



*NorthStar: An Innovative Four-Level, Integrated Skills Series
for Learners of English as a Second or Foreign Language*

Andrew K. English and Laura Monahan English
New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 1998

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Preparing second language students to read and write in an academic setting presents many challenges. Selecting materials that are not only authentic and appropriate, but stimulating as well, is one of them. Often we find a text that is well-suited to our students' academic needs, but the topics hold little interest for the population we are teaching. The authors of the *NorthStar* series have found a way to bridge the gap between challenging, academically-oriented materials and those topics that will engage our students' imaginations and maintain their interest.

The series includes both listening-speaking and reading-writing texts. This review will focus on the reading-writing strand. However, in a multi-skills program, the reading-writing and listening-speaking texts could work nicely together since the corresponding chapters in each text explore different aspects of the same contemporary themes. Some of the themes included in the advanced reading-writing text are addiction, aging, cross-cultural insights, religion, business, and the military. Each thematic unit presents two readings from a variety of genres such as autobiographical essays, editorial articles, encyclopedia entries, interview reports, and student essays.

The *NorthStar* series offers abundant language support throughout each unit. Warm-up exercises are presented in the first section with the goal of introducing the general context for a topic and allowing the students to make a personal connection with the theme. These activities include prediction exercises, group activities, and pre-reading thought and opinion exercises. Next, in the "Preparing to Read" section, the textbook provides background information, discussion questions, and vocabulary exercises that help students to understand the specific text they will study. Students might take a general knowledge quiz, survey opinions within a group, or work with vocabulary selected to ensure comprehension of the text that follows. At this point, the students have ample preparation to begin the first reading. A sequence of four

increasingly detailed exercises guides them through the reading selection, while providing practice in prediction, comprehension of main ideas, examination of specific details, and inference. The second reading on the same topic contrasts with the first in viewpoint, genre, or tone. The activities that follow ask the students to explicitly relate the two pieces, consider consequences, and distinguish and express the different points of view. It is at this stage that students are expected to have a deeper understanding of the topic.

At this point, most reading-writing texts proceed to another topic. With *NorthStar*, this is only the beginning. Three additional sections are included to give the students practice: "Working with Words," "Skills for Expression" (i.e., the grammar focus), and "Writing Style." The writing topics presented at the end of each unit encourage the use of both academic and real-world writing strategies such as interpreting graphical data, analyzing poetry and literary quotes, composing letters to request information, and preparing interview reports. The section also includes fieldwork assignments in which students go outside the classroom, using their knowledge and skills to gather data from personal interviews, library research, and telephone or Internet research.

One of the strengths of the *NorthStar* series, then, is the abundant practice and language support provided through a variety of activities in each unit, relieving the instructor of the arduous and time-consuming task of searching for additional materials, as is required with many other reading-writing texts.

The grammar exercises in *NorthStar* will not inspire the common complaint of both teachers and students that the grammar is decontextualized and unrelated to class topics. Instead, materials are offered in both the presentation and practice stage that are thematically compatible with the topic of the particular unit. If the topic is natural disasters and the grammar focus is adjective clauses, actual sentences from the text the students are reading are presented as examples of the target structure. In this way, students can explore and practice grammar issues while maintaining the focus of the unit. In addition, language levels and grammar points are keyed to Addison Wesley Longman's *Focus on Grammar* series to easily allow for additional in-depth grammar work. Depending on the needs of the students and the nature of the course, the *Focus on Grammar* text could be required or used as a reference for individual student needs.

One drawback I found with the Advanced *Northstar* reading-writing text, after using it in my own college classroom, is that the units are rigidly organized around one particular outcome, allowing for little variation of assignment. For example, the unit, "What is Lost in Translation," prepares the students thoroughly for writing a compare-and-contrast essay, which is the focus of the writing "Style" section presented after the readings. If instructors wish to use the readings for another outcome, they cannot simply substitute an alternate writing-style focus because all of the previous exercises (even the grammar focus) are in preparation for the compare-and-contrast essay. Instructors may, of course, select exercises from other units in the text

more suited to a different desired outcome, but then they lose one of the best features of the text—its contextualized language practice.

