

## The Effect of Using Authentic Reading Materials on the Reading Comprehension of Ninth-grade EFL Students in Jordan and on their Attitudes towards Reading\*

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of using authentic reading materials on the reading comprehension of Jordanian ninth-grade EFL students and on their attitudes toward reading. The subjects of the study were thirty-three students at Um Tufail Secondary School for Girls (Amman) who comprised the control group, and twenty students at Jordan University Model School who comprised the experimental group. Three instruments were used: Eight authentic reading passages, a reading attitude questionnaire, and a reading comprehension test. Data were analyzed using means, standard deviations, and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The results showed that using authentic reading materials significantly improved the reading comprehension and reading attitudes of students in the experimental group. Therefore, the researchers recommended that more authentic reading materials be included in ninth-grade textbooks, and teachers introduce students to different sources of authentic reading materials, such as magazines, brochures, and the Internet. (**Keywords:** Authentic reading materials, Reading comprehension, Attitudes towards reading, EFL, Jordan).

### Introduction

Reading is an important language skill because it introduces non-native speakers to other cultures and helps them to acquire new experiences, especially with the growing interest in using the Internet to communicate globally. Wallace (1991) identifies three major purposes for reading; reading for survival, reading for learning, and reading for pleasure. Both reading for survival and reading for learning are goal oriented, while reading for pleasure is done for its own sake. Therefore, the real challenge for the reading teachers is how to get students to read for varied purposes other than passing exams.

Many researchers believe that a reading text should be authentic, naturally occurring in the target culture, and not specifically written for language teaching because the process of simplification may result in a reading passage that is more difficult to understand than the original. Adequate exposure to authentic material can also promote positive reading

### أثر استخدام المواد القرائية الأصلية باللغة الإنجليزية في الاستيعاب القرائي وفي اتجاهات طلبة الصف التاسع الأساسي في الأردن نحو القراءة

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ملخص: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء أثر استخدام المواد القرائية الأصلية باللغة الإنجليزية في الاستيعاب القرائي وفي اتجاهات طلبة الصف التاسع الأساسي في الأردن نحو القراءة. تكونت عينة الدراسة من (33) طالبة في مدرسة أم طفيل الثانوية للبنات (عمان) مثلن المجموعة الضابطة، و(20) طالباً وطالبة في المدرسة النموذجية التابعة للجامعة الأردنية مثلوا المجموعة التجريبية. تم استخدام ثلاث أدوات لجمع بيانات الدراسة هي: ثماني قطع قرائية أصلية، واستبانة لقياس اتجاهات الطلبة نحو القراءة، واختبار لقياس الاستيعاب القرائي. وتحليل البيانات تم استخدام المتوسطات الحسابية والانحرافات المعيارية وتحليل التباين المصاحب (ANCOVA). أظهرت نتائج الدراسة بأن استخدام المواد القرائية الأصلية قد حسن بدرجة كبيرة الاستيعاب القرائي لدى طلبة المجموعة التجريبية كما حسن اتجاهاتهم نحو القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية. وفي ضوء هذه النتائج أوصى الباحثان بأن تتضمن كتب اللغة الإنجليزية للصف التاسع عدداً أكبر من المواد القرائية الأصلية وأن يعرف المعلمون طلبتهم بمصادر متعددة للمواد القرائية الأصلية مثل المجلات والنشرات واستخدام الانترنت. (الكلمات المفتاحية: المواد القرائية الأصلية، الاستيعاب القرائي، الاتجاهات نحو القراءة، اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية، الأردن).

attitudes among their students by providing them with a variety of interesting reading in materials magazines, newspapers, books, encyclopedias, and other reference materials. Using authentic materials such as news, sports, wedding announcements, birthday invitations, and advertisements of food, clothing, furniture, or travel improves students' reading comprehension (Swaffar, 1985; Bacon, 1987; Bell, 1998; Wallace, 1992; Nash and Yun- Pi, 1992; Guariento and Morley 2001; Kelly, et al. 2002; and Carbery and Yoshida, 2003).

In selecting appropriate authentic reading materials for EFL students, Walz (1998) points out that the World Wide Web is the best source available for reading because it provides learners with a wide range of web sites and provides accessibility to all kinds of information. She adds that because EFL students hardly ever speak the language after leaving the school, they will keep their skills and get access to a world beyond traditional borders.

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However, the majority of L2 learning texts at the beginning and intermediate levels still depend on simplified input, and many material writers and L2 specialists continue to emphasize the practical value of simplified texts, especially for beginning and intermediate L2 learners. Teachers and researchers who criticize the use of authentic texts in beginning and intermediate classrooms often do so because they believe that L2 learners find it difficult to process congruently all the stages of linguistic input found in an authentic text. For this reason, they feel that authentic texts may not only be too lexically and syntactically complex for L2 learners, but also too conceptually and culturally dense for successful understanding (McLaughlin, 1987; McLaughlin, Rossman, & McLeod, 1983; Shook, 1997; and Young, 1999).

