FOURTH EDITION

READING POWER 2

Extensive Reading • Vocabulary Building • Comprehension Skills • Reading Faster

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Contents

Introduction to Reading Power 2

Part 1  Extensive Reading

Introduction  2
Unit 1: New Vocabulary in Your Reading  4
Unit 2: Fiction and Nonfiction  8
Unit 3: Books  16

Part 2  Vocabulary Building

Unit 1: Guidelines for Learning Vocabulary  30
Unit 2: Learning New Words from Your Reading  44
Unit 3: Guessing Meaning from Context  50
Unit 4: Word Parts  61
Unit 5: How Words Are Used Together  70
Unit 6: How Words Work in Sentences  82

Part 3  Comprehension Skills

Introduction  100
Unit 1: Previewing  101
Unit 2: Scanning  117
Unit 3: Making Inferences  135
Unit 4: Focusing on the Topic  150
Unit 5: Understanding Paragraphs  162
Unit 6: Identifying the Pattern  184
Unit 7: Thinking in English  205

Part 4  Reading Faster

Introduction  222
Unit 1: The White Woman of the Genesee  233
Unit 2: Two Popular Authors  253
Unit 3: Popular Health and Psychology  273
What Is a Topic?

A topic is a word or phrase that tells what something is about.

Examples:

- You are talking with a friend about a person you both know. You say to your friend, “He’s always talking about baseball.” In other words, baseball is his favorite topic of conversation.
- You are reading a book, and a friend asks, “What is it about?” You answer, “It’s about mountain climbing.” Mountain climbing is the topic of the book.

The topic is important in written English. Writers think about the topic as they are writing, and their ideas follow from that topic. If you want to understand the ideas, you must start by looking for the topic.

Finding the Topic

In these exercises, you will look for the topic of a list of words. One word is the topic for the other words. The topic is the most general word. It can be a thing, a person, or an idea. The other words all belong to the topic and are more specific.

**EXAMPLE**

![Diagram of topic and specific words]

**Topic** (general word)

- Europe

  **specific words that belong to the topic**

  - France
  - Germany
  - Finland
  - Greece
Kinds of Topics

There are three kinds of topics:

1. The topic can be the name of a group of things or people.

   **Example:** Topic: *meat*
   beef  chicken  lamb  pork  turkey  rabbit

   **Explanation**
   All the words are specific kinds of meat.

2. The topic can be the name of a thing with many parts.

   **Example:** Topic: *apartment*
   bedroom  closet  bathroom  kitchen  hall  balcony

   **Explanation**
   All the words are parts of an apartment.

3. The topic can be the name for a general idea or thing. It can include more specific things.

   **Example:** Topic: *party*
   music  food  people  games  drinks  dancing

   **Explanation**
   All the words are specific things that are often included at a party.

**Notes:** In these exercises, you don’t need to know the meaning of every word. You just need to find the general word that tells the topic. Do each exercise without using a dictionary. Look up words you want to know after you finish the exercise.

**Practice**

*Find the topic in each list. Then circle it and write it on the line.*

1. Topic: ____________
   minute  hour  day  time  week  second

2. Topic: ____________
   lunch  meal  brunch  supper  dinner  breakfast

**Explanation**
- The topic of the first group of words is *time*. All the other words are about time.
- The topic of the second group is *meal*. All the other words are names of different meals.
EXERCISE 1

A. Find the topic in each list. Then circle it and write it on the line.

1. Topic: ______________
   nose ear eye mouth head chin
2. Topic: ______________
   dog mouse fish bird cat pet
3. Topic: ______________
   shirt skirt clothing sock suit dress
4. Topic: ______________
   carrot vegetable potato pea onion bean
5. Topic: ______________
   dollar euro yen ruble peso money
6. Topic: ______________
   eighty sixteen seventy-seven number nine thirty-two
7. Topic: ______________
   family mother sister uncle brother aunt
8. Topic: ______________
   table sofa bed chair furniture desk
9. Topic: ______________
   Sudan Africa Kenya Nigeria Egypt Zimbabwe
10. Topic: ______________
    refrigerator oven microwave stove sink kitchen

B. Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same?

EXERCISE 2

A. Find the topic in each list. Then circle it and write it on the line.

1. Topic: ______________
   milk juice coffee drink water tea
2. Topic: ______________
   engine car window door brake tire
3. Topic: 
river    lake    sea    pond    ocean    water

4. Topic: 
school    bank    house    building    factory    supermarket

5. Topic: 
computer    keyboard    mouse    monitor    software    hard drive

6. Topic: 
happy    feeling    excited    angry    upset    bored

7. Topic: 
oxygen    nitrogen    helium    neon    hydrogen    gas

8. Topic: 
map    reservation    suitcase    travel    guidebook    hotel

9. Topic: 
plant    tree    bush    flower    grass    seed

10. Topic: 
doctor    hospital    bed    patient    nurse    medicine

B. *Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same?*

**Thinking of the Topic**

In these exercises, the topic is not included in the lists. You must think of a topic for each list. The topic should be just right for the words in the list. It should not be too general (too big) or too specific (too small).