I also found that the second reading in many units is often difficult to integrate with the first in terms of an intertextual writing assignment. For example, the unit “Bridge Across Generations” has a series of editorial pieces that explore an innovative program designed to increase interaction between the generations. The exercises that follow allow the students to thoroughly explore the ideas, both expressed and implied, in the readings. Reading two presents another editorial focused on the emphasis in today’s society on eternal youth. This text is only remotely related to the issue of bridging the generation gap and was virtually impossible to integrate with the first. Similar difficulties were encountered in other units as well. Since intertextuality is such an important skill at the advanced stage in ESL writing, it is essential to have readings that can be easily integrated within the student’s work.

Thus, the *NorthStar* series is, for the most part, a comprehensive and contemporary text that offers abundant language support in a variety of well-written exercises designed to ensure complete and in-depth understanding of a topic. Students will enjoy the variety of themes and activities that emphasize practical and academic literacy strategies, and instructors will appreciate the carefully organized, in-depth units that will challenge and engage their students without requiring extra hours of gathering outside materials. Kudos to Andrew and Laura English for creating a delightful series of books that satisfies the needs of both second language students and teachers!



Writing in the Real World

Deborah Brennan (Ed.)

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Globe Fearon, 2000

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Persuaded by the latest trends in composition instruction, overwhelmed with information about the most appropriate ways to correct errors, and occupied with teaching grammar and rhetorical structures, English as a second language (ESL) writing teachers may forget that their duty as educators extends beyond preparing their students to achieve academic success. Their ultimate goal should be to help students function in the world outside the classroom, and thus, should include teaching the practical types of writing that all ESL learners—permanent residents, recently arrived immigrants, or international students—face after their school day. Hence, if your aim is to prepare ESL students or native speakers of English to write effectively, accurately, and successfully in their lives, *Writing in the Real World* by Deborah Brennan is definitely a useful resource. Your students, whatever their age and level of proficiency, will learn real-life types of writing to help them to organize their time, develop and maintain their social networks, and master the technological resources in their future jobs.

This book is organized into five units within which the chapters and lessons address numerous types of practical writing. The first unit, “Organizing Yourself,” engages students in informal writing: lists, daily schedules, summaries, telephone messages, e-mail messages, directions, and journal entries. The second, “Writing for Family and Friends,” presents writing as an act of social communication and consequently prepares students to write correspondence (friendly, congratulatory, and sympathy letters, postcards, and envelopes). Moreover, there are lessons on invitations, invitation replies, and thank-you notes. The third unit focuses on “Writing for the Community.” While its first chapter is devoted to teaching students three different types of formal letters (inquiry, complaint, and to-the-editor), the second prepares them to complete voter registration forms, rental agreements, change-of-address notices, and driver’s license applications. Authentic materials are included to motivate students and approximate the activities of real-life expe-

riences. Next, "Shopping and Managing Money" includes the various types of writing involved in financial transactions in banks (account or credit-card applications, checks, check registers, deposits, and withdrawals) and in buying from catalogs, the Internet, or the classified ads in newspapers. Finally, the fifth unit links writing with jobs. You may help your students find a job by teaching them how to write resumes, letters of application, and job application forms. You can prepare them for "technology-based" writing (for example, memos, fax cover sheets, e-mail messages, and purchase order forms) that they are likely to encounter in their jobs and also get them ready to confront the harshest reality of a job: filling out federal tax forms!

