

E. Reading Methods

1. Reading Method: Reading for Sentence Forms

Concurrent with the introduction of the Sentence Forms, the teacher should provide examples of the Forms using actual literary texts, especially works by proven writers.

Students should be sent on hunting expeditions to find the Sentence Forms in books, magazines, and newspapers in the library and on the internet.

Students can be told, for example, **to select a section of:**

1. a famous novel or essay, or
2. a contemporary magazine or newspaper

and **then**

1. to take sentences and to analyze them word by word (using the ten kinds of words and the five roles functions they perform), or
2. to take a passage, excerpt, or article, and identify the key sentence forms using footnotes or endnotes.

We earlier provided one example of this with the random selection of forms in from several pages of *Moon Shot*.

The internet has many sites where texts of famous works of literature and where online news and articles can be found.

Some sites include:

- <http://www.bibliomania.com/>
- <http://www.bartleby.com/>
- <http://www.elibrary.com>

Groups of students can work together on consecutive parts or sections of literary texts. Students can prepare and present overhead transparencies of their Form Analysis. This will involve students investigating together, listening to each other, reading the text, writing their analysis, and speaking in front of the class or group the sentence forms they created.

They could also be told to do a parallel composition, one that parallels in form the chosen passage.

2. Reading Method: Triangular Reading Method, or Reading for Themes and Ideas

Triangular Reading Method

1. Have the students read an essay, and then identify and explain **the theme** of the essay.
2. Ask students to recognize the **few key ideas** that support and develop the theme.
3. Have students cite the **significant facts, statistics, examples, and illustrations that prove or explain the main ideas**.

Theme

K e y I d e a s

S u p p o r t f o r I d e a s

3. Reading Method: Reading for Deeper Meaning

Motto: *Dig a little deeper.*

Looking at a well-written passage, ask the students to try to find and explain parts of the passage that can mean or suggest a deeper meaning. Have them look for symbols, figures of speech (irony, metaphor, personification, simile, analogy), and talk about the underlying theme.

These polarities help at this time:

Deeper Levels within a Passage	
depth	surface
inner	outer
symbol	discursive statement
figurative	literal
figure of speech	prose
suggested	stated
overtone/undertone	tone
process yourself	given clearly
connotation	denotation

4. Reading Method: Reading Aloud; the Meaning Unit, the Meditative Unit

Concentration on the vertical as well as the horizontal dimension of language through the use of the Meaning and Meditative Units.

Glaser and the *breath unit*

Joe Glaser, in his book *Understanding Style*, talks about the voice the reader hears in someone's writing. He stresses that sound is important to good writing. We would like to quote from pages 4 and 5, because he explains it so well, but for the sake of brevity, we will try to summarize those pages and a few more.

He says that writers need to be fully aware of the kind of sound that their written words have. When someone reads, they *subvocalize* – mentally generating speech, but not using the vocal muscles or speech apparatus. He introduces a very important topic, the ***breath unit***, which constitute the sections or chunks of the sentence which we read aloud and between which we pause. We pause either to take a breath or because the punctuation indicates a pause. He later talks about the *nucleus*, or stressed word within the breath unit. Each breath unit has an emphasized or stressed word. Usually a sentence has a ***sentence nucleus***, which is one of the breath unit nuclei that is given more stress or emphasis.

Meaning Unit and Meditative Unit

His observations are accurate and significant, but are not complete. It is true that we speak in units that are indeed limited by the amount of air that we expel while speaking, but available air is not the only factor that determines the length of the breath unit. The other factor is the *meaning of the cluster of words* that form the breath unit. In a sentence, words are clustered into phrases, strings, adjective-noun packets, and so on. Each cluster or packet has individual meaning, and reading them as a unit and offsetting that unit with a pause **highlights the words of the unit, makes them stand out – albeit briefly – in a moment of shining glory**. An attentive listener can comprehend much better if the sentence is presented gradually in meaningful chunks. The job of listening becomes much easier.

Because *both* these factors (the breathing and the meaning) are involved in determining what is spoken (before the necessary pause), we would like to replace *Glaser's breath unit* with a more inclusive and precise term, the **Meaning Unit**, as follows:

Meaning Unit
= Unit of Expressive Meaning and Expressive Breath

The Meaning Unit, therefore, however long or short it is, is determined by the *meaning of the section of the sentence being read as well as the amount of*

available breath. The length of the expressive breath also colors its expressive meaning.