**PRACTICE**

*Read the list. Then write a topic.*

**Topic:** 
baseball    rugby    tennis    soccer    cricket    football

**Explanation**

• This topic tells us that all the words are names of sports played with a ball.
• The topic *sports* is too general. It includes many other kinds of sports that are not on the list.
• The topic *sports played with a ball in the United States* is too specific. One of the sports on the list (cricket) is not played in the United States.
EXERCISE 3

A. Read each list. Then write a topic.

1. Topic: ____________
   sheep         cow         horse         goat         chicken         pig

2. Topic: ____________
   knife         spoon        cup          bowl         fork          chopsticks

3. Topic: ____________
   Buenos Aires  Caracas    Lima          Rio de Janeiro  La Paz      Montevideo

4. Topic: ____________
   subway        train        bus          tram         taxi          limousine

5. Topic: ____________
   index         title page   table of contents  chapters      cover pages

6. Topic: ____________
   physics       chemistry    biology       astronomy      geology       botany

7. Topic: ____________
   purple        hot pink     orange        beige         grey          forest green

8. Topic: ____________
   cheese        milk         ice cream     yogurt         butter        cream

9. Topic: ____________
   morning       afternoon    noon          midnight      dawn          evening

10. Topic: ____________
    papaya        banana       mango        pineapple     coconut       avocado

B. Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same?

EXERCISE 4

A. Read each list. Then write a topic.

1. Topic: ____________
   Seoul          Bankok       Saigon        Rangoon       Jakarta       Kuala Lumpur

2. Topic: ____________
   Mercury       Venus         Saturn        Mars          Jupiter       Uranus
3. Topic: _______________
dollar  quarter  penny  dime  nickel  half dollar

4. Topic: _______________
driveway  street  highway  lane  avenue  motorway

5. Topic: _______________
Kennedy  Washington  Clinton  Bush  Lincoln  Roosevelt

6. Topic: _______________
roof  wall  window  floor  stair  door

7. Topic: _______________
war  hunger  sickness  poverty  unemployment  crime

8. Topic: _______________
Louisiana  Florida  Texas  Mississippi  Georgia  Alabama

9. Topic: _______________
heavy  fat  skinny  slim  thin  overweight

10. Topic: _______________
Pelé  Maradona  Beckham  Gullit  Platini  Von Basten

B. Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same?

EXERCISE 5

A. Read each list and write a topic. Then add one more word to the list.

1. Topic: _______________
wing  seat  pilot  seatbelt  tail  _______________

2. Topic: _______________
sports  movie  soap opera  cartoon  _______________

3. Topic: _______________
gloves  hat  scarf  sweater  coat  _______________

4. Topic: _______________
rain  wind  sun  fog  snow  _______________

5. Topic: _______________
run  jump  walk  kick  hop  _______________

6. Topic: _______________
Amazon  Ganges  Danube  Nile  Yangtze  _______________
7. Topic: ________________
candy  ice cream  pie  pudding  cookies  ________________

8. Topic: ________________
desert  mountains  wetland  prairie  forest  ________________

9. Topic: ________________
book  letter  Web page  article  e-mail  ________________

10. Topic: ________________
Mexico  Honduras  Guatemala  El Salvador  ________________

B. Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same?

EXERCISE 6

A. One word in each list doesn’t belong to the topic. Cross out the word that doesn’t belong. Then write the topic.

1. Topic: ________________
road  ladder  elevator  stairs  wall  escalator

2. Topic: ________________
teacher  doctor  taxi driver  scientist  lawyer  engineer

3. Topic: ________________
box  table  bag  pocket  basket  suitcase

4. Topic: ________________
truck  tractor  car  van  motorcycle  jeep

5. Topic: ________________
warm  nice  freezing  cold  cool  hot

6. Topic: ________________
runway  gate  shops  tracks  security  waiting area

7. Topic: ________________
look  shout  say  speak  scream  laugh

8. Topic: ________________
hand  leg  heart  arm  knee  foot

9. Topic: ________________
actor  camera  director  producer  costume  paint

10. Topic: ________________
farmer  nurse  road worker  gardener  baseball player  police officer
**B. Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same?**

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**EXERCISE 7**

**A. Think of words for these topics and write them on the lines.**

1. Well-paid jobs
   -
   -
   -
   -
2. Places to visit in your city
   -
   -
   -
   -
3. Problems at your school/university
   -
   -
   -
   -
4. (your own topic)
   -
   -
   -
   -

**B. Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same?**
**EXERCISE 8**

A.  **Do you know the meanings of these words? Read each word aloud. Then put a ✓ (you know), ? (you aren’t sure), or X (you don’t know).**

- get down to ✓
- connected ▄
- charged ▄
- customer ✓
- access ▄
- power ✓
- equipment ▄
- offer ▄
- settle ▄
- join ▄

B.  **Read the passage to the end.**

**Hungry for Power**

Michelle Lebrun was in Chicago, and she didn’t know what to do. She wanted to work, but her computer’s battery\(^1\) was dead. It was mid morning, and she had to get ready for a meeting. Then she saw a coffee shop. She went in and looked around. She soon saw what she needed and sat down. Under her table, there was a power outlet.\(^2\) Now she could get down to work.