Regarding the empirical studies conducted on the effect of using authentic reading materials on students' reading comprehension and reading attitudes, most results have revealed significant effect of using such materials. For example, Allen et al. (1988) examined the extent to which upper intermediate French, Spanish, and German students could cope with different authentic texts chosen from different sources, such as newspapers, magazines, personal letters, and business correspondence. The results showed that the students could clearly cope with lengthy authentic reading texts without experiencing any frustration. Gonzalez (1990) also exposed forty-three students to a supplementary authentic material that had a cultural component. An attitude questionnaire and an achievement pretest and posttest were used to collect data. The results revealed that students not only responded favorably to the use of authentic materials, but also practiced the linguistic forms much better than studying non-authentic materials. Young (1993) compared the effect of using authentic reading texts vs. edited reading texts on the attitudes and the reading comprehension of 49 Spanish students. Data were collected by using think-aloud tasks, recall protocols, and interviews. The results showed that all students comprehended significantly more from the authentic passages than from the edited ones. The majority of students also responded more favorably to the authentic passage than to the edited ones.

In Germany, Mainenti (1997) instructed secondary stage students with a variety of aural, video and printed authentic materials for eleven weeks to investigate the role of using authentic reading materials in improving students' attitudes towards reading. The results revealed an overwhelming preference for the use of authentic materials over textbook-based materials. They also showed that exposure to authentic materials created positive attitudes toward unmodified reading passages, and lowered students' affective filters.

Bell (2001) investigated the effect of using extensive reading materials on the reading comprehension of two groups of elementary level learners (n=26) at the British Council English Language

Centre in Sana'a, Yemen. A multiple choice reading comprehension was used to collect the data. The results showed that students' freedom to select material according to their interests helped them achieve substantial improvements in their understanding of the material compared to exposing students to modified materials.

Alshamrani (2003) investigated the attitudes of a group of ESL students in Pennsylvania about reading authentic texts. The data was collected through using multiple qualitative methods including interviewing, document analysis, notes, and email follow-ups. The results showed that regardless of various reading difficulties they encountered, students had positive attitudes toward reading authentic texts and were willing to read after the course had finished.

Ghaith and Bouzeineddine (2003) explored the relationship between one hundred Lebanese EFL students' interest in the reading material and their achievement in reading. Two questionnaires and a reading comprehension test were used to collect the data. The results indicated that students who were interested in the materials were more likely to persist in reading than their uninterested counterparts, and reading attitudes and reading achievement were positively related.

Lin (2004) compared the effects of using authentic and non-authentic materials on the attitudes and reading comprehension of Taiwanese EFL learners. A reading comprehension test and a questionnaire were used to collect the data. The results revealed that the participants who used authentic materials from newspapers, magazines, and brochures had significantly higher reading comprehension scores than those who did not. It was concluded that that EFL teachers carefully select authentic materials for supplementary materials encouraging students to read real life texts and understand more cultural differences.

Tella and Akande (2007) examined the reading habits of one hundred and fifty (150) primary school pupils randomly drawn from ten (10) schools in Botswana. A questionnaire, "Children Reading Habits/Books Availability Scale" was used to gather data. The results revealed that inadequate book availability, lack of interesting children's literature, and watching television hindered pupils from developing the habit of reading extensively. It was recommended that children's literature be made available in all primary schools, teacher's help students find interesting books to read, and parents develop an interest in reading for their children.

In Jordan, Ali (1994) investigated the influence of language simplification on the comprehensibility of English texts by Jordanian 12th grade female students in Al-Karak District. The sample consisted of 120 twelve-grade literary stream students. An original text (vocabulary and syntax were not simplified), and a lexically and syntactically simplified text were used. The results showed that students who were exposed to

the simplified reading texts comprehended significantly better than those who were exposed to original non-simplified texts. Another study was conducted by Bani Abdelrahman (2006) to investigate the effect of using authentic materials on eleventh grade EFL students' reading comprehension. The sample of the study consisted of 72 students assigned to two groups. The results of study revealed that the use of authentic materials had a significant positive effect on students' reading comprehension.

#### **Statement of the problem**

Exposing Jordanian EFL students to authentic reading texts has been deemed necessary since Jordan adopted the communicative approach in the 1980s. English is no more regarded as a school subject, but rather an experience which students should acquire through communicative classroom activities. For example, it is stated in the General Guidelines and Curricula for the Basic and Secondary Stages (2002 : 7) "The experience of learning a foreign language is of great educational value, significantly enriching the learner's awareness and appreciation of his own language and culture as well as introducing him to other cultures and ways of life and thinking. It is also stated in the General Guidelines and General and Specific Outcomes for the English Language: Basic and Secondary Stages (2006) that "Students are expected to read and understand both simplified and authentic texts of both general nature and technical language, P. 10); "Students are expected to read, to understand and respond to written English in a variety of authentic informational and literary contexts, P. 49)

However, the reading passages in the ninth-grade textbook do not seem to achieve those objectives. For example, passages like "Himalayas", "Books and Printing", "Al-Andalus", "Making glass", or "Brain Function" are more informational than communicative by nature. Students rarely need the ideas or the vocabulary in such passages in their real life. In fact, many Jordanian EFL teachers complained that their students often felt bored reading about such topics, because they did not directly relate to students' interests and needs. This, according to teachers, negatively affected students' reading comprehension gains. The researchers themselves- being teachers and supervisors of English for more than ten years- have also noticed that most students were mainly interested in answering the reading comprehension questions, doing the grammar exercises and memorizing the meanings of new vocabulary items only in order to pass the test. This implies that students took reading more as duty than pleasure. Therefore, the researchers proposed that exposing EFL students to authentic reading materials could have a positive effect on the reading attitudes and the reading comprehension of those students.

