

Fresh Starts
Rapid Reading for Fluency and Fun
楽しく学ぶ速読スキル演習

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NAN'UN-DO

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Junko Machida, Monako Yagi, and Aaron Dodson, Fall 2011

Introduction

TO THE STUDENT

Fresh Starts promises to do just as its subtitle says: help you achieve greater English fluency and enjoy yourself at the same time as you learn to read better and faster. This “refreshing” new textbook is made up of seven units, each with two reading sections. These are followed by a variety of fun and effective reading-comprehension, listening and speaking activities.

The first reading section of each unit is relatively simple; you should have no trouble at all understanding it. The second is a little more difficult. But both are highly interesting and informative, designed to increase your active vocabulary and stock of general knowledge while gradually building up your reading skills and speed. This is accomplished thanks to an innovative approach that may at first be unfamiliar to and somewhat challenging for you (but don’t worry: you’ll soon get used to it). Instead of relying on sentence-by-sentence translation or reading a passage over and over, you will read straight through to the end without stopping, using comprehension-improving techniques such as skimming and scanning, sense grouping (breaking sentences down into manageable parts), and guessing the meanings of words from their context. With *Fresh Starts*, you will also learn how to analyze a paragraph’s structure, find its topic sentence (the one that tells you what the paragraph is about), and recognize its main ideas. You will then practice summarizing what you have read—just to make sure you don’t forget it.

But that’s not all. *Fresh Starts* will make you a better English listener and more fluent speaker as well. Through shadowing—that is, by listening to and following along orally with and mimicking the native-speaker recordings of the reading passages—your ear for English, your English pronunciation and intonation will quickly improve. And by taking an active part in the dialogue-practice and role-play activities that wind up each unit, you will steadily gain the confidence you need to put everything you have learned to use in the real world.

So welcome to *Fresh Starts*. It should be fun.

Introduction

HOW TO USE THIS TEXTBOOK

General Tips for Effective Speed Reading

1. As you read a passage, don't stop every time you come across a new word. Guess the meaning by looking at the words and phrases around it—that is, by looking at its context. And don't go back and reread. Read the passage straight through to the end and try to understand as much of it as you can.
2. Don't rush too much. Read at a pace that you feel comfortable and confident with—at which you can grasp the passage's main ideas.
3. The topic sentence is often the first or second sentence of a paragraph, so always read the first line or two especially carefully. This will give you a good advance understanding of what the paragraph is about: a solid framework to which you can attach its important details and main ideas.

Task 1 Speed Reading

Directions:

1. When the instructor signals “Start,” start reading “Reading 1” and time how long it takes you to read it. Record your reading time in the chart following the reading. (For example: 2 minutes, 40 seconds = 2.67 minutes.)
2. As you read, note (underline or circle) any words and phrases that are used to express main ideas. Also, use the context to guess the meanings of new words.
3. Calculate and record how many words per minute you were able to read.
4. After you have completed the follow-up exercises, reread the passage. Again, read it straight through without stopping and calculate and record your reading speed in space 2.

$$\text{算出方法: リーディングの速度 (wpm)} = \frac{\text{読んだ語数}}{\text{所要時間 (分)}} \quad / \quad \frac{\text{読んだ語数} \times 60}{\text{所要時間 (秒)}}$$



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Oh, do you mean *Pirates of the Caribbean*?

Well, then let me tell you a joke about a pirate.



Reading 1

Speed-read this passage to the end without stopping. Record your reading time below.

A Pirate



[1] There once was a bar on the docks of a port town. Every day, many sailors came in, and the bartender knew most of them. But one day, a man the bartender didn't know walked in. He was old and looked terrible. He had a wooden peg in place of one leg, a hook instead of a hand, and an eye patch that covered a missing eye.

[2] The bartender was friendly and wanted to know all his customers' stories, so he called the old man over and gave him a free drink. "You look like you've got a lot to tell. What's your story?" the bartender asked.

[3] "Thanks for the drink. I am a pirate," the man replied, "but I am thinking about retiring." "Piracy is a hard business," the bartender said knowingly. The pirate looked at him. "You want to know my story, eh? Well, I haven't had much luck. Let's start at the beginning. First, I lost my leg," he said, looking down at his peg leg. "I was young and foolish. I wouldn't listen to orders and got into an argument with my captain. So he threw me into the sea. A shark got my leg before the crew could pull me back in." "You're lucky they pulled you back in at all," the bartender said. "What happened after that?"

