



Reflecting on Teaching Practice and Assessment Design for English Reading & Writing Classes

TODD J. ALLEN, PHD

tjallen@kansai-u.ac.jp

www.toddjamesallen.com/workshops



Today's Plan

- Description of the courses
- Syllabus
- Textbook
- Assessments
- Activities



Description of Courses

- 英語 2 A上級 and 英語 2 B上級 (文学部 / 社会学部)
- This course focuses on developing students' reading and writing abilities in English. The course will use various activities asking students to give their opinions, summarize texts, paraphrase, and write their own paragraphs. Students will further develop their communication-oriented English language skills for everyday and academic contexts.

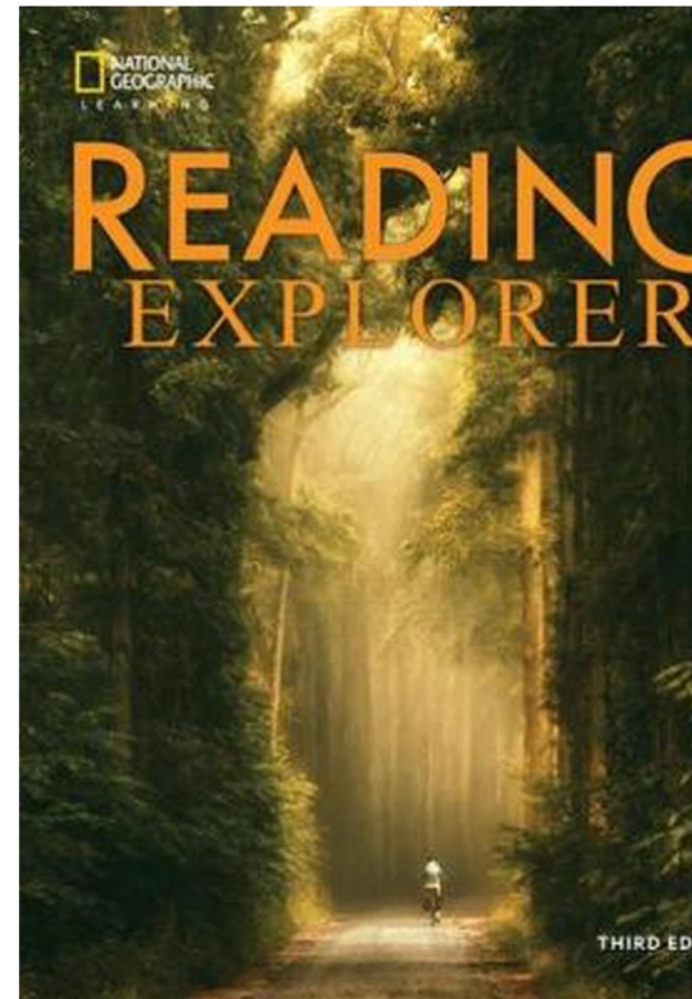
Syllabus

- Following the syllabus set by 教務, students receive an outline which covers all the chapters over the spring and fall semesters. The table is an example from the spring semester.
- Spring: Units 1-6
- Fall: Units 7-12

Week	Topics	Important Notices
1 (05.04.22)	Introduction	
2 (12.04.22)	Unit 1: Sports & Fitness (1/2)	
3 (19.04.22)	Unit 1: Sports & Fitness (2/2)	Writing/Reading Task 1
4 (26.04.22)	Unit 2: Skin Deep (1/2)	
5 (10.05.22)	Unit 2: Skin Deep (2/2)	
6 (17.05.22)	Unit 3: Animals in Danger (1/2)	Unit Quiz 1
7 (24.05.22)	Unit 3: Animals in Danger (2/2)	
8 (31.05.22)	Review Exam	
9 (07.06.22)	Unit 4: Violent Earth (1/2)	Writing/Reading Task 2
10 (14.06.22)	Unit 4: Violent Earth (2/2)	
11 (21.06.22)	Unit 5: Islands and Beaches (1/2)	
12 (28.06.22)	Unit 5: Islands and Beaches (2/2)	Unit Quiz 2
13 (05.07.22)	Unit 6: Global Addictions (1/2)	Writing/Reading Task 3
14 (12.07.22)	Unit 6: Global Addictions (2/2)	
15 (19.07.22)	Review Exam	