#### **Purpose and questions of the study**

The present study aimed at investigating whether or not exposing ninth- grade EFL students to authentic reading materials would improve their reading

comprehension and attitudes towards reading English. To achieve the purpose of the study, the following questions were addressed:

1. Are there any statistically significant differences ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the reading comprehension mean scores of Jordanian ninth grade EFL students that can be attributed to the type of the reading material (authentic vs. non-authentic)?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the mean scores of Jordanian ninth grade EFL students with regard to their attitudes towards reading, which can be attributed to the type of the reading material (authentic vs. non- authentic)?

#### **Significance of the study**

There has been a divide within the field of second language (L2) materials development over the use of authentic reading texts versus the use of simplified reading texts as the means of language input for beginning and intermediate L2 learners (Day and Bamford, 1998). This may explain why the two local studies conducted in Jordan by Ali (1994) and by Bani Abdelrahman (2006) revealed inconsistent results.

The present study can be considered significant because: (1) it came as a response to the recommendations of the two local studies mentioned above; (2) it was the first study in Jordan which investigated the effect of using authentic materials on the reading comprehension of basic stage students; and (3) it was the first study in Jordan which investigated the effect of using authentic materials of students' attitudes towards reading.

Therefore, the researchers hoped that the results of the present study would give the EFL curricula planners, textbook authors, and teachers in Jordan more insights into the relevance of the present reading materials to basic stage students, and judge more accurately the value of including different authentic texts in the EFL curricula.

#### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms were operationally defined after surveying related literature to achieve the purpose of this study:

**Authentic reading materials:** Omaggio (1986:128) writes: The term "authentic materials" means different things to different people. For some, only that language generated by native speakers and for native speakers is "authentic"; for others, it refers to the language that occurs originally as a genuine act of communication that reflects the features likely to occur in unmodified discourse. According to Simensen (1987: 42-43), there are three types of reading materials: (a) authentic readers, not written for pedagogic purposes; (b) pedagogic readers, specially written for EFL/ESL students; and (c) adapted readers, which have been adapted from authentic texts.

In this study, "authentic reading materials" refer to the materials which are used for the genuine everyday communication and not designed specifically for the teaching and learning purposes. Typical sources for

selecting such materials include the Internet, magazines, TV programs, newspapers, brochures and posters.

**Non-authentic reading materials:** Compared to the authentic materials described above, the “non- authentic reading materials” refer to the reading materials which are designed for classroom use and not for everyday communication. Therefore, some lexical items and grammatical constructions were adapted or simplified to suit ninth grade EFL students in Jordan.

**Reading comprehension:** According to Nuttall (2000), language is simply the vehicle conveying the writer's message, whereas in language classrooms the message is too often the vehicle conveying the language. Ramirez, (1995) considers reading an interaction between the reader and the writer and between the reader and the text in order to achieve the intended purpose. Hock and Mellard (2005) consider reading comprehension a collective term under which come a number of skills such as identifying the main idea of a passage, summarizing the content of a text, generating questions about the information in the text and looking for clues that answer those questions. (193)

The researchers used the term "reading comprehension" in this study to refer to the ability of Jordanian ninth grade-EFL students to answer the comprehension questions that were designed to measure the different comprehension levels (i.e.: literal, inferential and evaluative) in addition to vocabulary recognition .

**Reading attitudes:** Reading attitude is defined differently by different researchers. According to Ramirez (1995: 165), "Attitudes refer to the set of beliefs that a learner holds about the community and people who speak the target language". Alexander and Filler (1976: 1) define reading attitudes as "A system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation". Smith (1990: 215) writes "A reading attitude refers to a state of mind, accompanied by feelings and emotions that make reading more or less probable". Reeves (2002) argues that there is considerable agreement among researchers that reading attitudes has three major components: beliefs, feelings and practices.

For the purposes of the present study, the term "reading attitudes" is used to refer to Jordanian ninth-grade EFL students' beliefs, feelings and practices as measured by a specially prepared questionnaire.

#### **The population and sample of the study**

The population of the study consisted of all schools which have first secondary grade in Amman district during the academic year 2005/2006. Two schools were selected to conduct this study: Um Tufail Secondary School for Girls which had three ninth -grade sections, and Jordan University Model School which had two sections. One ninth-grade section (33 students) from Um Tufail School and one section (20 students) from Jordan University Model School were selected randomly. Those two sections were randomly assigned to the control group and to the experimental group. It is

worth mentioning that teachers of both sections had BA in English Language and Literature from a public Jordanian university, more than ten years of experience in teaching upper basic stage students, and were willing to cooperate with the researchers to achieve the purposes of this study.

