

Outcomes

Better Reading Outcomes

Learner Training 2 Suggested Answers

1 I read things I'm interested in. I keep a list of new words.

It's great that you read – and, of course, if you can find things you're interested in, it motivates you to read more. Three things to think about:

- 1 It's important not just to record new words, but to notice the words that go with the new words. If it's a new verb, which noun does it go with? If it's a new adjective, which noun does it describe? – and so on.
- 2 Be careful you're not reading things that are too difficult. If you're looking up too many words, you'll overload yourself and you won't enjoy reading as much as you could.
- 3 It is worth reading other things from time to time to make sure you meet a range of language. If you're not careful, you'll end up knowing a lot of facts and language connected to the area you're interested in, but not much about other areas. Don't limit yourself!

2 I'm not into reading. I prefer studying grammar and vocabulary.

It's great that you like studying, but studying grammar and vocabulary can only take you so far. Reading helps you see how grammar and vocabulary is used in normal language. It helps you learn even if you're just reading for pleasure. It gives you exposure to repeated examples of words in context. It's essential if you want to really push on with your English. Start small. Find something you're interested in reading and for the first week, just read five minutes a day, then build up from there.

3 I want to study Business at an English-speaking university, so I read a lot of magazines.

OK, but what kind of magazines? Business magazines? If so, then that's a start, but it's not the end of the story. If not, then maybe you should try to! On top of that, you'll also need to start learning the language of your subject, so read things like a beginner's guide to the subject. Read things connected to business in English that you've read before in your own language, so you understand the ideas and can focus more on the new expressions. Keep your own vocabulary record book of useful words and phrases for talking about business. You might also want to buy a subject-specific dictionary, such as an English for Business dictionary, to help you.

4 I like to read simple graded readers and listen to CDs of them at the same time.

Great! There's nothing wrong with graded readers. They're written for lower-level learners and help you to meet the most useful and common words over and over again. They don't waste your time with language that's not so useful. It's also great that you listen at the same time as reading. This can help you get used to how written language sounds when spoken at relatively normal speeds. It can bridge the gap between writing and speaking. Maybe you could try reading first – and then reading and listening together next?

5 I'm reading a novel by Charles Dickens. It's very hard.

Wow! You're either brave or mad! I'm not surprised it's hard. Most native speakers struggle with Dickens. I'd say that for almost all students, this kind of thing is too hard. It's great you're interested in literature, but why not read a graded version of the novel? It'll be easier and won't contain as much unusual or old-fashioned vocabulary!

6 I read newspapers and find new words and try to use them in my speaking.

Hmm. Written English and spoken English can be very different. The kind of language used in most newspapers – especially more serious newspapers – isn't actually very commonly used in speech. It'll help you read serious newspapers better – and might be useful if you're discussing serious issues, but for normal everyday spoken language, you'd be better off watching soap operas with subtitles in your own language – or even reading things like Facebook comments, forum discussion boards, blog post comments and so on. That kind of writing is much closer to informal speech.

7 I read graded readers or kids' books below my level, so that I can read quickly and easily. I learn a few new words as well.

I'm not sure kids' books are a good idea, to be honest, unless you really want to know words like *witch*, *wizard* and *castle*! Reading graded readers is always a good idea, but maybe now is the time to try books at the level you're studying at. Challenge yourself a bit!

One final thing to say about graded readers is that there are all kinds now available: there's lots of non-fiction too, if you don't like reading stories. And if you're worried about graded readers being 'stupid' version of 'real' books, why not try the graded readers written only for EFL learners? They're a growing part of the market and there are some great titles out now.