[4] "A few years later, I was still young, and a little smarter, but not much. I wanted to win the love of a pretty young woman. But her father was a rich

man, and he certainly didn't want his daughter to marry a pirate like me. So he challenged me to a sword fight. I thought I could beat him, but he was too quick, and I lost my hand," the pirate said, raising his hook. "And now I wear this hook in its place."

[5] "A sad story," the bartender said. "So, your bad luck continued, I imagine. How did you lose your eye?" The old pirate looked a little embarrassed. "I remember that clearly. It was a hot summer's day. We were about to sail our ship north, and I was working hard to prepare for the trip," he said, tapping his eye patch. "And then, a drop of sweat got into my eye." The bartender waited, but the pirate didn't continue. "You mean you lost your eye to a drop of sweat?" he asked. (399 words)

Task 1: Speed Reading (See page 3 for directions.)



Your Reading Time minutes seconds = minutes

	1	2	3
Reading time (minutes)			
Words per minute (wpm)			



Modern Pirates

*Long ago pirates sailed on the sea,
buried treasure and plundered with glee.*


*But now with computers,
a new style of looters,
download music and movies for free.*

(by Siobhan Flynn)



Task 2: Vocabulary Check

Match the words on the left with their Japanese meanings on the right. Write the letters in the parentheses.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. () terrible | a. 木の義足 |
| 2. () piracy | b. 知ったかぶりをして |
| 3. () knowingly | c. 剣による戦い |
| 4. () sword fight | d. 口論 |
| 5. () argument | e. 続ける |
| 6. () peg leg | f. 手鉤  |
| 7. () continue | g. うらぶれて |
| 8. () eye patch | h. 眼帯 |
| 9. () hook | i. 困惑して |
| 10. () embarrassed | j. 海賊(業) |

Task 3: Reading Comprehension

Read these sentences. Circle "T" if the sentence is true, "F" if it is false.

1. A stranger came into a bar on the docks of a port town.
2. The old, terrible-looking man was a retired pirate.
3. The pirate lost his leg because of a shark.
4. The pirate won the sword fight with his girlfriend's father.
5. The pirate wasn't proud of the way he had lost his eye.

T F
T F
T F
T F
T F

Task 4

Talk about the joke in Reading 1 with a partner. Decide what the "punch line" (the funny line that ends a joke) will be.



Listening

Task 5

As you listen to the conversation below, write the missing words in the parentheses.  3

A: Welcome to our bar, sir. You're a new face in here. Do you work around here?

B: No, I'm retired, but I used to be a (^{1.}).

A: Well, with that eye patch, hook, and peg (^{2.}), you certainly look like one. What happened?

B: A shark took my leg, and I lost my hand in a (^{3.}) fight.

A: That was (^{4.}) luck. And your eye?

B: I remember it well. It was a very hot day. The sun was high, I was working (^{5.}), and a little drop of sweat got into my eye.

A: You lost your eye to a drop of sweat?

B: Well, you see, it was the first day I had my hook.

Task 6

Listen to the conversation again. Then practice it with your partner. Use eye contact and try to make your conversation as natural as possible.



Reading 2

Read this passage. Then do the activities that follow.

The Power of Laughter



Photo by Megumi Dodson

[1] Laughter is almost magical. To make a child laugh or an infant smile, adults will do things that would ordinarily be highly embarrassing to them. They might play peekaboo* or make strange sounds. Or make funny faces, or dance absurdly around. This shows just how precious a smile can be. But despite their importance to us, smiles and laughter are not yet well understood. That's why many scientists are researching the physical, psychological, and social causes and effects of laughter.

[2] Smiles are both powerful and mysterious. When other animals show their teeth, it is a sign of fear or anger. Why is it that the same action by humans has a completely different meaning? Whatever the reason, the power of a smile remains. Compare the set of before-and-after photos in an advertisement for wigs, for example. The person in the “before” picture is usually expressionless while the person in the “after” photo is smiling. This is a common trick, as a smiling person is more attractive, which goes to show you that you cannot always trust a smile.

[3] Think about the last time you had a good, long laugh. Just thinking about it makes you smile, right? Laughter is incredibly healthy. It lowers blood pressure, reduces stress-hormone levels, and, believe it or not, is good aerobic exercise. Because of these benefits, laughter has all kinds of

uses in medicine and psychology. By lowering stress, for example, laughter can help people heal faster. One of the most interesting things about laughter is its infectious nature. If one person laughs, the people



around that person will do the same. The health benefits of laughter are the same whether you start laughing yourself or “catch” it from someone else.