#### **Instrumentations**

The three research instruments used to achieve the purposes of this study were:

- 1- Authentic reading passages: The researchers selected eighteen reading passages from the Internet to replace the reading passages in the ninth grade textbook. The titles of those passages were: "The World's Shortest Comprehensive Recycling Guide," "The Art of Eating," "International Gift-Giving Customs," "How to Write a Resume and Reference list," " Interview Tips," "Traffic Signs," "First Aid (Wounds)," "Survival English for Travelers," "Sports," "Exercise with Health," "Personal Advice Columns," "Business Etiquette," "Proverbs," "Seven Steps to Feeling Good About," "British Social Customs," "Music's Important Influence," "Traffic Signs (Warning sign)," and "The Importance of the Internet for Teens". Eight of those passages were later selected by the referees as the most relevant to the students.
- 2- A reading attitude questionnaire: The researchers surveyed related literature in order to develop a questionnaire that would measure students' attitudes towards reading. Most of the items of the questionnaire in its original form were based on the works of Wong and Choir (1995), Lee (1995), and Bamford and Day (1997). Those items mainly elicited students' beliefs, practices and feelings towards reading. Some of the items that suited ESL or English native speakers were modified by the researchers to suit EFL students.
- 3- A reading comprehension test. This was a two – fold test: the pre- test and the post- test. The researchers prepared some comprehension and vocabulary questions based on the two reading passages which were assigned for the pre-test and the post –test. The researchers also prepared model answers for all questions. Those questions and answers were later modified as suggested by the referees.

#### **Validity of the research instruments**

To validate the selected reading passages, a panel of twelve EFL referees (eight EFL university professors, two English supervisors, and two experienced teachers) was asked to select the most relevant eight authentic reading passages out of the eighteen passages suggested by the researchers. The referees were provided with a set of definitions of authentic reading materials derived from related literature to make their task easy. The eight passages selected by those referees were: "First Aid (Wounds)," "Proverbs," "Seven Steps to Feeling Good," "British Social Customs," " Traffic Signs (Warning sign)," "The Art of Eating," "Exercise with Health," and

"The Importance of the Internet for Teens. (See Appendix A).

The same twelve referees were asked to validate the attitude questionnaire. Those referees considered the following items irrelevant, and so they were deleted: "Authentic reading materials teach proper English," "Authentic reading materials help me to enrich my experience to deal with the outside world," "Authentic reading materials help me to shape my personality," "Authentic reading materials provide me with the knowledge I need," "Authentic reading materials develop my creativity and imagination," and "Authentic reading materials provide me with a long term memory." The referees also added the following items: "Reading English gives me pleasure," "I only read English to answer comprehension questions," "Reading English materials help me understand the world around me," and "I feel encouraged if someone asks me to share what I read with him." Other comments were related to fixing some editing mistakes and rephrasing some other items. The questionnaire was then modified accordingly, resulting in a thirty-item questionnaire which was finally approved by all the twelve referees (See Appendix B).

Concerning the reading comprehension pretest and posttest, the referees selected two unseen reading passages from the students' textbook "Flood in Bangladesh" for the pre-test and "The story of making glass" for the posttest. Accordingly, the researchers prepared the two comprehension tests with their model answers and asked the referees to validate them. The referees required that the types of questions include both closed and open-ended questions, and measure surface and deep understanding of the text. They also changed the marks allotted for each question. The referees deleted two wh- questions from the pre test and four questions from the post test. All the referees' comments were taken into consideration in writing up the final version of the test (See Appendix C).

#### Reliability of the instruments

The reliability of the questionnaire was established by using test-retest method where Pearson correlation Coefficient was .61. This value was considered satisfactory since, according to some statisticians, responses to attitude questionnaires are generally less stable than achievement tests, or performance tests. The test- retest method was also used to establish the reliability of the reading comprehension test where Pearson Correlation Coefficient was .91. Inter- rater reliability regarding the open ended questions of the reading comprehension tests, the two researchers corrected a sample of ten papers independently. There was more than 94% consensus on the marks, and so the researchers continued to correct the rest of papers and the final marks were averaged for each student in each group (the experimental and the control group).

#### Procedure

To achieve the purposes of this study, the following procedure was used:

- 1- Eighteen authentic reading passages were suggested by the researchers from which the referees selected eight for implementation of this study.
2. An attitudinal scale and a reading comprehension test were developed by the researchers based on literature.
3. The reading comprehension test, the attitudinal scale, and the reading passages were validated by twelve EFL referees.
4. Ratability of the research instruments was established prior to implementation.
5. Implementation of the study lasted for two months during the second semester 2005-2006.
6. Data was then collected and analyzed

#### The variables of the study

This quasi-experimental study had one independent variable (i.e. the reading material) which had two levels: authentic reading material and non-authentic reading material. The two dependent variables of the study were the reading comprehension means scores of Jordanian ninth- grade EFL students and their mean scores regarding their attitudes towards reading.

#### Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations. In addition, (ANCOVA) was used to find out whether the differences in the mean scores of students in both groups were statistically significant ( $\alpha \leq .05$ ).

#### The results

**The results related to the first question:** "Are there any statistically significant differences ( $\alpha \leq .05$ ) in the reading comprehension mean scores of Jordanian ninth-grade EFL students which can be attributed to the type of the reading material (authentic vs. non-authentic)?"

To answer this question, adjusted mean scores and standard errors were calculated for both groups. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Adjusted mean scores and standard errors regarding reading comprehension.**

Group	Adjusted Mean scores	Standard. Error
Control	15.158	1.037
Experimental	24.177	1.528

Table 1 shows that the reading comprehension adjusted mean score of students of the control group was 15.158, while the adjusted mean score of students' of the experimental group was 24.177. This means that the difference was in favor of students of the experimental group. To find whether those differences were statistically significant ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), ANCOVA was used. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Analysis of covariance regarding reading comprehension.**

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Authentic vs. non-authentic materials	450.619	1	450.619	17.938	.000*

Table 2 shows that there were statistically significant differences ( $\alpha \leq .05$ ) in students' reading comprehension mean scores. Those differences were in favor of students in the experimental group. This means that using authentic reading materials significantly improved students' reading comprehension.

**The results related to the second question:** "Are there any statistically significant differences ( $\alpha \leq .05$ ) in reading attitude mean scores of Jordanian ninth grade EFL students which can be attributed to the type of the reading material (authentic vs. non-authentic)?"

To answer this question, the adjusted mean scores and standard errors were calculated for both groups. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Adjusted means scores and standard errors regarding attitudes towards reading.**

Group	Adjusted Mean scores	Standard Error
Control	93.803	1.629
Experimental	102.543	2.266

Table 3 shows that the adjusted mean score of students of the control group with regard to attitudes toward reading English was 93.8, while the mean score of students of the experimental group was 102.5. This means that students in the experimental group developed more positive attitudes toward reading in English compared to their counterparts in the control group. To find whether those differences were statistically significant ( $\alpha \leq .05$ ), ANCOVA was used. The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Analysis of covariance regarding attitudes towards reading.**

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Authentic vs. non-authentic materials	678.613	1	678.613	8.327	.006*

Table 4 shows that there were statistically significant differences ( $\alpha \leq .05$ ) in the students' attitudes towards reading English due to using authentic materials. Those differences were in favor of the students in the experimental group. This means that using authentic reading materials significantly improved the reading attitudes of the students in the experimental group.

## Discussion

The results of the first question showed that the reading comprehension mean scores of the students who were exposed to the authentic reading materials were significantly higher than the mean scores of the students who were exposed to the non-authentic materials. This indicates that using the authentic reading materials was effective in improving the reading comprehension of students of the treatment group. One possible reason for this result could be that the process of adapting the reading passages in students' textbooks could have resulted in unnatural vocabulary and choppy syntax, which might have complicated the text. The process of simplification of the reading passages might have caused more difficulty for students to understand them than understanding the authentic passages, because cohesion, coherence, and discourse structure might have been impaired. The removal of complex linguistic forms in favor of more simplified and frequent forms could have denied learners the opportunity to learn the natural forms of language. As a result, the authentic texts were more comprehensible and therefore had a greater communicative value for students in the treatment group than simplified texts (Widdowson, 1978; Honeyfield, 1979; Meisel, 1980; Krashen, 1985; and Long and Ross, 1993).

Another reason could be that the students who were exposed to the authentic reading materials such as "First Aid (Wounds)"; "Seven Steps to Feeling Good"; "Traffic Signs (Warning sign)"; and "Exercise with Health" found those passages more interesting and relevant to their needs than the non-authentic ones such as "Natural Disasters"; "Earthquakes"; "Inventors and Inventing"; "Himalayas"; "Books and Printing"; "Al-Andalus"; "Making Glass"; and "Brain Function". Those non-authentic passages seemed to be more informative than communicative, because students were not likely to deal with them or use the vocabulary in them in their daily encounters. Foreign language learners need to be introduced to enriched context such as authentic texts so that they can use functional language and see language in its entirety. Therefore, the content of the reading material must be interesting, meets the real life needs of learners, adequately representing the culture of the target society and having moderate linguistic complexity for students taught (Goodman, 1986 and Gebhard, 1987).

The students who were exposed to the authentic reading materials were excited to browse the Internet for other interesting topics which they brought to the classroom to share others. Examples of those topics were: "Customs and Traditions"; "Bleeding"; "Exercise for Health"; and "What Should I Eat?". Students in the treatment group were able to express their points of view of what they read through authentic tasks such as role-play, simulations, negotiation of meaning and personal reflections. This, in turn, seemed to have provided those students with more vocabulary, which helped them to understand the reading texts much better

than students who were exposed to non-authentic tasks (Ahellal, 1990 and Nuttall, 2000).