Each chapter is introduced by a brief paragraph describing the writing lesson and a few questions to encourage thinking. This facilitates students' understanding of both the form and the function of the type of writing in the lesson since they can fit the new information into an already existing framework. Similarly, every lesson starts with a statement of the objectives and the definitions of the types of writing to be learned so that the students are aware of what they will be expected to do. Five parts follow this introduction. "Learn it" explains the function and the features of the kinds of writing presented in the lesson. "Look at it" provides one or two models of this type of writing—such as texts, letters, and forms—accompanied by marginal notes showing the primary features of each. "Talk about it" includes questions for discussion in pairs or in groups. Using discussions, the students have the opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills (for example, comparing and contrasting models and analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the models) and thus reflect upon the value and effectiveness of the texts presented. The two following parts engage students in practice in two different ways. "Try it" includes templates, captions with guidelines, and a list of features for the students to complete, follow, and check respectively. "Use it" presents a situation to which the students have to respond by practicing the types of writing presented in the lesson. The former is based on controlled composition, but the latter provides students with more freedom to write. Finally, each lesson has follow-up activities where students are given a problem to solve. The first step is to discuss with their classmates the most appropriate types of writing that could be used in order to solve the situation, and the second is to produce the actual pieces of writing to be used in each case.

Among the major strengths of this book is that the activities encourage the integration of other linguistic skills, especially reading. Furthermore, activities and types of writing included in this book have practical and immediate applicability since they deal with the ubiquitous technological resources that have become essential in our jobs. Thus, the students increase their motivation and are better prepared to succeed both in class and in the real world. Also, the *Teacher's Guide* and the student's workbook, *Forms in the Real World*, are excellent aids for the two poles in the educational setting: the instructor, who is provided with a comprehensive rationale and helpful suggestions for the lesson plans, and the learners, who gain further opportunities to practice the topics covered in the textbook.

Nonetheless, there are some weaknesses in this book, one being the organization of topics: Certain types of writing appear two or three times in different chapters. For example, e-mail messages are covered in the first and last chapters, without adding any new information. Moreover, the use of lists of required features—templates to complete and checklists to look for missing items that guide some of the activities in this book—may excessively restrict the learners' perception of writing. The limited number of models presented may also contribute to students' lack of freedom; they could be tempted to apply these models as fill-in exercises, keeping the structure and the majority of text, adding only the necessary changes to adapt the writing to each situation. This process would prevent them from improving their creativity in writing. Fortunately, an easily accessible and highly motivating activity could remedy the latter weakness: the use of realia in class. The instructor could bring materials such as real application forms, memos, and letters for students to either observe as additional models or to use as practice. These activities would make students aware that an idea can be expressed in infinite ways and would also provide the perfect link between the academic environment and the outside world.

Do not hesitate to implement real life writing in your class. Both you and your students will benefit from this experience. By enabling them to use writing outside the classroom, you will be complying with your obligations as an educator and helping your students succeed in their lives.



America Writes:

Learning English Through American Short Stories

Judith Kay and Rosemary Gelshenen

New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998

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It seems that English as a second language (ESL) teachers are always trying to find new and better ways to help students improve their language proficiency. *America Writes* may be just the vehicle for them. This excellent book has the potential for improving high-intermediate to advanced-level ESL students' language skills, not only reading and writing skills, but also speaking and listening. High-interest readings complemented by a variety of comprehension checks, discussion questions, writing ideas, grammar exercises, and other learning activities make this a book well worth investigating.

An especially valuable strength of this reader rests in the stories themselves. Judith Kay and Rosemary Gelshenen have grouped 18 well-chosen American short stories into five theme-based chapters: life lessons, unexpected twists, irony, family relationships, and meeting challenges. Students can simultaneously enjoy authentic literature, survey the history of American culture, and improve their language proficiency through reading, writing, and discussion. The stories include "A Day's Wait," by Ernest Hemingway and "Thank You, Ma'm," by Langston Hughes (life-lessons chapter); "The Last Leaf," by O. Henry and "The Lottery," by Shirley Jackson (unexpected-twist chapter); "All Summer in a Day," by Ray Bradbury and "Désirée's Baby," by Kate Chopin (irony chapter); "A Visit to Grandmother," by William Melvin Kelley and "My Father Sits in the Dark," by Jerome Weidman (family-relationships chapter); and, "A Rice Sandwich," by Sandra Cisneros and "The Circus," by William Saroyan (meeting-challenges chapter). These stories cover a broad spectrum of American culture, universal life themes, and other areas of student interest. There is bound to be something for everyone.