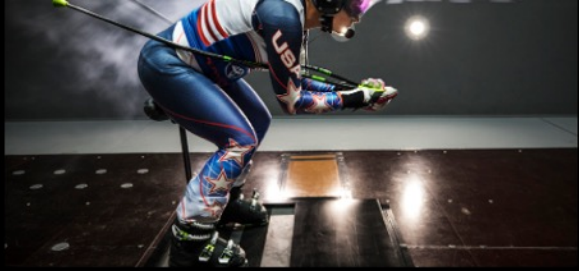
Textbook

- I use the online workbook version of Reading Explorer 3.
- Students are able to access the online tools and complete all activities in the book.
- We use all digital tools in the classroom (e.g., videos and readings) from the textbook to facilitate learning.
- All materials used in class (e.g., PowerPoint slides) are uploaded to Kandai LMS.



EXAMPLE

Course Information			...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● Course Outline Textbook	Updated 5months ago Attempts 11	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● IMPORTANT NOTICE Textbook	Updated 2months ago Attempts 17	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● Student Feedback Survey Textbook	Updated 2months ago Attempts 9	...
Slides			...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● Week 1 (Slides) Textbook	Updated 5months ago Attempts 7	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● Week 2 (Slides) Textbook	Updated 4months ago Attempts 4	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● Week 3 (Slides) Textbook	Updated 4months ago Attempts 7	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● Class 4 (Slides) Textbook	Updated 4months ago Attempts 6	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● Week 5 (Slides) Textbook	Updated 4months ago Attempts 13	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● Week 6 (Slides) Textbook	Updated 3months ago Attempts 4	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● Week 7 (Slides) Textbook	Updated 3months ago Attempts 11	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● Class 9 (Slides) Textbook	Updated 3months ago Attempts 5	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	● Week 10 (Slides) Textbook	Updated 2months ago Attempts 9	...



01

Sports and Fitness



02

Skin Deep



03

Animals in Danger



04

Violent Earth



05

DIGITAL VERSION



06

Global Addictions



07

Energy Solutions



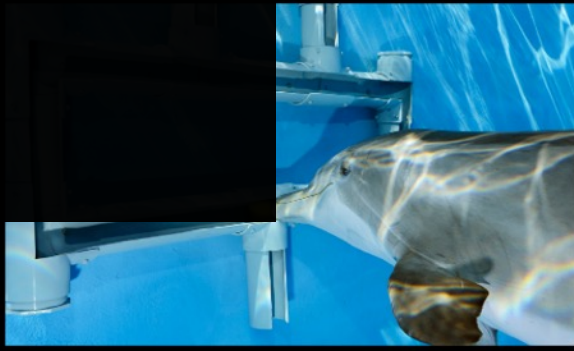
08

Epic Engineering



09

High-Tech Solutions



10

All in the Mind



11

Visual Pioneers



12

Far Out



Credits

Help

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC



Assessments

- Following the requirements by 教務, students complete two review exams.
- Students also complete two unit quizzes and the e-learning component.
- Students also complete reading and writing activities as assessment items.

Item	Weight	Due Date
Review Exams (2)	40% (2)	1.17.05.22 2.19.07.22
Unit Quiz (2)	20% (2)	1.17.05.22 2.28.06.22
E-Learning (easy tango/really English)	10%	Throughout the semester
Writing/Reading Tasks (3)	30% (3)	1.19.04.22 2.07.06.22 3.05.07.22

Unit Quizzes & Review Exams

- All quizzes and exams are completed online in class.
- Unit quizzes are roughly 20 minutes and review exams are 45 minutes.
- Students are usually given time to study before the exams.
- These exams focus on vocabulary, grammar, critical thinking skills, and comprehension.
- Roughly 90% of the exam is taken from the book (e.g., vocabulary), with last sections focusing on applying acquired knowledge in different ways.

Section 5 of 5

Sentence completions

Select the appropriate word/conjunction/preposition for each sentence below

This development comes _____ a high price, though. *

- in
- at
- of
- by

You learn _____ ways that people have been learning for hundreds of thousands of years; by having an experience. *

- in
- at

Reading & Writing Tasks

Students complete three reading and writing tasks each semester.

Students complete two reading tasks and 1 writing task each semester.