These days, more and more people are looking for outlets. They are away from their office or home, and they need power. Until recently, most electronic equipment stayed in the office or at home. It was connected to power all the time. But now, people carry all kinds of electronic equipment with them. Computers, cell phones, personal organizers, cameras, music players, games—all these things run on batteries. Sooner or later, the batteries die and need to be charged.

Many coffee shops allow customers to use outlets for free. It’s good for business. Some are adding more outlets to their walls and are offering free wireless Internet access. Airports are also adding outlets and offering Internet access.

Business travelers in particular need power. You sometimes see them sitting on the floor of the airport if there are no chairs near an outlet.

Occasionally there are arguments about outlets, but they are usually settled quickly. Everyone knows the rules: First, you should never take up all the outlets. Second, if someone else needs the outlet, you should limit your time.

The next time your computer or your cell phone battery dies, what will you do? Will you join the crowd looking for an outlet? Or will you make a different choice? You could turn off all your equipment, and, instead, you could open a book or go for a walk.

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\(^1\) **battery** an object that provides electricity for something

\(^2\) **outlet** a place on a wall where you can connect electrical things to the electricity supply
C. Look back at the passage and circle the words that are on the list in part A. Then underline words in the passage that are new to you.

D. Look up the underlined words in the dictionary. Write them in your vocabulary notebook with the parts of speech, the sentences, and the meanings.

E. Check your understanding of the passage. Read it again if you need to. Write T (True) or F (False) after each sentence.

1. Michelle Lebrun didn't need a power outlet. ______
2. To charge a battery, you need to plug it into an outlet. ______
3. More and more places offer Internet access. ______
4. In public places, you can use an outlet for as long as you want. ______

F. Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same? Then check all your work with your teacher.

EXERCISE 9

A. Read each sentence and circle the best meaning for the underlined word(s).

1. Now she could get down to work.
   a. continue  b. start  c. finish

2. They are away from their office or home, and they need power.
   a. electricity  b. control  c. lights

3. Until recently, most electronic equipment stayed in the office or at home.
   a. typewriters  b. news  c. machines

4. It was connected to the power all the time.
   a. turned on  b. attached  c. closed

5. Sooner or later, the batteries die and need to be charged.
   a. opened  b. used  c. refilled

6. Many coffee shops allow customers to use outlets for free.
   a. people who sell things  b. people who work there  c. people who buy things

7. Some are adding more outlets to their walls and are offering free wireless Internet access.
   a. selling  b. giving  c. using
8. Some are adding more outlets to their walls and are offering free wireless Internet access.
   a. programs  b. news  c. entry

9. Occasionally, there are arguments about outlets, but they are usually settled quickly.
   a. ended  b. started  c. paid

10. Will you join the crowd looking for an outlet?
    a. stay away from  b. become part of  c. look at

B. *Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same?*

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**EXERCISE 10**

**A. Complete the sentences with the words from the box. Use each word only once. Change the form of the word for the sentence if necessary (plural, past tense, etc.).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>access</th>
<th>connected</th>
<th>equipment</th>
<th>join</th>
<th>power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>charged</td>
<td>customer</td>
<td>get down to</td>
<td>offer</td>
<td>settle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Mihoko ____________ the photography club at the university.
2. Is there ____________ to the building for people in wheelchairs?
3. At 9:00 A.M., there weren’t many ____________ in the shop.
4. They decided to ____________ their argument and work together again.
5. Good skiing ____________ can be very expensive.
6. The battery in my cell phone was ____________ but it still didn’t work.
7. Now that we agree about the conditions, we can ____________ business.
8. The telephone company ____________ a free phone to new customers.
9. The machine is not working because it’s not ____________ to anything.
10. Yesterday evening the ____________ was out for almost three hours.

**B. *Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same?***
EXERCISE 11

A. Write a sentence for each word in the box in Exercise 10. Look at the sentences in Exercises 9 and 10 if you need help.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 

B. Check your work with your teacher.

EXERCISE 12

A. Write the other parts of speech for each word. More than one word may be possible for each part of speech. (See Part 2, Unit 4, page 67.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>access</td>
<td></td>
<td>charged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>connected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equipment</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>join</td>
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<tr>
<td>offer</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power</td>
<td></td>
<td>settle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same? Then check your answers with your teacher.

C. Write the new words from Exercises 8–12 in your vocabulary notebook. Then make study cards. Study them alone and then with another student.