Each chapter (which includes three or four stories) begins with a brief commentary designed to focus students' attention on that chapter's theme. For example, the life-lesson chapter is prefaced by focusing comments such as, "Life is the greatest teacher of all, and our experiences often change our lives

forever” (p. 1). Students may then ask themselves, “How did the characters [in the story] learn a lesson?” and “Have I ever experienced a similar situation?” (p. 1). Each chapter ends with several review activities: “Analyzing and Comparing,” “Freewriting,” “Words Frequently Confused,” “Spelling,” and a “Review Test.” These end-of-chapter review activities provide opportunities for students to make connections between stories and for teachers to assess students’ learning.

In “Analyzing and Comparing,” students are asked, for example, to compare two boys, one from Hemingway’s “A Day’s Wait” and the other from Hughes’ “Thank You, Ma’m.” Students must think about ways in which the two boys are alike and different. In “Freewriting,” students may be asked to write for 15 minutes about a theme as it occurs in the story—for example, the theme *fear*. In “Words Frequently Confused,” students are given the opportunity to review homonyms or other words that are often misused because of their similarity in spelling or meaning. Examples (taken from the text) include bear/bare, attach/detach, teach/learn, anxious/eager, and quiet/quite/quit. These words are taken from the chapter stories. The “Spelling” activity also uses words taken from the stories. Students are given one or more spelling rules followed by practice exercises. The “Review Test” covers specific grammar points that students have studied previously in the context of a particular story. For example, “A Day’s Wait” addresses articles and prepositions; “Thank You, Ma’m” addresses adverbs of time and degree as well as adverb placement. Students are given a number of sentences and are asked to determine whether or not each sentence is correct. Incorrect sentences must be edited. Teachers will find numerous ways to use these practical review activities.

Within each chapter, individual stories are introduced with four pre-reading activities: “think-before-you-read” questions, a literary term, idioms and expressions, and a biographical sketch of the author. The pre-reading questions are designed to check, activate, and build students’ background knowledge as well as motivate students’ interests. The literary term is defined and discussed as it relates to a particular story. For example, “A Day’s Wait,” is introduced with *point of view*. The authors explain that the story is told from the father’s point of view. Students are asked to imagine the story told from another character’s point of view. Idioms and expressions used in the story are listed and defined so students will be able to read with improved comprehension and fluency. Finally, a simple yet surprisingly comprehensive sketch of the author provides students with additional important information. For example, before reading “A Day’s Wait,” students read about Hemingway’s literary style as well as his life experiences and his death. These pre-reading activities are certain to enhance students’ reading experience.

Each story is followed by comprehension questions, vocabulary study, grammar exercises, discussion questions, and writing ideas. The comprehension questions range from simple recall (“Where does the father go while his son is resting in bed?”) (p. 5) to inference (“In what season does the story take place?”) (p. 5) and critical thinking (“Why does the boy cry easily the next

day?") (p. 5). Each story also includes a vocabulary enrichment exercise. Kay and Gelshenen have selected a number of difficult words from each story for further study. Students must reread (or scan) the story to learn how the words were used in context and how they can be applied in a new context. Grammar exercises that follow each story are another valuable feature of *America Writes*. Exercises include sentence editing, sentence construction, and cloze exercises. The grammar activities relate to the previous story and address a variety of potential problem areas such as articles, prepositions, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, infinitives and gerunds, active and passive voice, and subject-verb agreement. The exercises also encourage a recycling of the information in the reading. For example, as students reread the story looking for infinitives and gerunds, they have another opportunity to deepen their understanding of the story's plot, issues, and themes. Thus, in the context of familiar stories, acquiring grammar knowledge is likely to be easier and more enjoyable, and the results more long lasting.

Two final activities follow each story: "Sharing Ideas" and "Writing." The section on sharing ideas includes discussion questions that can be answered with a partner, within a small group, or by the whole class. Students have the opportunity to speak to the group and to practice listening. The discussion questions are strategically placed directly before the writing ideas. In this way discussion can serve as a brainstorming technique: ideas that students generate can be used as resources for the writing assignment. Writing prompts range from writing narratives and new story endings ("Rewrite the story from the doctor's point of view.") (p. 11) to expository writing ("Who should be responsible for the moral education of a child?") (p. 23). The writing ideas can easily be adapted to fit the needs of different teachers and classrooms.