The result of the first question is consistent with the results of many other studies (Johnson, 1981; Allen et al., 1988; Bell, 2001; Lin, 2004; and Bani Abdelrahman, 2006), which showed that exposing L2 to authentic texts helped them achieve substantial improvements in their understanding of the material compared to exposing them to modified materials.

The results of the second question also showed that exposing students to authentic materials improved their attitudes towards reading. One possible explanation for this is that authentic texts enabled the students of the treatment group to enjoy and understand those texts much better than the non-authentic ones, and so they developed more positive attitudes towards reading. Teachers could not have helped students improve their reading ability if they had not been able to help them overcome negative attitudes towards reading. Nothing builds a positive attitude towards reading better than the ability to read well and understand. Students may fail to find value in reading if their reading-related activities seem meaningless and are not authentic. Students need to read materials that mean something important to them and that expose them to new and different environments (Bacon and Carmeron, 1987 and Howard, 1987).

Another explanation is that using authentic materials such as "Customs and Traditions"; "Proverbs," "The Art of Eating," "International Gift-Giving Customs," and "British Social Customs," might have given students in the treatment group the chance to see how people in other cultures behave or live, which encouraged them to compare those cultural norms with their own. In other words, such materials seemed to have brought life into the classroom by giving students a virtual access to the target culture, and helping them to do communicative tasks rather than merely demonstrate knowledge of grammar points or lexical items as their counterparts did (Kelly, et al. 2002 and Kilickaya, 2004).

The results of the second question are supported by the results of many other studies (Shapiro and White, 1991; Barnett and Irwin, 1994; Guthrie et al., 1995; Mainenti, 1997; Besco, 1998; Schumacher, 2001; Ghaith and Bouzeineddine, 2003; and Alshamrani, 2003). Those results showed that students receiving basal instruction had less positive attitudes toward reading than their counterparts receiving whole language instruction, because whole language materials allowed for self-expression and fostered more willingness to read more often. Children in the traditional classroom also liked to read less while students who read trade books and didn't have to complete worksheet for reading read better and liked to read more often. Exposure to authentic materials created more positive attitudes among students toward unmodified reading passages and exerted a greater influence on their reading comprehension compared with exposure to modified texts.

It can be noticed from the results of the two questions of the present study that using authentic materials not only improved the reading comprehension of students, but also their attitudes towards reading. This may indicate that reading attitudes and reading achievement were positively related. This is supported by the results of many other studies (Gonzalez, 1990; Young, 1993; Yano and Long, 1994; Yamashita, 2004; and Tella and Akande, 2007), which indicated that the relationship between reading ability and attitude grows stronger over time and the better students read, the better their attitudes toward reading will be. Only the results of two studies (Ali, 1994 and Peacock, 1996) contradicted the above-mentioned results.

#### **Implications and recommendations:**

The results of this study showed that exposing EFL students to authentic reading materials not only improved their reading comprehension, but also their attitudes towards reading. If non-native speakers have no chance to encounter the target language and culture outside school, they should -at least- have the opportunity to read authentic texts and do authentic tasks in the classroom. Rather than simplifying language, it should be embedded in meaningful contexts through the use of authentic text (Cummins, 1981). Developing positive attitudes towards the target culture may reduce any prospective culture shock for the non-native speakers and minimize the social distance between students' native culture and the non-native culture because a lot of cultural stereotype can be eliminated by this exposure (Schumann, 1976).

Therefore, EFL textbook authors and curriculum planners in Jordan are advised to include more authentic reading materials -or at least balance both the authentic and the modified reading texts- in the school textbooks, so that students have ample opportunities to read a variety of materials that are real and interesting. Teachers are also advised to provide their students with different sources of authentic materials, such as magazines, brochures, and the Internet to make reading more relevant and interesting to them. On the other hand, students should be encouraged-both at school and at home- to spend some of their own time reading books or magazines, looking up information on the Internet, or browsing for authentic materials in local library. It is likely that allotting more time for extensive reading will improve both their reading skills and their attitudes towards reading English.

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**Appendix A: Sample authentic reading passages**

(كما وردت من المصدر)

Woodlands Junior School	British Social Customs		
England Manners and Etiquette in Britain .... British Manners ... English social customs			
You are here: Homepage > England Home > Social Customs - the dos and don't			
Eating Etiquette	Dos and Don'ts	Daily Life	Traditional Foods

## What are Britain's Social Customs?

**Time**  
British people place considerable value on punctuality. If you agree to meet friends at three o'clock, you can bet that they'll be there just after three. Since Britains are so time conscious, the pace of life may seem very rushed. In Britain, people make great effort to arrive on time. It is often considered impolite to arrive even a few minutes late. If you are unable to keep an appointment, it is expected that you call the person you are meeting. Some general tips follow.



**You should arrive:**

- \* At the exact time specified – for dinner, lunch, or appointments with professors, doctors, and other professionals.
- \* Any time during the hours specified for teas, receptions, and cocktail parties.
- \* A few minutes early: for public meetings, plays, concerts, movies, sporting events, classes, church services, and weddings.

