MORE READING POWER 3

Extensive Reading • Vocabulary Building • Comprehension Skills • Reading Fluency

Linda Jeffries
Beatrice S. Mikulecky

PEARSON
Longman
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When you read extensively, you will find many new words. What should you do about the words you don’t know?

**Rule 1** Do not look up all the new words in the dictionary. If you stop often to look up words, you will forget the story and you will not enjoy reading.

It is usually not necessary to know the exact meaning of every word. You can often follow the story without knowing some words. Try these exercises with missing words. This is like reading a passage with words you don’t know.

**EXERCISE 1**

A. *This passage is from the beginning of a short story. Read the passage and answer the questions. Do not try to guess the missing words.*

Once there was a young woman who came from a good family. She had all the xxxxxx of money and a good education, and she was xxxxxx. She fell in love and married, but then her luck ended. Her love for her husband soon xxxxxx. She had two lovely children, a boy and a girl, but she did not enjoy them; she could not love them. She told herself that she hadn't been quite xxxxxx for children, but in her heart she knew she would never have been ready. She wasn't really interested in children. Deep down she felt they were xxxxxx her time. There were other, more important things she wanted to do with her life.

The children seemed to know what she was thinking and looked at her coldly. She xxxxxx to be a gentle, loving mother to them, but inside she felt only impatience. She knew she was not xxxxxx to love, not her children or anyone else. Still, everybody said she was a wonderful mother. When they said this, she smiled and the children smiled, but they all knew it was not xxxxxx.

The mother, the father, and the children lived in a large house outside the city, with a xxxxxx yard, a big car for the father, and a station wagon for the mother and children. They had a nanny to help with the children and the house, and gardeners to cut the xxxxxx and trim the shrubbery.

a. Who are the characters (people) in this story so far? ______________________

b. How does the woman feel about her children? ______________________

b. How do the children feel about her? ______________________
EXERCISE 2

A. The story continues below. Read the passage and answer the questions. Do not try to guess the missing words.

Everything in the house and the yard was as it should be. The children had rooms full of toys, xxxxxx, and the latest electronics. The parents dressed well, xxxxxx friends for dinner, went out for concerts and to the opera. But all the xxxxxx, a question hung in the air. The mother worked part time in a real-estate office, but she didn't make many sales. The father had a job in a bank. His salary was good, but what he and the mother xxxxxx was not enough for the way they were living.

The mother began to xxxxxx. The children were growing up and needed new things for school, for sports, for their xxxxxx. All these things were expensive. She went online and looked for ways to xxxxxx money. But she'd heard stories about people who had lost everything to those sites, so she turned off her computer. With all her worrying, her face became xxxxxx. She needed more money, more money.

And so the children always heard the unspoken xxxxxx. Nobody said it out loud, but it could be felt all the time. They heard it at Christmas, when packages with expensive toys and sports equipment were xxxxxx under the tree. They heard it at dinner when their parents talked about friends going to Vail for a long ski weekend, or flying to Paris for spring vacation. The children would look up from their games for a moment and listen. Then they would see in each other's eyes that they both had heard.

a. What kind of feeling is there in the house? ______________________

b. Does the father work? Is he successful? ______________________

c. Does the mother work? Is she successful? ______________________

d. What does the mother try to do? ______________________

e. What seems most important to the parents? ______________________

f. What do you think will happen to the family? ______________________

B. Talk about your answers with another student. Give examples from the text to explain and support your answers.

C. Talk with your class. How many of the questions could you answer, even with a lot of missing words? How well do you think you understood the passages?
Rule 2: Try to guess the general meaning of a new word from the other words and sentences around it (the context). This general meaning may be enough for you to continue reading and follow the story. (See Part 2, Unit 3 for more practice with guessing meaning.)

EXERCISE 3

A. Read the passage from Exercise 1 again. This time, try to guess the missing words or phrases and write them in the blanks.

Once there was a young woman who came from a good family. She had all the ________ of money and a good education, and she was ________.

