Reading Comprehension and Writing

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Introduction

Adoette Vaughan
Major: International Studies and French
Minor: Sustainability
Languages: French, Italian
What interests me: experiencing different cultures
Simply being able to communicate in another language and fit in anywhere
Introduction

Joshua Jacobs
Major: Classical Studies
Minor: Jewish Studies
Languages: Classical Hebrew, Old Aramaic, Latin, Ancient Greek

Why I study language: humans, past and present, are inherently interesting

I love to see continuities and differences between ancient and modern civilizations.
Layers of Reading Comprehension

1. Vocabulary

2. Grammar

3. Approaching a text/Translating
Reading Comprehension (Vocabulary Acquisition)

**Repetition**: a little work every day is better than prolonged sessions less frequently

**Flashcards**: learning vocabulary is very helpful with context, but rote memorization is an efficient way to acquire vocab
Reading Comprehension (Vocabulary Acquisition)

**Media**: improving reading comprehension can involve many formats

**Phone**: setting your phone in another language forces you to interact with new vocabulary on a daily basis.

**Music**: frequently listening to music in your studied language can be a great vocabulary building tool especially if memorizing the lyrics works for you.
Repetition: again, spending time with grammatical topics a little bit every day will help to ingrain topics (noun/verb paradigms, verb synopses, etc.)

Office Hours: if there is a topic you do not understand, do not hesitate to bring it to your professor

Quizzes and Tests: take advantage of assessments as opportunities to remind yourself, or improve knowledge, of paradigms, grammatical structures, etc.

WLLC (Weekly) Events: add wldhs@uark.edu to your Outlook calendar, or follow uarkwldhs on Instagram
Reading Comprehension (Approaching a text)

**Literature:** read through the assigned material once, underlying any words preventing you from essential understanding.

Aim to gain a sense of the mood, themes, and characters keeping in mind the genre and time period.

Read through the material again this time translating a few words that remain a problem.

Write the translations out in the margins so that you’re forced to recall the word’s meaning.
Reading Comprehension (Approaching a text)

Textbook: take notes on any rule you’re unfamiliar with or that may take more practice

Try to rewrite what you’ve read in the textbook in your own words

In the end, repetition will be the key to mastery.
Reading Comprehension (Approaching a text)

**Classroom:** look for keywords in an unfamiliar passage and use them as the basis of your interpretation.

**Testing:** if you’re allowed to consult a dictionary, use it sparingly as it can be time-consuming. Read over question and any possible answers twice.

**Outside Practice:** spend some time with texts outside of class on a daily basis (e.g., follow a news outlet in target language on social media)

**Translations:** this skill is a process
Translation Example

Translationese: We come among the monuments: my man began to make at the tombstones, I withdraw singing, and I count tombstones.

English: We arrived at some monuments, and my friend began to relieve himself. I gave him some privacy, singing and counting the tombstones.

Culture and language inform each other: meaning is not only found in grammar and syntax!
Reading Comprehension (Translating Tools)
Another great thing about word reference is it gives multiple translations depending on intended use.
Circumlocution: using more words where fewer would do can help build fluency in writing and speaking.

Use vocabulary and grammatical formations you’re familiar with while writing.

Translation: Write out sticking-points in English and then do your best to communicate your message in the foreign language.

Try not to rely too heavily on translating services.

Imitation: read articles or literary works that resemble your written assignment.
Writing (Ancient)

**Imitation:** we are bound by the ways we see the language used in ancient texts, so imitate that style and content as much as possible.

**Practice:** writing translations in an ancient language demonstrates an active mastery of grammar and vocabulary that can be very helpful.

**Creative Assignments:** these are a great tool for students to get out of their comfort zone and use the target language in new ways.
Closing Thoughts

Have fun!

Learn the language in ways you enjoy

Do things in line with what motivated you to start learning the language

Look back on your growth