If you are invited to someone's house for dinner at half past seven, they will not expect you to be there on the dot. It is considered good manners to arrive ten to fifteen minutes "late". An invitation might state "7.30 for 8", in which case you should arrive no later than 7.50. However, if an invitation says "sharp", you must arrive in plenty of time.

**Invitations**  
"Drop in anytime" and "come see me soon" are idioms often used in social settings but seldom meant to be taken literally. It is wise to telephone before visiting someone at home. If you receive a written invitation to an event that says "RSVP," you should respond to let the person who sent the invitation know whether or not you plan to attend.

Never accept an invitation unless you really plan to go. You may refuse by saying, "Thank you for inviting me, but I will not be able to come." If, after accepting, you are unable to attend, be sure to tell those expecting you as far in advance as possible that you will not be there.

Although it is not necessarily expected that you give a gift to your host, it is considered polite to do so, especially if you have been invited for a meal.

Flowers, chocolate, or a small gift are all appropriate. A thank-you note or telephone call after the visit is also considered polite and is an appropriate means to express your appreciation for the invitation.

**Dress**

Everyday dress is appropriate for most visits to peoples' homes. You may want to dress more formally when attending a holiday dinner or cultural event, such as a concert or theater performance.

**Introduction and Greeting**

It is proper to shake hands with everyone to whom you are introduced, both men and women. An appropriate response to an introduction is "I am happy to meet you". If you want to introduce yourself to someone, extend you hand for a handshake and say "Hello, I am....". Hugging is only for friends.

**Dining**

When you accept a dinner invitation, tell your host if you have any dietary restrictions. He or she will want to plan a meal that you can enjoy. The evening meal is the main meal of the day in most parts of Britain.

Food may be served in one of several ways: "family style," by passing the serving plates from one to another around the dining table; "buffet style," with guests serving themselves at the buffet; and "serving style," with the host filling each plate and passing it to each person. Guests usually wait until everyone at their table has been served before they begin to eat. Food is eaten with a knife and fork and dessert with a spoon and fork.

[Click here for more Eating Manners](#)

[Also visit our page on Dos and Don'ts in Britain](#)

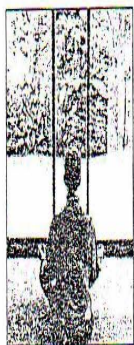
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# Social

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## HEALTH: Exercise for Health



Life in the 21st Century is on the whole more sedentary than it was a generation or two ago. At the risk of creating stereotypes, it is probably not far from the truth to say that, for a significant proportion of us, a typical day comprises driving to work then sitting for 8 hours or more at an office desk before driving back home and collapsing on the sofa for the evening. At weekends we might manage a walk around the park or shops. Overall it is surprisingly easy for weeks to pass by with our exertion limited to climbing the stairs to bed! Unfortunately our health suffers as a consequence.

Exercise has been shown to have many benefits both in the healthy, for prevention of illness, and for the treatment of certain conditions. It would not be an unfair statement that we are relatively inactive as a nation.



### WHY SHOULD YOU EXERCISE?

Regular exercise has been shown to lessen the risk of developing atheroma, which causes angina and heart attacks. In addition, other risk factors for heart disease such as blood pressure, stress and body weight all, on average, tend to be lower in people who regularly exercise compared with those who don't.

Exercise not only helps to keep weight under control and thereby reduce the risk of developing several of today's big killers, including heart disease and diabetes but also, by keeping muscles and ligaments strong and supple, helps prevent back, neck and muscular problems. The risk of developing osteoporosis is also lessened.

As well as all of these physical benefits, regular exercise has undoubtedly psychological benefits including a general feeling of wellbeing and an improved ability to deal with stress. There is even evidence that mild cases of depression can be helped with exercise.

### BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

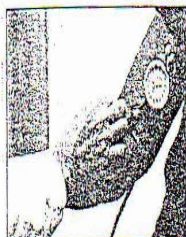
Inactivity causes progressive reduction in the capacity for physical work, decreased function of the heart, muscle strength and bone density. Regular exercise offers protection against coronary disease, decreases obesity and can lower cholesterol. It can reduce blood pressure, and those who take up

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## Social Pages - Health - Exercises for Health



exercise often stop smoking. Joints and muscular strength can be improved and osteoporosis prevented. Regular exercisers feel decreased depression, tension, fatigue, aggression and improved sleep patterns.



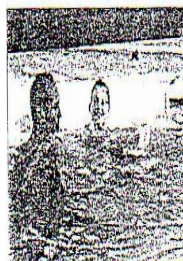
### HOW MUCH EXERCISE SHOULD YOU TAKE?

To gain health benefits you should do at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise, on most days (at least 5 days per week).

30 minutes in a day is probably the minimum to gain health benefits. However, you do not have to do this all at once. Several short bursts of activity are

thought to be equally as good. For example, three 10-minute sessions of activity at different times in a day. This may make it easier to fit exercise into a busy schedule. Try to increase the amount to 40-60 minutes per day if you can.