She fell in love and married, but then her luck ended. Her love for her husband soon _________. She had two lovely children, a boy and a girl, but she did not enjoy them; she could not love them. She told herself that she hadn’t been quite _________ for children, but in her heart she knew she would never have been ready. She wasn’t really interested in children. Deep down she felt they were ________ her time. There were other, more important things she wanted to do with her life.

The children seemed to know what she was thinking and looked at her coldly. She ________ to be a gentle, loving mother to them, but she felt only impatience. She knew she was not _________ to love, not her children or anyone else. Still, everybody said she was a wonderful mother. When they said this, she smiled and the children smiled, but they all knew it was not ________.

The mother, the father, and the children lived in a large house outside the city, with a ________ yard, a big car for the father, and a station wagon for the mother and children. They had a nanny to help with the children and the house, and gardeners to cut the ________ and trim the shrubbery.

B. Talk about your answers with another student. Are they the same?
EXERCISE 4

A. Read the passage from Exercise 2 again. Try to guess the missing words or phrases and write them in the blanks.

Everything in the house and the yard was as it should be. The children had rooms full of toys, ________, and the latest electronics. The parents dressed well, ________ friends for dinner, went out for concerts and to the opera. But all the ________, a question hung in the air. The mother worked part time in a real-estate office, but she didn’t make many sales. The father had a job in a bank. His salary was good, but what he and the mother ________ was not enough for the way they were living.

The mother began to ________. The children were growing up and needed new things for school, for sports, for their ________. All these things were expensive. She went online and looked for ways to ________ money. But she’d heard stories about people who had lost everything to those sites, so she turned off her computer. With all her worrying, her face became _________. She needed more money, more money.

And so the children always heard the unspoken ________. Nobody said it out loud, but it could be felt all the time. They heard it at Christmas, when packages with expensive toys and sports equipment were ________ under the tree. They heard it at dinner when their parents talked about friends going to Vail for a long ski weekend, or flying to Paris for spring vacation. The children would look up from their games for a moment and listen. Then they would see in each other’s eyes that they both had heard.

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

Rule 3 If a word appears several times and it seems important to the story, circle it (with a pencil if it is not your book). When you finish reading, you can look it up in the dictionary. If it is a useful word, write it in the margin (the side of the page) or in your vocabulary notebook.

Note: For this class, you will need a vocabulary notebook. You will learn more about how to keep a vocabulary notebook in Part 2, Unit 2.
In this unit, you will learn about two types of reading material: fiction and nonfiction. You will practice steps for reading and understanding both fiction and nonfiction.

Note: The definitions for some words are given at the bottom of each page to help you follow the fiction and nonfiction passages. These are not common words, so you do not need to learn them.

Fiction

Fictional stories or books are about people and events that are not real. The author makes up the people, the events, and sometimes the place. Fiction often includes a “message”—an idea or opinion about life in general.

Kinds of fiction: short stories, novels, historical novels, romances, thrillers, crime, science fiction. The passage in the first exercise is a short story by Mark Hager.

EXERCISE 1

A. **Preview:** Read the title and look very quickly through the story below (for not more than 30 seconds). Ask yourself, Who and what is it about?

B. **Now read the story to the end. Do not stop to look up new words.**

**Good Morning**
by Mark Hager

When I was a boy, I walked through two miles of woods to get to our schoolhouse, and I would take my father’s twenty-two rifle\(^1\) with me and hide it in a hollow tree before I got to the schoolhouse, and get it as I came home in the evening.

One evening, coming from school, I ran into a community uprising at Mr. Epperly’s house. Mr. Epperly’s cow had gone mad\(^2\) and was bawling\(^3\) lonesome bawls and twisting the young apple trees out of the ground with her horns, and the whole community was demanding that Mr. Epperly’s dog, Old Ranger, be shot, as Old Ranger had fought and killed the mad dog that bit the cow.

