

Preface

This book has been designed for a two-credit-course of Simple Prose Texts for Literature and TEFEL majors. It contains a variety of narrative, argumentative, expository and descriptive texts and also a variety of subjects some of which have been given to students as fieldwork to make sure that the contents are appealing to Iranian students culturewise. In the compilation of the materials and composition of different parts, and especially comprehensive questions, the main objectives of the course have been met.

However, we have not treated the book only as a reading book; therefore, its general design was based on the intention to enhance students' lingual skills of reading, speaking, writing, and inevitably listening. Thus we have born in mind two facts: First, the fact that two or three courses of reading precede this course; second, the fact that this book is supposed to prepare literature-major-students for a book like Advanced Prose edited by Dr. Honarvar and published by SAMT. Thus this book is bound to include more profound and perceptive texts and subtle styles than other reading texts for beginning students.

The parts and chapters of the book have been classified thematically—Man and Animals—which roughly follow the general cycle and the general themes of human life in the first part and leads down to the next link in the Chain of Creation, namely Animals, in the second part.

Each unit has been also divided into five sections of 'Words to Watch', 'Understanding the Writer's Ideas', 'Building Up Vocabulary', 'Understanding the Writer's Techniques', and finally 'Writing Projects'. Each unit gives the instructor enough chance for maneuvering.

In the section of 'Words to Watch', the significant and new words of the text have been isolated from the text. Yet to avoid spoonfeeding students, we leave the responsibility of looking up the words to the students themselves. This provides them with an opportunity to find the meaning of words in their appropriate contexts.

In 'Understanding the Writer's Ideas', the text has been treated mainly as a reading text. In this section, the comprehension of the students is tested; detailed questions cover almost all the significant parts of the text.

Since the texts are generally selected from up-to-date and genuine sources, the students will certainly come across statements or phrases used by native speakers which sound quite strange to them. In the part of 'Building Up Vocabulary', we have tried to list some of the most important statements. Students are supposed to rewrite them in their own words or discuss them in class to find appropriate English equivalents for them. Sometimes it may seem inevitable to give students a few hints in their mother tongue or to explain the social or emotional context in which that specific statement is used. Such discussions and associations will help students learn these statements by heart. The

instructors may want to ask students to write their own statements and use the expressions or axioms which have occurred in the main text for further practice.

In ‘Understanding the Writer’s Techniques’, we have tried to push students toward something more than just comprehending the ideas; they move from ‘what’ to ‘how’ the writer expresses what he wants to communicate with his/her reader. In this part students become acquainted with such terms as tone, mood, irony, satire, sarcasm, paradox, metaphor, rhetorical questions and the underlying implications which these elements reveal. They also come to discover some of the elements in the general organization of the expository and argumentative discourse which make them effective and persuasive. The instructors are also responsible to draw the students’ attention to some subtle techniques that the writers employ to arouse the reader’s curiosity–suspense–and to convince him/her; the more precise analysis, the better the students’ appreciation of the text and the course.

Discussing and challenging the above issues of writing, an effective piece of prose, students will be hopefully encouraged to practice similar techniques in the section of ‘Writing Projects’. Having experienced the methods used by the writers of the model texts, students will be more at ease to handle similar subjects suggested in ‘Writing Projects’. An attempt has also been made to accord the subjects with our students’ culture and mentality. The intention is to provoke our students to select only one of the alternatives and to express what they feel about the subject. Instructors are supposed to leave them free to have their own discussions and creativities; this practice of self-assertiveness may give them a chance to feel more self-confident and may lead to their creative achievements.

The last part of ‘Further Readings’ provides students with some more texts which they can deal with in the same manner they have treated the model texts.

Nevertheless, the above points are only suggestions and the instructors may use their own creative methods. In the end, we will gladly welcome any suggestion for the amendment of this book.

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