[4] Brain-imaging technology shows that when we laugh, three parts of our brains light up. The first is the cognitive, or thinking, section of the brain. This is the part that analyzes what is funny. The second is the motor portion of the brain. This is what controls our physical reaction to something funny, from the slight curling of the lips that makes a smile to the clapping and foot-stamping that accompany a good belly laugh. The third part of the brain to light up is the one that controls emotions. This is what produces the light, pleasant feeling we get when we laugh. In other words, laughter affects every part of us: mind, body, and spirit.

[5] We are not always sure what will make a person laugh. There are many forms of humor. Some seem universal and will make anyone laugh, from children to the elderly and from culture to culture. On the other hand, some things that are amusing to some people are serious or frightening to others. Some humor is very complex and requires cultural knowledge to understand it. Nevertheless, once we “get” it, it has the same effect. How all this works, and why laughter affects us so powerfully, is something we are just beginning to understand. (496 words)

peekaboo* 「いないいないばあ」のこと。

Task 7: Shadowing

(See the bottom of page 12 for an explanation of Sense Groups and Shadowing.)

Directions:

1. First, as you listen to the passage, put a slash between each Sense Group (indicated by pauses).
2. Second, listen again and read along with (or slightly behind) the text. Try to mimic the speaker's pronunciation.
3. Next, try using the same rhythm, pitch, and inflection as the speaker.
4. As you read, try to grasp the meaning of each Sense Group without going back to reread.





Reading 1

Speed-read this passage to the end without stopping. Record your reading time below.

Hobbits



[1] Some writers create stories. Others, like J.R.R. Tolkien, create new worlds. Many fantasy fans feel Tolkien is the father of modern fantasy. Millions of people have read *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, his most popular works. Those books have inspired many other artists to create their own worlds. Of all Tolkien's creations, the "hobbits" are probably the most famous. Hobbits have had a major influence on popular culture.

[2] Hobbits are very much like humans, but with some differences. One major difference is size. Hobbits are about half as tall as humans, so to humans, they look like children. There are other, smaller differences as well. Hobbit feet are thick on the bottom and covered with hair on top, so Hobbits don't need shoes. Their ears are slightly pointed. They also live longer than humans, coming of age at 33 and living as long as 120.

[3] Tolkien based hobbit culture on an ideal version of British country life. Hobbits are a quiet, peaceful people. They avoid danger and adventure as much as possible. Family relationships are very important to them. They love eating, drinking, and smoking. Their homes are dug into hills rather than built. Overall, they are a very "earthy" people, and do not know much about the world outside their small country.

[4] Though hobbits are small and peaceful, they have a unique power. They are not fighters or especially intelligent, but they have very tough

spirits. This toughness hides within them, and even the hobbits themselves don't know about it. For example, when they are pressed by enemies, they have surprising courage.

[5] Millions of people have read and enjoyed *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Part of their popularity is due to the hobbits. Readers find hobbits attractive because they represent a powerful ideal. Their size and nonviolent way of life make them appeal to children and parents alike.

(315 words)

Task 1: Speed Reading



Your Reading Time minutes seconds = minutes

	1	2	3
Reading time (minutes)			
Words per minute (wpm)			

Task 2: Vocabulary Check: Skimming and Content Words

Skim through Reading 1 and find the words below as quickly as you can. Write their Japanese meanings, and then fill in the blanks with other forms of each word, as in the example. (See page 19 for an explanation of skimming.)

	in Japanese	Verb	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
1	(例) 創造する	create	creation,creativity	creative	creatively
2		inspire			
3		attract			
4		avoid			
5		represent			
6		base			
7		adventure			
8		influence			
9		differ			
10		hide			
11		appeal			



Task 3: Reading Comprehension (1): Paragraph Order

The followings are possible titles for the five paragraphs in Reading 1. Put the titles in the order that their paragraphs are found in the essay.

1. The Characteristics of Hobbits
2. The Power of Hobbits
3. The Creator of Hobbits
4. Differences between Hobbits and Humans
5. The Popularity of Hobbits

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⇒

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Task 4: Reading Comprehension (2): Information and Ideas

Write brief English answers to these questions.

1. What have Tolkien's books inspired other writers to do?

2. Why don't Hobbits need shoes?

3. What is very important to Hobbits?

4. What happens when Hobbits are faced with an enemy?

5. What do Hobbits represent to many readers?