Does this book have any drawbacks? Not really, but it might have been helpful to include a grammar and vocabulary pre-test. Administering a pre-test would provide teachers (and students) with an additional assessment tool. If teachers decide to measure students' learning in this way, they can easily devise the appropriate tests.

This 276-page book may well be one of a kind. The page layout is ideal, with plenty of white space. For ease of identification, story paragraphs are numbered. The table of contents and index are comprehensive, yet straightforward and easy to use. The book is a convenient size and weight, making it easy for students to carry with them. Even the cover is attractive and inviting in both color and design. The appendix includes a list of common ESL errors, a list of all the literary terms used in the book, and a lengthy list of irregular verbs. As a further aid to teachers, an instructor's manual is available. It contains an answer key, expanded ideas for introducing each story, more ideas for discussion, and suggestions for further readings.

So, if your program is literature based, this may be the book to improve your students' confidence level and language proficiency. It contains excellent readings, literary information, and grammar and vocabulary exercises, as well as a variety of opportunities for writing, and many opportunities for discussion. I highly recommend this book.



Tense Situations: Tenses in Contrast and Context (2nd ed.)

Pamela Hartmann, Annette Zarian, and Patricia Esparza
Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace, 1998

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Most English as a second language (ESL) students struggle with the appropriate and correct use of tense. They question, for example, when is the present perfect preferred to the simple past? ESL teachers generally agree that tense is one of the most challenging dimensions in grammar. Teachers looking for a textbook to teach native-like verb-tense usage will find an answer in *Tense Situations*. This book directs both teachers' and students' attention to the contexts or situations where a particular tense occurs or is used. In accordance with Larsen-Freeman's (1991) three-dimensional grammar framework (form/structure, meaning/semantics, and use/pragmatics), this book addresses the semantic usage of the tenses and provides students with opportunities to practice contrasts between tenses in a situated context.

The book is organized into 20 chapters and an appendix. Each chapter is composed of a filmstrip story, a time frame with accompanying grammatical explanations, and mini-lessons called "Rap It Up," "Rap in the Real World," and "Fill It In"(or "Picture Puzzle"). Except for the review sections, the overall format is the same in each chapter.

The filmstrip story is the main part of the chapter where grammatical points with examples extracted from the filmstrip are provided. As the name suggests, each picture is shown in a length of photographic film. Each filmstrip, which consists of two side-by-side stories with pictures in the middle, presents humorous episodes. Students are asked to first read the complete story in the left column, then cover up the story that they have just read and choose the correct tense for the cued verb form on the right side of the page. Afterward, students read grammatical explanations. Alternatively, I think it would make more sense to do steps two and three in reverse order. Without knowing the usage presented in the grammar explanation, students are forced to depend primarily on their short-term memory in order to choose the right tense.

The remaining oral activities, “Rap It Up” and “Rap in the Real World,” are designed to develop conversational skills using appropriate tenses. The former consists of simple oral practice based on illustrated examples while the latter involves a conversation and discussion practice either with a partner or in small groups. “Fill It In” and “Picture Puzzle” are presented alternately. “Fill It In” is a traditional fill-in-the-blank exercise. However, “Picture Puzzle” is an innovative practice section in which students are asked to transform cartoon symbols into sentences guided by a key to symbols in the appendix. Through this activity, students practice what they have learned in an interesting way. At first glance, the picture symbols appear tricky. However, after one or two attempts, students will feel comfortable with them.

