

Introduction

English for the Students of Medicine is designed as an EAP textbook for undergraduate university students of medical and paramedical sciences ranging from a pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate level of English proficiency. The book is recommended as the main source for the beginning EAP course for medical and paramedical fields including medicine. The book aims to help students consolidate general reading skills and strategies they have already acquired through general English courses and transfer these skills and strategies to their target academic tasks. Hence, a wide range of medical text types/genres have been included in the book to provide students with ample opportunities to learn and practice discipline-based reading skills. With the main focus on reading, the other language skills and components (i.e., vocabulary grammar, discourse, and genre) are used as a springboard for fostering the reading skills and strategies.

The book is organized in 12 units based on medical themes and topics of maximum authenticity and relevance to the students of medical sciences. The core of each unit is two reading passages developing the same theme and all activities of each unit are geared to that theme. To this end, there is an efficient integration of relevant content and language with a good distribution of common genres in the field of medicine.

The units are divided into various sections as introduced below:

Title Page

It is designed to give readers a general overview of the theme of the unit and contains the title of the unit, a picture representing the theme, and a ‘unit focus’ which briefs the content of the unit.

Reading 1: Check up

The tasks and activities in this section are intended to engage students mentally and to attract their attention to the content so that they may connect it to their own personal life experiences. These activities are different from ‘warm ups’ in that they are primarily intended to get the learners to think rather than to talk on the topic. This could be achieved as the students recount episodes from their lives, share their knowledge and experiences, or make predictions. Through the check up activities, readiness is also achieved via a preliminary focus on vocabulary items.

Reading Passage

Each unit contains two reading passages which are adapted from a variety of authentic and credible sources such as encyclopedias, academic journals, published textbooks, magazines, and registered academic/professional websites. The length of passages increases in an ascending order from around 650 words Unit 1 up to around 800 words in Unit 12.

The vocabulary items within the frequency levels appropriate for pre-intermediate intermediate learners – ranging from 2000 to 3000 most common written word families in the General Service Word List (Longman Corpus, 2009) as well as the academic words – are boldfaced in the passages for input enhancement. These vocabulary items are worked on in the tasks and activities in the same unit and are recycled in the subsequent units.

Gloss. To facilitate personal engagement while reading and to aid comprehension, certain experiential activities have been included within the text placed in the margins. These while-reading activities are of two main types:

- a. Referencing to the words or images glossed in the margin.*
- b. Responding to the questions and comments placed in the margin.*

Medicine Notes. Technical vocabulary items are colored in the text and defined in the end notes immediately following the passage under the heading of Medicine Notes. This is to facilitate comprehension through referencing while reading.

Digest What You Read

This section is primarily intended to assess the reader's comprehension of the text. The wide range of comprehension questions including true/false, Yes/No, alternatives, multiple choice and Wh-question item types are designed to check the readers' levels of comprehension beginning from literal comprehension and proceeding to prediction, evaluation, and personal response. It should be mentioned that literal comprehension – the lowest processing level – is not the main focus of the comprehension check activities unless it is required by the nature of the corresponding academic reading. For example, scanning as the focused reading strategy requires reference to the information literally cited in the text. Considerable space is devoted to tasks as vehicles serving a two-folded purpose: assessment and consolidation.

Second, in order to help students consolidate comprehension of the text, a variety of task types such as information gap, opinion gap, reasoning gap, jigsaw, problem solving and information transfer are designed.

Additionally, the 'Digest What You Read' section includes three other main parts: reading strategy, vocabulary shot, and grammar injection.

Reading Strategy

Reading strategy instruction in this book is highlighted in a number of ways: (a) the choice of strategies which are helpful in discipline-specific contexts, (b) discipline-specific reading tasks, and (c) explicit instruction and tips which are to be utilized while the reader encounters reading problems. The reading strategy under focus in each unit is matched with the nature of the relevant reading passage.

Vocabulary Shot

In designing this section, various aspects of word knowledge including meaning, collocations, grammatical features, word parts, and register are taken into account through both explicit instruction and task-based activities. The framework used in this book embraces five main instructional phases; selective attention, meaning recognition, manipulation, interpretation, and production. As an example, in the section entitled ‘Take a Look’ multiple meanings of a word extracted from the text are focused upon.

Grammar Injection

We have treated grammar through a discovery approach and raising learners’ consciousness about grammar choices. To this end, grammar instruction is embedded in and practiced through different genres and subgenres prevailing in medical contexts.

Reading 2

The second reading passage provides a further opportunity for learners to practice reading and to recycle the reading strategies, vocabulary, and the grammar focus of the first reading passage while it introduces new content and comparatively smaller vocabulary ranges. Although the general theme is the same as the first reading passage, the topic is more specific, the text is shorter, the genre is usually different, and the load of activities prior to and following it is considerably lower. Vocabulary items in Reading 2 follow the same forms and functions as those in Reading 1. However, less controlled and more productive tasks are designed for the vocabulary section in ‘Digest What You Read’ following Reading 2.

Translation

This section is designed as a reading practice as well as a translation activity. Also, the activity offers focused practice on vocabulary, grammar, and some features of genres presented in the unit. Further, the section provides the learners with some practical and simple non-technical tips on translation. The translation activity reinforces the learners’ internalization of the grammatical structure focus of the unit, too. A hint is inserted in the instructions as to the possible differences/similarities between English and Persian in terms of the grammatical

structure. Additionally, the choice of the genre, (e.g., the abstract section of an article, a case report, etc.) raises the learners' awareness of medical genres and brings more authenticity to the translation section.

Self-check

To give the learners a sense of achievement, each unit ends up with a 'self-check'. The main objectives of the unit are worded explicitly using performative verbs. Beginning the statements with the expression of 'I can' is meant to contribute to the Learner's sense of accomplishment. The learners are encouraged to stop for a few minutes and reflect on their learning processes and strategies.

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