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\(^1\) *twenty-two rifle* a gun used for hunting

\(^2\) *go mad* become wild and dangerous because of rabies, a disease

\(^3\) *bawl* cry loudly
Mr. Epperly wanted to know if it wouldn’t be safe to put Old Ranger in the stable or someplace and keep him penned up until the danger period was over, but the neighbors said no; that Mr. Epperly’s children might slip out and feed him through the cracks and get bit.

Mr. Epperly said he could not do it himself, and wanted to know who would volunteer to do it, but none of the men would.

Mr. Epperly came to me, and said, “Joe, why can’t you take him with you through the woods on your way home and do it?”

I told Mr. Epperly I did not want to shoot Old Ranger. I saw Mr. Epperly’s three kids were already keeping close to the old dog.

Mr. Epperly then pulled a one-dollar bill from his pocket.

“I will give you this dollar bill if you’ll do it,” he said.

I considered. I had never yet had a one-dollar bill all my own and while the idea of shooting Old Ranger did not appeal to me, it did seem like a thing that was demanded by the whole community, and they all put at me to do it, trying to make me feel like a kind of hero, and pointed to the danger to Mr. Epperly’s children. Then Mr. Epperly put a piece of clothesline around Old Ranger’s neck, and I started with him. The Epperly kids began to cry.

As I walked through the woods by the little path, I started looking for a place suitable to shoot a dog and leave him lay. I saw a heavy clump of wild grapevines, and I led him down under there and then got back up in the path. Old Ranger looked at me and whined and wagged his tail. He wanted to come to me. I recollected always seeing him wherever there was a splash of sunshine in Mr. Epperly’s yard when I would pass there and Mr. Epperly’s kids would join me for school.

I went down and untied Old Ranger and walked on. I came to a place where there was a hickory grove in a little flat area where the underbrush was thin. I recollected how Old Ranger liked to go to the hickory groves and tree squirrels. I led Old Ranger down and tied him close to the trunk of a big hickory tree.

I started to take aim, but Old Ranger started prancing and looking up the tree. I remembered then hearing Mr. Epperly tell how Old Ranger would do that when he’d tree a squirrel and Mr. Epperly would raise the gun to shoot, and I could not fool Old Ranger like that.

Besides, there was too much light and Old Ranger could see me take aim. I decided to wait for the gloom. Soon as the sun dropped a few more feet behind the Wilson Ridge, there would be gloom, and maybe Old Ranger would not see so plainly how I pointed the gun.

While I waited for the gloom, the burning started in my pocket. I took the one-dollar bill out. I had a feeling there was something nasty about it.

While I thought of that, Old Ranger reared and barked and surged at the cord leash, and when I looked back out the path I saw Mr. Epperly’s three kids, but they (continued)
were running away. They had turned to run when Old Ranger barked. I guessed they had slipped off from their house and followed just to see where I left Old Ranger.

The thought struck me that they would run back to their house and tell I had not shot Old Ranger yet, and that would set the folks to worrying again, and I took aim. I thought I had better fire in their hearing. I took aim at Old Ranger, but I could not touch the trigger the way he looked at me and tried to speak, so I fired in the air so the Epperly kids could say they heard the shot.

I stuck the dollar back in my pocket, went down and hugged Old Ranger around the neck. I knew I would never shoot Old Ranger. I took him and walked on. I got to the edge of our field. I climbed on the gate and sat a long time and considered. I tried to think up how I could explain to my mother why I had brought Old Ranger home with me so that she would not be scared. I could not decide how I could explain with a good face that I had a one-dollar bill in my pocket I had been given to shoot Old Ranger.

I remembered where I had seen an empty castor-oil bottle at the edge of the path. It was still there, and I got it, and stuck the one-dollar bill in it, and buried the bottle in some soft dirt under the corner of the fence.

My mother decided that since I had fired the shot, she would let me keep Old Ranger for a month, with the community thinking he was dead, but it was the hardest month I ever spent.