As the authors mention, the merit of this book lies in its recognition of the importance of context beyond the sentence to the appropriate use of tense. Students can develop a native-like command of various tenses by studying verb tenses in the sentence examples and by paying attention to the given contexts. Another strength of the text is its inclusion of six review sections. In these sections, students get feedback on whether or not they have used various tenses correctly. Review sections are more inclusive in that they involve a greater range of tenses to choose from (i.e., the complete range of past tenses) than is found in the individual chapter exercises (i.e., simple past versus past continuous). Through review sections students can master the usage of varied tenses in appropriate contexts. Review sections are made up of gapped-text completion exercises and a section called “Finish the Story.” “Finish the Story” involves rewriting the story based on a cue sheet. In doing so, students can add creative phrases and sentences, thus also working on their writing skills.

Tense Situations shows several improvements in the second edition. First, even though the first and second editions have the same overall content, the second edition is better organized in that the earlier long “Rap It Up” is divided into two distinct sections, “Rap It Up” and “Rap in the Real World.” Second, the revised edition contains more sentences in the filmstrip story, which makes the whole story sound more natural. Third, a new section, “Figure It Out,” is introduced in three chapters in the second edition. This section provides additional practice. Fourth, regarding stylistic improvements, the entire text in the second edition is written in boldface, which is more readable. Finally, the second edition has fewer examples in the overall exercise sections than in the first edition, presumably because it was felt that students might feel pressured if they had to answer too many questions.

There are, still, some improvements that could be made in a third edition. Colorful pictures should be used rather than simple black and white ones to attract students’ interest. Also, students should be provided with an index card to cover up a single sentence in each chapter since covering up the sentences in the filmstrip with their hands is inconvenient and inefficient. When faced with a difficult choice, students are tempted to uncover answers too quickly.

I highly recommend *Tense Situations* for advanced ESL learners who have difficulty choosing one tense over another. Although the authors mention that “the text is intended for high-intermediate ESL students” (p. v), the level of the book would be a little high for intermediate students because every exercise necessarily involves the careful determination of appropriate tense usage among possible tenses. In conclusion, in spite of a few minor drawbacks, this book is a valuable guide to help students make the proper choice of English verb tense in appropriate contexts.

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New Ways of Using Drama and Literature in Language Teaching

Valerie Whiteson, (Ed.)

Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1996

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A language arts teacher was overheard in the faculty lounge saying to her colleague, "I wish someone would write a book that puts together a whole lot of fun, creative ways to teach literature. I've got these handouts from all the workshops I've gone to, but I can never find them when I want them. I need a book where great ideas are in one place."

The language arts teacher would be ecstatic to find out that such a book has already been written and perhaps surprised to discover that it's written for English as a second language (ESL) teachers! *New Ways of Using Drama and Literature in Language Teaching*, edited by Valerie Whiteson and published by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), is a book rich with lesson ideas from all over the world: Japan, Jordan, Uruguay, Malaysia, as well as the English-speaking world. Although most of the activities are for secondary and college students at the intermediate level and above, there are several ideas that would work well with any age group, and many can be easily adapted to fit different student populations and needs, including those of beginners.

This book in the *New Ways* series is divided into four chapters covering drama, prose, and poetry in which both ESL and English or language arts teachers will find nearly 60 different ideas to awaken students to the miracle of literature. A great many of the lessons focus on creative and speculative thinking and writing, while others target critical thinking and literary analysis, and still others provide opportunity to mime and speak with emotion while trying on a different persona. The vast majority of lessons require students to work in groups and promote sensitivity to sociocultural issues as well as an awareness of individual differences. For example, in "West Side Story: A Lesson" by Francoise Beniston, students are asked to think about how immigrants are treated in their new country, and in "Creative Acts: A Workshop Approach" by Andrew Barfield, students create short plays about staying in a foreign country. Students later reflect on cross-cultural differences.

The format for the lessons is a teacher's dream come true: Language levels, aims (instead of objectives), class time, teacher preparation time, and resources are all listed in the beginning for easy reference. The lessons open with a short explanatory rationale followed by step-by-step procedures and a wonderful section called "Caveats and Options" to help with organizational concerns and with variations. Several of the lessons also have sample questions and activities, charts, and references.