While the textbook does not explain how to write paragraphs, I provide information about how to write effective paragraphs such as topic sentences, body sentences and conclusion sentences. For example...


What are Paragraphs?



A paragraph is a collection of sentences dealing with a single topic. It should be unified, coherent, and well-developed. Typically, you want to keep one idea to one paragraph.



A paragraph is made up of a topic sentence, the developing details, and a concluding sentence.

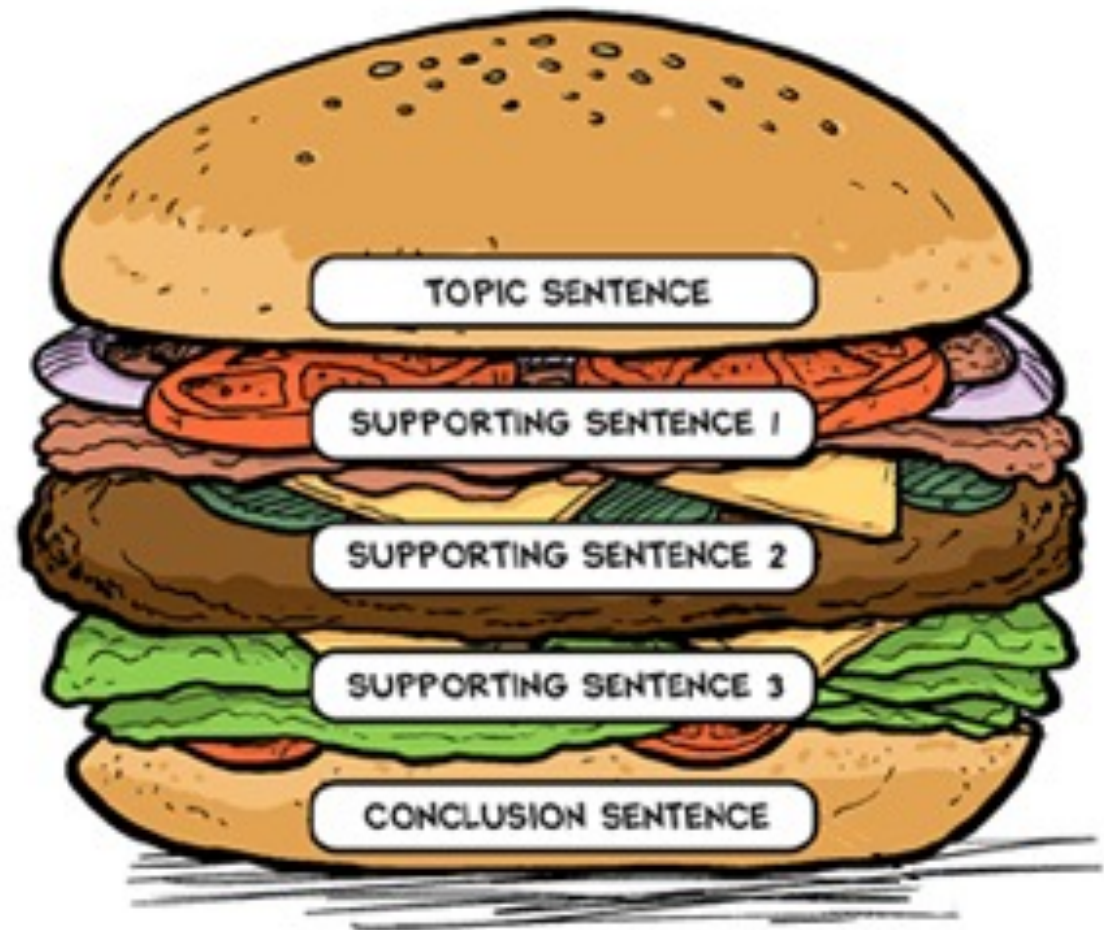


Elements of a Paragraph

- Adequate Development (Body Sentences)
 - It is important to fully develop and discuss the topic of your paragraph. If your paragraph is only 2-3 sentences, there is a good chance that you have not developed it enough.
- Here are some ways you can develop and support your topic:
 - Use examples
 - Tell a story illustrating the idea
 - Compare and Contrast
 - Give data (such as facts, statistics, etc)

Structure

- A good way to think of a paragraph and how it is structured is like a sandwich. The topic sentence is the top layer of bread, the concluding sentence is the bottom layer, and all of the developing details in-between are the meat and other goods of the sandwich.



