by
Merlin D. Tuttle



Elephants—Out of Time, Out of Space

By Douglas H. Chadwick



East Europe's Dark Dawn

By Jon Thompson
Photographs by James Nachtwey



Secrets of Animal Navigation

By Michael E. Long
Photographs by James L. Amos



Iraq: Crucible of Civilization

By Merle Severy



5. ENERGY RELATIONS IN ECOSYSTEMS

The life processes that occur within an ecosystem are vitally interrelated and form a continuous chain, each step of which derives its energy from the one before. The *production* of food, its *consumption*, and *death* and subsequent *decay* are actually governed by an *energy-flow* mechanism.

Energy enters the system in the form of sunlight, some of which is converted into potential food energy by the **primary producers** in the ecosystem – the green plants. The energy then passes from the green plants to the **primary consumers** – the herbivorous animals. The **secondary consumers** – carnivorous animals – feed, in turn, upon the herbivores. At the final stage are the **tertiary consumers** – the large carnivores which feed only on smaller carnivores. Each stage in the flow of energy from one population to another is known as a **trophic level**. The sequence of trophic

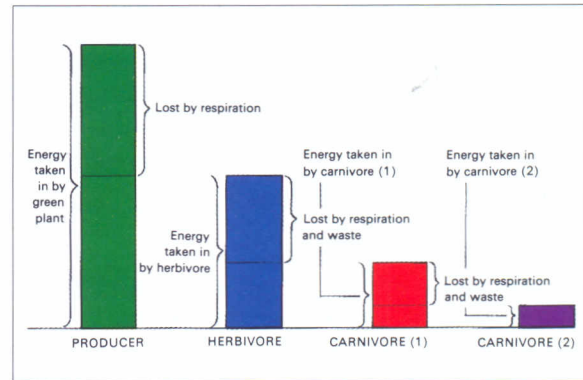


Fig. 1

levels in any ecosystem forms a **food chain**. All of the food chains in a particular community constitute a **food cycle**.

It is significant that some potential energy is lost (chiefly through *respiration*) at each trophic level. Because of this, the amount of energy available is greater at trophic levels closest to the primary producers – the green plants.

As a result, any given community is able to support larger populations of herbivorous than carnivorous animals. If we imagine the food chain as a pyramid, the large base represents the large numbers of producers. The number of consumers gets smaller as we move further up the pyramid, until we reach, for example, a single bird of prey or predatory fish in an environment at the top of the pyramid.

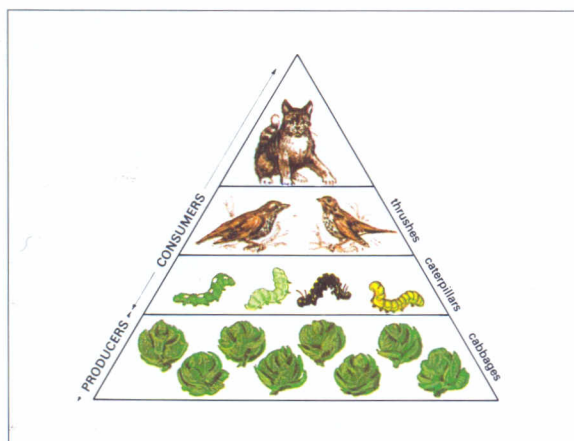
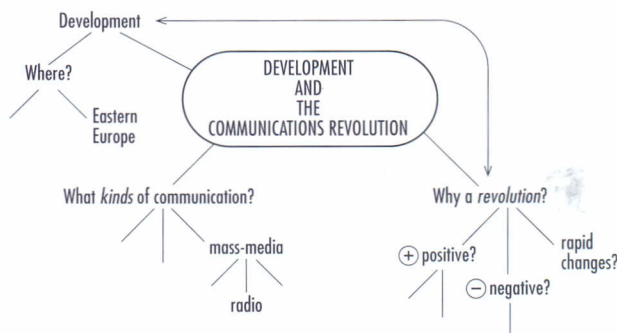


Fig. 2

3. Work in pairs or small groups.

A. You will soon read a text entitled *Development and the Communications Revolution*. What does a title like this remind you of? Try to jot down what you *know* or what you *would like to know* about this topic using a diagram like this:



B. The following are the *first* and the *last* paragraphs of the text. Read them. Can you think of other possible topics which the text may develop? Add them to the diagram above.

The power of advanced communications technology to assist development is enormous. For instance, it has been used to study and control locust damage in Africa; for the better management of rangelands in Kenya; in the study of the humid tropical forests of Peru. It is also helping in the design of road and rail networks, mineral prospecting, and weather forecasting. Apart from land and resource management, satellite technology helps in education and can transmit medical, nutritional and agricultural advice to large numbers of people, often otherwise isolated.

For the future, the entire role of communications must also change, from a one-way flow, from North to South, to full dialogue between North and South. In this way the rich societies will share their current information advantage with the rest of the world.

C. The following are the *opening* sentences of the different paragraphs of the text. After reading them, you should be in a better position to *anticipate* what the whole text is about and to *ask yourself* more questions about it. Add your further predictions and questions to the diagram above.

