

Reading activity: Scanning the newspaper

Now is an appropriate time to help students get familiar with the local newspaper and the local, regional, state, national and international news they can find there. We have offered simple versions of this exercise in previous issues of *Hands-on-English* (see Vol. 9, No. 1 and Vol. 9, No. 5.), but this one is more extensive and challenging, and provides a wider range of levels, including a more advanced level.

Preparation

Bring some copies of your local newspaper to class, enough so that each small group or pair of students has their own complete set. If you wish, you can just save the paper for a few days and bring in a different days paper for each group. (For a slightly more coordinated exercise, you can buy several papers on the same day so that all the students are looking at the same paper.)

Before class, check to see if most of the topics covered here are mentioned in the papers you are bringing. Note that local papers often have a different focus each day of the week — education on Monday, food on Thursday, reli-

gion on Friday, for example. This tends to affect the advertising as well. You can add more search questions — about food, for example — if the papers you are using have a special focus.

How to do it

Have the students select which level to try or hand out the levels you think might be appropriate. Level A may work for literacy-level students, especially with some help getting started. Or, Level A could be a quick warm-up for higher level students. Each level requires a bit more reading comprehension to complete. If the students find one level too easy, they can complete it quickly and then try a higher level.

Hand out some highlighting pens and colored sticky notes. Ask the students to mark their answers by highlighting them on the page and then also noting the page number on their worksheet. To make it easier to find the page again, they can attach a sticky note to the outside edge of the page.

Let the students take their time with this exercise—after all, the purpose is not only to find the answers but also to get comfortable using and reading the paper.

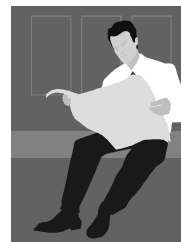
Reporting

Have each group report their answers orally to the class. This works especially well if all the groups have the same paper, as they can follow along together to check. Also, ask the students to explain their answers (i.e., why did this picture make you smile?).

Take the opportunity to discuss any parts of the paper the students are unfamiliar with. For example; what is the police blotter and why is it there? What is this information useful for?

Do your students know what's available in their local or regional newspaper? This exercise is designed to give them a little reading practice while discovering a resource of possible use to them.

Extension — Once students are familiar with this exercise, you can prepare a further, more detailed version concentrating on issues and information specific to your location.



Level A

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Find the word “U.S.” 2 times. | Pages: _____ |
| 2. Find the word “police.” | Page: _____ |
| 3. Find the word “TV” 2 times. | Pages: _____ |
| 4. Find the word “Free” 2 times. | Pages: _____ |
| 5. Find a picture that makes you smile. | Page: _____ |
| 6. Find a picture that makes you worry. | Page: _____ |
| 7. Find the word “car” 2 times. | Pages: _____ |
| 8. Find the word “Weather”. | Page: _____ |
| 9. Find the word “Movies” 2 times. | Pages: _____ |
| 10. Find 4 pictures: a young man, an old man, a young woman and an old woman. | Pages: _____ |
| 11. Find the word “Sports” 2 times. | Pages: _____ |
| 12. Find a letter that someone wrote to the newspaper. | Page: _____ |
| 13. Find 3 jobs you can apply for. | Page: _____ |
| 14. Find a picture of a cell phone. | Page: _____ |