If your students are studying a play, a brief but unusual lesson is "Silent Scene" by Geraldine Hetherington, who has several lessons in the book. Using a variation of the fish-bowl technique, a small group of students inside the "fish bowl" enact in pantomime a scene from a play, after which the larger group of observing students must interpret the mime verbally. "Silent Scene" can be used either to introduce students to a scene or to check comprehension and can be adapted to any level.

For those of you who love to use video and have the time for a project, Pamela Couch has created "Interacting with Literature Via Student-Produced Videos." Students recreate a short story or novel chapter by first acting out the scenes described and by drawing pictures; they then write a screenplay that is later produced and shown.

"Wooden Characters" by Gabriel H. Diaz Maggioli demands little more from the teacher than a box of Cuisenaire rods (Gattegno, 1972). Students use the rods as characters and enact variations of the literature they have read. Great for beginners, this lesson helps to make literature more alive while getting students to deduce and predict details of plot and character. Two other lessons by Diaz Maggioli utilize game boards. Examples of the required boards are provided. "The Story Game" is designed to encourage students to "voice their opinions" (p. 17), and "All the World's a Stage" is for "perceiving the multitude of meanings in a literary piece" (p. 19).

In the poetry chapter several creative and well-constructed lessons combine prose or drama with poetry. Linda Butler's "Using Borrowed Lines" wants students not only to understand literature but also to "linger over a passage, to reread and savor the author's words" (p. 66). Students write short poems focusing on the imagery in the novel or story, and these poems are later read by their classmates. With "Poem Charades" by David George, students get into groups and act out "short action- or emotion-oriented poems" (p. 68). Nursery rhymes and song lyrics make good choices for the charades.

For advanced secondary and college students, Anita Lie's "Act It Out" uses narrative poems such as Browning's "My Last Duchess" and Shelley's "Ozymandias" to have students rewrite a scene from the poem as a script for a play that they later act out. One of the more unusual lessons is from Linda Gajadusek, Denise Balason, and Jennifer Murphy of Georgia State University: "Getting Psyched to Read Novels" asks students to apply psychological concepts to the novels they read. Using *A Separate Peace* as an example, students must select two of Freud's defense mechanisms and explain how a character demonstrates this behavior. Later, they determine the position of the characters in Maslow's hierarchy of needs and specify

how their needs are being met. Provided in the appendix are detailed study-guide questions that students discuss in small groups. Later they either give panel presentations or write reports using the psychological concepts as a basis for interpreting the novel.

The last section of the book has several lessons designed to work with any genre. "When a Pig Builds a Bungalow: Working With Titles" by Lynne Davis asks students to create new titles while studying the parts of speech. Natalie Hess's "Put a Ring Around the Thing" provides an elaborate process using the description of an object "to arouse students' curiosity" (p. 138). One of my favorites is "Walk for a Good Talk," also by Hess. Using the story of Snow White as the text, Hess lists controversial statements such as "Snow White is disgustingly submissive" (p. 141) and "The only way Snow White can be brought back to life is with a kiss from a man. What a terrible lesson for little girls." (p. 142) as a ploy to get students up and moving around, giving their opinions while learning vocabulary and developing confidence in their self-expression.

My only criticism of the book is that too many of the lessons use standard European and American novels and poems such as *A Separate Peace*, *The Accidental Tourist*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, and "Annabel Lee," or direct readers to the standards in their "References and Further Reading" section. While it is true that most of the lessons may be easily adapted to fit literature from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Americans of color, it would have been a bonus to see more of these writers represented, and more women writers as well. Stephanie Vandrick's "Quote/Unquote" which uses only quotations from women to arouse interest in literature is a welcome addition, as is Whiteson's "Multicultural Ideas."

But overall, *New Ways of Using Drama and Literature in Language Teaching* is very much worth the investment if your goal is to inspire appreciation of literature in your students. Moreover, these activities are bound to make your classroom a creative context for language learning, and through the emphasis on drama and verbal interaction they should also build student self-esteem.