The Epperly kids would not walk with me to school. They would pucker up\(^\text{16}\) to cry when they saw me, and the kids down at the schoolhouse, they would say with a sneer,\(^\text{17}\) “What did you buy with your dollar bill?”

I could not answer. I could not tell them about the castor-oil bottle under the fence corner or Old Ranger in our stable; the Epperly kids searched the woods on both sides of the path to our house, hunting for the body of Old Ranger, but they would not ask me where I had left him, and other neighbors spoke of how Old Ranger’s great booming\(^\text{18}\) voice was missed.

Mrs. Epperly was kind to me. I met her in the road one day, and she told me how she had scolded\(^\text{19}\) the kids for treating me like that. “But,” she added, “if it was to do over, I would not allow it done. The children…Mr. Epperly, too; they’re half crazy.”

Then came the happy morning. “You can take Old Ranger home now, Joe,” my mother said. “Been over a month. No danger now.”

I went to the stable, got Old Ranger, and he reared and licked my face. I shouldered my book strap, and led Old Ranger down the path. I stopped at the fence corner and got the castor-oil bottle with the one-dollar bill in it. I had a time trying to hold Old Ranger’s mouth shut so I could get in sight of the Epperly house before he barked.

At the right place where they could see us when they came running to the front porch, I let Old Ranger have his voice. Old Ranger let go with a great howl that rolled and rocked across the ridges, and the Epperlys came bounding.\(^\text{20}\) Mr. and Mrs. Epperly and the three kids. They alternated between my neck and Old Ranger’s, and I don’t know to this day which of us got the most hugging.

*(continued)*

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\(^\text{16}\) **pucker up** the expression on a face (especially of a child) before he/she starts crying

\(^\text{17}\) **sneer** an unkind expression or tone of voice that shows no respect

\(^\text{18}\) **booming** very loud

\(^\text{19}\) **scold** to criticize someone, especially a child, about something they have done

\(^\text{20}\) **bounding** running
I handed Mr. Epperly the castor-oil bottle. “Why did you do that?” he said. “It felt nasty in my pocket,” I said. He tried to make me keep it and when I wouldn’t, he just pitched it toward me and his three kids, and we started for the schoolhouse, feeling rich, with a whole dollar to spend.

**C. Read the story again. If there are words you don’t know, skip over them or guess the general meaning. The important thing is to follow the story.**

**D. Discuss these questions with another student:**

- Where does the story take place?
- When do you think it takes place: in the 21st century or earlier?
- What do you learn about the narrator (the person who tells the story)?
- Who are the other characters (people) in the story?
- Why do people in the community think that Old Ranger should be shot?
- Why doesn’t the narrator shoot Old Ranger?
- Why doesn’t he take Mr. Epperly’s dollar in the last paragraph?
- Did you like this story? Why or why not?

**E. Work with another pair. Retell the story from beginning to end. Try to use your own words. (You can look back at the text.)**

**Nonfiction**

Nonfiction is writing—articles or books—about real people, places, events, or things. The writer gives information that he or she says is true. (Other people may disagree with the writer.)

Kinds of nonfiction: history, biography, science, technology, politics, psychology, health, travel, nature, “how-to” (cooking, gardening, etc.).

The passage in Exercise 2 tells about a historical period—the Second World War—and a particular group of people—the Navajo Indians. What do you know about this period and these people?

**Discuss these questions with another student.**

- When was the Second World War? Who was involved?
- Did your country or hometown suffer from this war?
- Did anyone in your family fight in it?
- Where do the Navajo Indians live?
- What do you know about them?
EXERCISE 2

A. **Preview the passage:** Read the title and look very quickly through the passage (for not more than 30 seconds). Ask yourself, Who and what is it about?

B. **Now read the passage to the end. Do not stop to look up new words.**

**The Code Talkers**

June 1942, Camp Elliott military base, San Diego, California: 29 men sat in a locked classroom. The men were all Navajo Indians who had been recruited to the Marines for a “special assignment.” They had already completed the basic training course and proven that they were in excellent physical condition (better than most Americans) and could shoot a rifle expertly. Now they were waiting to find out why they had been recruited.