The power of advanced communications technology to assist development is enormous.

If we want the communications revolution to benefit everyone, however, we must make the technology widely available.

Advances in satellite technology can help reduce the costs involved.

The communications revolution could break the information monopolies.

New information technologies are also creating a far greater diversity in the media.

For the future, the entire role of communications must also change, from a one-way flow, from North to South, to full dialogue between North and South.

D. Now read the whole text. Then look back at the diagram.

- If the text has answered any of your questions, make a note of such answers next to the questions;
- complete your original ideas with relevant information from the text;
- highlight the questions that remain unanswered and make a note of terms or concepts that sound new or difficult to you.

DEVELOPMENT AND THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION

The power of advanced communications technology to assist development is enormous. For instance, it has been used to study and control locust damage in Africa; for the better management of rangelands in Kenya; in the study of the humid tropical forests of Peru. It is also helping in the design of road and rail networks, mineral prospecting, and weather forecasting. Apart from land and resource management, satellite technology helps in education and can transmit medical, nutritional and agricultural advice to large numbers of people, often otherwise isolated.

If we want the communications revolution to benefit everyone, however, we must make the technology widely available. In other words, we must ensure universal access to information, establish a diversity of information sources, and achieve maximum participation in the transmission of ideas.

Advances in satellite technology can help reduce the costs involved. To give an example, countries that cannot launch their own satellite may be able to pay others to launch them. They can also rent communications services from other countries' systems for telephone, telex, data and video transmissions. Regional cooperation is the most effective way that the Third World nations can utilize the space potential. Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil have plans to launch their own satellite and provide a telephone link with remote rural areas. Moreover, it is suggested that the United Nations should create a Centre for Outer Space, which would provide help and services to member states.

The communications revolution could break the information monopolies. Countries like Sweden have shown the way by extending their «Freedom of Information» laws to ensure private citizens' access to their data banks of government departments. But many other democratic countries, notably the UK, resist such reforms.

New information technologies are also creating a far greater diversity in the media. Cable television, video cassettes, home computers, and the proliferation of software programmes will provide an immense choice, like books on a library shelf.

For the future, the entire role of communications must also change, from a one-way flow, from North to South, to full dialogue between North and South. In this way the rich societies will share their current information advantage with the rest of the world.

The first and final paragraphs of a text, as well as the opening sentence in each paragraph, often give us important clues to the main ideas developed in the text. Such topic sentences (which may also appear at other points in a text) are often followed by examples, explanations or expansions of the main ideas.

4. Read the text again. Copy and complete the following summary chart.

Par. No. and main ideas	Examples/Expansions
1. Communications technology assists development	a) controlling locust damage (Africa) b) _____ c) _____ d) _____ e) _____ f) _____ g) education
2. The communications revolution must make technology available	a) _____ b) _____ c) _____
3. _____ ↓ Regional cooperation	a) countries can pay others to launch satellites b) _____ a) _____ b) UN Centre for Outer Space
4. _____ _____	Swedish laws ensure access to data banks
5. Diversity in media	a) _____ b) _____ c) _____ d) _____
6. Role of communications must change	from _____ to _____

5. Look back at the text. Which words and expressions are used to introduce and list the examples and explanations that follow each topic sentence?

e.g. (par. 1) For instance, it has been used ...
It is also helping ...

6. You have been asked to write a short article for an English school magazine.

- A. In groups, choose one of the following topics:
- Italy: its tourist attractions.
 - Why soap operas are so successful and popular on Italian TV.
 - Computers and their uses in Italy.
 - How Italian teenagers spend their free time.
 - A big Italian city and its problems.
- Pool your ideas on the chosen topic using a «spidergram» like the one in Exercise 3.
- B. In pairs, try to arrange your ideas into groups according to the different aspects of the topic, e.g. *Tourist attractions* – sightseeing; seaside and mountain resorts; festivals; cooking; shopping ...

Decide the order in which you will deal with these different aspects.

Write a paragraph for each aspect. Start each paragraph with a *general statement* or topic sentence (e.g. Many tourists come to Italy to visit its famous historic cities.) and complete it with one or more *supporting statements* – examples, expansions or explanations (e.g. Venice, Florence and Rome, for example, offer an enormous variety of sightseeing opportunities.).

- C. In groups, exchange your articles and comment on them. Are they clear? How could they be improved?

UNIT 3 – Text Processing Strategies – Exercise 2

1. Nations freed from decades of communist rule and unrestricted industrialization confront a harrowing legacy: air, water and land deadened by pollution.
2. How does a bird migrate to a destination it has never seen, a salmon return to the stream where it was spawned? Scientists search for the internal compass and map that guide such long-distance journeys.
3. To the Sonoran Desert's lesser long-nosed bats, cactus flowers and fruits are irresistible. To the cactus, the bats are irreplaceable – as pollinators and seed dispersers.
4. The international ban on ivory trade has reduced poaching, but in both Africa and Asia the largest land mammal faces the long-term danger of dwindling habitat.
5. Civilization and warfare evolved in the Tigris and Euphrates Valleys – today's Iraq – where great empires rose, then crumbled to dust.