
Reviews

Reading English Discourse : Business, Economics, Law and Political Science

Lyle F. Bachman. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Princeton-Hall, Inc., 1986. Pp. 279.

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Reading English Discourse: Business, Economics, Laws, and Political Science is an upper intermediate level reader for preuniversity and university ESL students who need English as a tool for reading professional materials in their chosen disciplines. The author expresses his concern about the major difficulties students have in reading formal academic English. He states in the preface that these difficulties are likely to occur in recognizing how the grammatical structures they have learned are used to signal a wide range of discourse meanings, in comprehending new vocabulary items which are characteristic of academic English, and in discovering the specific meanings individual words might take on in the context of a reading passage. Therefore, the focus of this book is not on grammatical structures, but on the organization of discourse and on the development of vocabulary and skills.

This book contains five units and each unit deals with a major discourse function; for example, "Time Order", "Exemplification", and "Comparison and Contrast". The lessons in each unit are based on reading passages related to the fields of business, economics, laws, and political science. Each lesson begins with "Prereading Activities" to stimulate students' interest before reading the passage. There are two versions of the same reading passage. "Passage A" is a simplified version and "Passage B" is more like the original text and includes the rhetorical structures and vocabulary to be taught in the lesson. There are several exercises which are based on "Passage B". The **Teacher's Guide** is a supplement to the main text, giving suggestions for teaching the materials and answers to the exercises in the main text.

The book's strong point is the variety of exercises based on the reading passages. The exercises are well designed and the number of purely mechanical exercises is very small. However, I cannot say that this book will give equal benefit to all ESL students. The author has stated that the main purpose is to help students to learn the structures of discourse and vocabulary that are typical of writing in the fields of business, economics, law, and political science. Therefore, the book will be more advantageous to ESL students who are studying in those fields than to others. As a reading teacher, I also feel that the comprehension questions in the "Comprehension Exercises" are too easy for students at this level. Many of the questions from the exercises can be answered with an exact quotation from the reading passage. It would be more challenging for students if the questions required them to think more.

However, on the whole, the book is attractive. The large and clear type makes the text easy to read. The well-designed format of the book and the exercises which place a demand on the creativity of students should appeal to both students and teachers.