As these men waited, some of them were probably remembering other classrooms with locked doors and barred windows. Most of them had been sent off the Navajo reservation (in Arizona and New Mexico), to government-run boarding schools for Indians. The aim of these schools was to turn the Navajo children into “Americans.” Their hair was cut short, their Navajo clothes and jewelry were taken away, and they were dressed like other American children. They were not allowed to celebrate Navajo religious traditions, and had to follow the school’s strict Christian teaching. Above all, they were not allowed to speak their language—not even among themselves. The punishments for breaking the rules were severe. The first time a child was heard speaking in Navajo, his mouth was washed out with soap. The second time, he was beaten or shut up alone in the dark for days.

The Navajos had also been treated cruelly by Americans in the more distant past. When the Navajo homeland became part of the United States in 1848, American settlers moved into the area and soon came into conflict with the Navajos. The government decided to resolve this conflict by moving all the Navajos off their homeland and into a camp in the middle of the desert. Many Navajos died of hunger and cold while walking the three hundred miles to the camp, and more died during their four years there. Later, they were allowed to return to their land, which became the Navajo Reservation. For a proud and independent people, this experience was a great shock.

Over the years, the story of the Long Walk was told and retold to each generation. It may seem surprising then that many Navajo men rushed to join the U.S. Army in December 1941 after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Their reasoning was very simple: In spite of the injustice they had suffered in the past, their homeland was part of the United States, so they were ready to defend it.

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1. **recruit** to get people to join
2. **rifle** gun
3. **reservation** an area of land in the U.S. kept separate for Native Americans to live on
4. **boarding school** a school where students live
Then, a few months after the United States joined the war two U.S. Marine officers came to the Navajo reservation and began recruiting young Navajos for a “special assignment.” The 29 men now sitting in this room were the result. Whatever they may have imagined about their special assignment, they certainly did not expect what they heard that morning from the Marine officer.

He told them first about military codes and how they were used to send important messages in wartime. He explained that the Marine Corps badly needed a new code. They were fighting in the Pacific against the Japanese on many small islands spread out over thousands of miles. In order to develop an effective strategy against the Japanese, the American commanders needed to communicate often and secretly. But so far, the Japanese had always been able to break the American military codes and find out about their plans.

The Navajos’ job, therefore, was to create a new military code based on the Navajo language. All the terms had to be short and easy to remember, as the code would not be written down. Above all, the officer told them, everything involving the code was top secret. They were not to discuss their work with anyone inside or outside the Marines.

At first, the Navajos could not believe what they were being asked to do. At school they had been punished for speaking Navajo, but now they were being asked to use it. Was this some kind of joke? However, the Marine officer was totally serious. He wrote his instructions on the blackboard and left the room, once again locking the door.

At that point, the men may have wondered why they had been chosen for this task. They were not a well-educated group. Many of them had not finished high school and none had a college degree. How could they succeed where officers in Washington with special machines had failed?

But after their first shock, the 29 men sat right down and got to work. They decided to start with the alphabet. For each English letter, they chose an English word. Then they translated that word into Navajo. For example, for the letter A, they chose ant, which became wol-la-chee in code. For the letter B, they chose bear, which became shush in code, and so on. Most of the words they chose were plants, animals, or other simple things from their lives on the reservation.

By the end of the first day, the men had finished the alphabet. The next day they started on military terms. For each term they thought of a related Navajo word. For example, for “hospital” they used the Navajo for “place of medicine,” for “bomb” they used the Navajo for “egg,” and for “route” they used the Navajo for “rabbit trail.”

Once the alphabet and the military terms were completed, everything had to be memorized. This was the easiest part for the Navajos. They all had excellent memories because from an early age, they had learned to listen carefully and remember what they heard. None of the Navajo stories, prayers, or songs they had grown up with were written down.