Reading Tasks



Students are provided with a short reading at their level.



After students read the text, they complete comprehension questions for homework and submit their responses in the following week.



The readings and exercises are borrowed from the other textbooks or other appropriate learning sources.

Cultural expectations and leadership



EXAMPLE

Gabriela worked for a multinational company as a successful project manager in Brazil and was transferred to manage a team in Sweden. She was excited about her new role but soon realised that managing her new team would be a challenge.

Despite their friendliness, Gabriela didn't feel respected as a leader. Her new staff would question her proposals openly in meetings, and when she gave them instructions on how to carry out a task, they would often go about it in their own way without checking with her. When she announced her decisions on the project, they would continue giving their opinions as if it was still up for discussion.

After weeks of frustration, Gabriela emailed her Swedish manager about the issues she was facing with her team. Her manager simply asked her if she felt her team was still performing, and what she thought would help her better collaborate with her team members. Gabriela found her manager vague and didn't feel as if he was managing the situation satisfactorily.

What Gabriela was experiencing was a cultural clash in expectations. She was used to a more hierarchical framework where the team leader and manager took control and gave specific instructions on how things were to be done. This more directive management style worked well for her and her team in Brazil but did not transfer well to her new team in Sweden, who were more used to a flatter hierarchy where decision making was more democratic. When Gabriela took the issue to her Swedish manager, rather than stepping in with directions about what to do, her manager took on the role of coach and focused on getting her to come up with her own solutions instead.

Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede uses the concept of 'power distance' to describe how power is distributed and how hierarchy is perceived in different cultures. In her previous work environment, Gabriela was used to a high power distance culture where power and authority are respected and everyone has their rightful place. In such a culture, leaders make the big decisions and are not often challenged. Her Swedish team, however, were used to working in a low power distance culture where subordinates often work together with their bosses to find solutions and make decisions. Here, leaders act as coaches or mentors who encourage independent thought and expect to be challenged.

Are the sentences true or false?

- | | Answer | |
|---|---------------|-------|
| 1. Gabriela's management style worked well with her team in Brazil but not with her team in Sweden. | True | False |
| 2. Gabriela's team questioned her proposals and her decisions because they didn't trust or respect her. | True | False |
| 3. Gabriela was satisfied with her Swedish manager's way of dealing with her problem. | True | False |

Write the sentences in the correct group.

1. The manager gives the team detailed instructions on what to do.
2. The manager makes the big decisions.
3. Team members do not usually challenge the manager.
4. The manager acts as a guide but encourages input from the team.
5. The manager gives specific advice to help solve problems.
6. The manager involves the team in making decisions together.
7. The manager has a lot of control over what happens.
8. Team members can take the initiative to do things their way.
9. The manager encourages the team to find their own solutions.
10. Team members can often challenge the manager.

Expectations in a high power distance culture	Expectations in a low power distance culture

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

Paragraph Writing Tasks

Each semester, students form a group of two to three and complete a group writing task.



In the spring semester, students create a brochure comparing two cultures they find interesting. Students are given a Word template and are encouraged to be creative.



In the fall semester, students create a news website, where they summarise the main points of a news article they are interested in. Students can use any free website editing software they wish, but I encourage them to use Wix. Furthermore, students are encouraged to be creative.



They are given two weeks to complete this task. Students are given some time in class to do this.



The assessments are then graded using a specific rubric.

Activities

- I attempt to be as interactive as possible, using the model 'think, pair, share'.
- The textbook provides good discussion activities at the beginning and end of each unit.
- I use the discussion questions with menti. Menti is a website that allow students/groups to answer questions using their devices (e.g., smartphone) rather than put up their hands.
- This is a good way to get students thinking about the topic or develop critical thinking skills.

WARM UP

Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. What are some reasons humans explore space?
2. What has been humankind's greatest achievement in space exploration?



Astronaut Terry Virts photographs the Earth through the window of the International Space Station.

Menti

- I also use menti for quick quizzes if students are struggling with particular areas (e.g., prepositions).
- It is interactive and students compete with each other for prizes.

Go to www.menti.com and use the code 2714 5373

Most people like basketball, but ____ my opinion it's too chaotic.

 Mentimeter

   
of from in with



THANK YOU

ANY QUESTIONS?