The Meaning Unit is followed by a pause of silence. This pause allows the reader to catch one's breath as well as to reflect on the words just spoken, and their intended meaning and beauty. We will refer to this moment of pause as the **Meditative Unit**. Its formula is as follows:

Meditative Unit
= Unit of Impressive Meaning and Impressive Breath

“Between what happens to us and our response to it is a space. And in that space is wisdom, awareness, reflection
– our inner compass.”

Stephen Covey in *First Things First Every Day* Foreward vii

Knowing *where* to pause is key to good public speaking. Knowing *about the need to pause* helps people in their writing, since one should always *sound out* a draft passage to listen to the rhythm and flow within and between the sentences. **We maintain that one hears the words, and feels the impact of each word if more attention is given to the presence of proper pausing in a sentence. We feel that there should be more pauses than the meditative unit. Some pauses may be half an interval, others a full interval.** This helps reintroduce silence into the sentence. **Each Meaning Unit is bracketed in the silences of the preceding and following Meditative Units.** A frame always makes a picture look better.

A passage, therefore, when read aloud, must have an alternating rhythm of spoken Meaning Unit followed by a silent Meditative Unit. Knowing where and when to pause, and for how long, is a skill that comes with practice and with full attention to the texture and terrain that the reader is traversing.

The negative space in a picture is as important as the positive shapes and forms in it, as everyone knows who has any familiarity with oriental painting, and in particular, the Japanese aesthetic sensibility. Take, for example, Japanese rock gardens.

As Lao-Tzu indicated, “Thirty spokes converge on a hub but it's the emptiness that makes a wheel work.” Space is essential to strength, as any designer of tensile space-frames knows. Writing, too, must have spaces.

Meaning Units

The following is a list of the main Meaning Units:

- (1) **Main Verb**: constituent verb **and its attachments** of auxiliary verbs (if immediately beside)
- (2) **Subject and its adjectival attachments**
- (3) **Direct Object and its object descriptors**
- (4) **Indirect Object and its object descriptors**
- (5) **Object Descriptors**:
 - a. predicate adjective (read by itself), and
 - b. predicate noun (read by itself plus its attachments)
- (6) **Single Adverb**
- (7) **Prepositional Phrase**
- (8) **Verbal Phrase** composed of header (leading verbal) and its tailer
- (9) **Strings**
 - a. noun/appositive/absolute
 - b. adverb
 - c. adjective
 - d. absolute

These Meaning Units should be kept intact within the sentence, and should be spoken as such. To fragment them will make listening comprehension more difficult. It will also weaken the power and meaning of the words used by the writer.

5. Reading Method: Chunking, or Preparing a Passage for Public Reading

To prepare a passage for public reading, we should keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. **Advance reading** of a passage and its sentences gives the reader the chance to deconstruct the sentence and to identify its Meaning Units.
2. Follow the above guidelines, and try to sense the topography or terrain of each sentence as you read it. **Speak the above Meaning Units in distinct but not disjointed units.** Pay attention to **punctuation marks.**
3. **Adverbs** (not adverb phrases) must be ***pronounced separately*** and ***with emphasis***. We can indicate this by a *double forward slash* in front of the adverb. i.e. *I will //never go there. I will //gladly accompany you on your holiday trip.*
4. **Adjectives** should be ***pronounced more loudly***, and *driven into their nouns* by voice projection. A *single forward slash* before the adjective indicates partial emphasis. ex. *He lives in the /red house.*
5. One should pronounce many, but not all, **conjunctions** separately, with ***a half pause before and after them.***

6. In general, in most cases, there should be a *slight pause before and after verbal phrases, noun phrases, adjectival phrases, and adverb phrases*.
7. There should be a *slight pause before and after the pronunciation of all individual items in a series*.

Students will be made aware of the presence of voice, rhythm, and silence in good reading. The use of music and dramatic rendering of prose and poetry will be part of a subsequent version of the 2HA.

6. Reading Method: Mind Mapping

This activity involves reading at levels both above and including the sentence level. The student reads attentively and then tries to map out in mind map cluster diagrams the topics, subtopics, and details as the writer may have done when making the outline for the written work.

A related topic is then to exchange mind maps with others students, and then have the students write compositions, recreating their own version from the mind map without viewing the original composition by the original author.