While at Camp Elliott, the Navajos also received training in the mechanics and operation of radios and field telephones. Then they began to practice sending and receiving coded messages. One Navajo would receive a message in English from an officer. He would translate it into code and send it by radio or telephone to another Navajo code talker, who would translate it back into English and pass it on to another officer.

(continued)
Some of the Marine officers doubted that the Navajos would be able to translate messages accurately. But the Navajos soon proved that they were not only accurate, but also very fast. Whereas it took the coding machines about four hours to send and receive a message, it took the Navajos only two to three minutes.

In September 1942, the first group of Navajo Code Talkers was ready for combat. They were sent to the Pacific to take part in the months-long battle for the island of Guadalcanal. It was essential for the Americans to stop the Japanese, who had been rapidly advancing toward Australia.

The job of the Code Talkers on Guadalcanal—and in later battles—was to help the officers communicate so they could organize operations on different parts of the island and at sea. Often the Code Talkers were in extremely dangerous circumstances, under heavy fire and with dead soldiers all around them. But right from the beginning, they showed an extraordinary ability to concentrate and get their job done. Furthermore, the Navajos proved to be valuable soldiers. They were calm, courageous, disciplined, uncomplaining, fast on their feet, and quick to adapt to difficult situations.

It took many months for the Americans to liberate Guadalcanal from the Japanese. Then they began to advance slowly toward Japan, island by island. By 1944, it was clear that the Japanese were losing the war, but they continued to fight. Finally, the Americans dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and on August 14, 1945, Japan surrendered.

By the end of the war, four hundred Code Talkers had been trained and sent to the Pacific. When the fighting was over, they made their way back to their homes on the Navajo reservation. In spite of their important contribution to the war, in spite of their courage and discipline, they received no special recognition. If they stayed on the reservation, they were given little help in restarting their lives, unlike other American soldiers. Above all, they still were not allowed to talk about the Navajo code—just in case another war broke out and the code was needed again.

Even without these orders, the Navajos probably would not have talked much about their wartime experiences. They were a modest and peace-loving people, who did not believe in celebrating war. So there were no homecoming parades on the reservation. But many families did hold special Navajo ceremonies for their sons and husbands to help them get over the nightmares and depression that often affect soldiers after combat.

In spite of this, some Code Talkers had difficulties after the war. It was not easy for them to accept the poverty and the limited work opportunities on the reservation, or the racism and discrimination they met off the reservation. The result was sometimes self-destructive behavior, including heavy drinking and suicide.

However, a number of the Navajos went back happily to their old lives, and others moved off the reservation to become successful professionals. Those who moved to the cities could take advantage of the special law that helped returning soldiers pay for college. Carl Gorman, one of the original 29, became a successful artist and teacher in California. Teddy Draper, who had learned Japanese during the war, became a language teacher. Both eventually returned to the reservation to teach young Navajos at the new schools and colleges that they helped start.
The first public recognition for the Code Talkers came after 1969, when the Navajo code was finally declassified (no longer secret). The Marines held a ceremony in Chicago that year to reunite some of the Code Talkers and they formed an association. In 1971, President Nixon presented the Code Talkers with a certificate of appreciation. In 1982, the United States Congress decided that August 14 would be National Navajo Code Talkers Day. Then, finally, in 2001, the 29 original Navajos who had created the code were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, and the other 370 Code Talkers were awarded the Silver Medal. For many of them, this award arrived too late. Only 5 of the 29 were still alive.

C. Read the passage again. If there are words you don’t know, skip over them or guess the general meaning. The important thing is to follow the story.

D. Discuss these questions with another student:

- What people, places, and events does this passage describe?
- What have you learned about Native Americans from this passage? About Navajo Indians?
- What have you learned about the Second World War from this passage? About military codes?
- Have you ever tried to invent or learn a code?

E. Work with another pair. Retell the passage from beginning to end. Try to use your own words. (You can look back.)