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Using Newspapers in the Classroom

Paul Sanderson

New York: Cambridge Press, 1999

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Newspapers have been a part of my life since my pre-reading days as a small child when my father would read the “funnies” to me before he settled in to read the rest of the evening paper. I learned about my community and my world by emulating my father, reading the daily newspaper. This recollection inspired my interest in Paul Sanderson’s new handbook for language teachers, *Using Newspapers in the Classroom*. While this handbook is not intended exclusively for English as a second language (ESL) classrooms, the newspapers from which its exercises are developed have special value for our students. Like many of our ESL students, I grew up in an isolated and insular community, albeit an English-speaking one, complete with dialect distinctions and the culture of rural poverty. The daily newspaper provided cultural schema, language practice, and information beyond my small world, just as it can for ESL students today. Journalists also provide detail and analysis in the stories and articles they publish, just as we ask our students to do when they write.

The wide variety of news, features, and advertisements in a daily paper provides content of interest for nearly everyone. Sanderson points out that newspapers are also a source of authentic materials—using language that is current and accessible. Teachers have long relied on newspaper articles to demonstrate different kinds of writing and relationships between concepts like *purpose* and *message*, or *voice* and *audience*. Now, Sanderson’s book provides well-planned lessons for use with a wide range of newspaper content.

His text is divided into chapters, within which are outlines and models of various exercises that may be used with different sections of the newspaper. Each chapter is organized as a series of lessons that the instructor may use in any order. Chapters that focus on the written word include “Headlines,” and “Articles.” They are further subdivided into sections such as “ambiguity,” “predictive listening,” and “what, who, where, when, how, why?” Chapters like “Photographs” and “Advertising” contain lessons that allow the instructor to

use rich visual content to prompt analytical writing. These chapters are especially useful if your class includes low-level English learners, because such students may be able to infer content from graphics more readily than from the written word. Most newspapers contain material suitable for students of any age or language competence level, and the lessons in Sanderson's book utilize that flexibility. Chapter sub-headings suggest the appropriate learning level for each lesson.

One lesson in the "Headline" chapter is called "Half-headlines." The instructor writes beginnings and endings of several headlines on the board in random order. Students must analyze the content and context of the phrases, then put the right beginnings and endings together. Finally, students must decide which article each headline applies to and give a rationale based on their understanding of their "re-composed" headlines and the texts to which they are attached. This lesson requires that the student practice inductive reading and critical thinking. The content of the article also informs the student on a news, business, or cultural issue. This exercise could be done as a whole class, in small groups, or individually as homework. Sanderson's exercises also require students to respond to details and to explain the writer's analysis (occasionally contributing analysis of their own), thus engaging the critical thinking processes.

Sanderson leads instructors through other exercises using cartoons ("funnies" or "comics," as we call them in the U.S.) that have the potential for teaching both culture and idiom. Instructors should be aware that students may have to stretch their knowledge of the language and culture to find meaning embedded in the humor. In-class exercises are combined with homework assignments that require students to find objects and ideas that are unique to the culture of their target language (American English). Examples of objects are images of cultural icons like automobiles with big fins, professional sports logos, and photos or caricatures of people in the news. Example ideas are references to organizations such as the Selective Service or to practices like employment "perks." Instructors may choose appropriate comics to tailor exercises to suit the needs of students over a range of reading comprehension and writing levels. At the most basic level, cartoons, photographs, and advertisements are useful. At an advanced level, Sanderson also offers challenging exercises using editorials and essays. There is even a chapter on journalistic ethics that leads to a discussion of ethics in student writing.

The book was published in Great Britain and makes references to English newspapers: Instructors will notice British spelling conventions in the sample exercises. The activities, however, are easily adaptable, since American newspapers contain sections and features that are similar to those in British publications.

In this book, over 120 exercises are detailed in a logical and readable format. No tools are needed other than the newspaper; a single issue of a medium-size Sunday paper can provide a semester's worth of material.

However, daily papers often generate one or more follow-up stories. These can be used to create continuity in subject matter and allow the instructor to create more drill-like exercises, especially if the same set of lessons is applied to each update of a continuing story. Current newspapers will always be more topical, but even when the news is not up to date, the ideas in this book are. *Using Newspapers in the Classroom* is an inventive and productive tool for an interactive classroom.