- Moderate exercise means that you get warm, mildly out of breath, and mildly sweaty. It does not have to be intense. However, a study published in 2003 suggests that the more vigorous the exercise, the better for health - particularly for preventing heart disease.
- On most days. You cannot 'store up' the benefits of exercise. You need to do it regularly.



### WHAT SORT OF EXERCISE?

Anything that makes your heart rate increase, and makes you at least mildly out of breath. For example: brisk walking, jogging, swimming, cycling, dancing, etc.

You can even use normal activities as part of your exercise routine. For example, fairly heavy housework or gardening can make you out of breath and sweaty. Consider a brisk walk to work, or to the shops, instead of using a car or bus, etc.



### WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXERCISE?

**Heart disease and stroke:** On average, the risk of developing heart disease such as angina or a heart attack is reduced by about a third in people who exercise compared to those who do not exercise. You are also less likely to have a stroke. Exercise is good for the heart muscle, but it also reduces some 'risk factors' for heart disease and stroke. For example, on average, blood pressure, cholesterol, and body weight are lower in people who regularly exercise compared with those who do not.

If you already have heart disease, regular exercise is usually advised as an important way to help prevent the heart disease from getting worse.

**Weight control:** Exercise helps to burn off excess fat. Regular exercise combined with a healthy diet is the best way of losing excess

weight, and to maintain a healthy body weight.

**Osteoporosis:** Regular exercise helps to prevent osteoporosis ('thinning of the bones'). The pulling and tugging on the bones by the muscles helps to stimulate bone-making cells, which strengthens the bones.

**Cancer:** Regular exercise roughly halves the chance of developing cancer of the colon (bowel cancer). There is also evidence that breast cancer is less common in women who exercise regularly.

**Mental health:** Exercise is thought to help:

- Ease stress, and improve your general well-being and self-esteem. It is difficult to measure 'stress'. However, many people find their level of stress is reduced by regular exercise.
  - Ease anxiety and mild depression.
  - Make you sleep better. (But do exercise during the day, not near to bedtime.)
- Older people: If you are over 70, you are less likely to fall and be injured if you exercise regularly.

#### ARE THERE ANY RISKS WITH EXERCISE?

- Injury. Sprains, and sometimes more serious injuries, are a risk if you do some types of exercise such as competitive sports. You can cut down the risk of injury by always warming up before any vigorous exercise, and by wearing the correct footwear.
- Endurance sports such as marathon running can cause stress fractures, fatigue, and cause menstrual periods to stop in some women.
- Sudden death sometimes occurs in people who are exercising. This is rare if you are used to moderate exercise. It is more likely to occur if you do not usually do much exercise, but then do a sudden bout of vigorous exercise such as an intense game of squash. However, even in this situation, sudden death is uncommon.
- If you gradually build up to do regular moderate exercise, the potential health gains greatly outweigh the small risks involved.



#### SOME OTHER POINTS ABOUT EXERCISE

If you have a medical condition that concerns you about exercising, then see a doctor before starting an exercise programme. However, there are few reasons why exercise may be harmful. A common wrong belief is that exercise may be "bad for the heart". On the contrary, exercise is good for most people with heart disease.

If you are unfit and not used to exercise, it is best to gradually build up your level of exercise.

One of the biggest obstacles is the uphill battle to become fit. Many people feel that the first few attempts at exercise

are quite a struggle. Do not get disheartened. You are likely to find that each time it becomes easier and more enjoyable.

- Try and keep exercise high on your list of priorities. If one kind of exercise becomes boring, try switching to other types to maintain the health benefits.
- Some people set their goals too high. For example, aiming for a marathon run. This may take too much time, you may lose enthusiasm, and exercise may become a drudge. Beware of this pitfall.
- Exercise is not just for young 'sporty' types. It is never too late to start to gain the benefits, no matter how old or unfit you are.
- The bottom line: Realistically, walking is likely to be the exercise chosen by many people. But, this is fine as brisk walking is an excellent moderate

## Appendix B: The reading attitude questionnaire

(كما وردت من المصدر)

Dear student:

This is a questionnaire which consists of thirty items with five options for each. The main purpose of the questionnaire is to identify your attitudes towards reading English. Please read each item carefully then tick the box that best applies to you (i.e. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree).

Your answers will be strictly confidential and they will be used for research purposes only. Therefore, you don't need to write your name, or the name of your school

Thank you so much for your cooperation

The Researcher g

No	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I like to read English in my free time.					
2.	Reading helps me form opinions.					
3.	Being able to read is the most important thing for doing well at school.					
4.	Being able to read well helps me to get a better job					
5.	Reading helps me a lot to understand how other people feel about things.					
6.	Reading is fun.					
7.	I get upset when I think about having to read any thing in English.					
8.	Reading helps me to learn new experiences.					
9.	Reading is one of my best daily activities.					
10.	When I read English, I cannot understand new words in the text.					
11.	I like to spend sometime reading books or magazines at the library.					
12.	When I read an interesting material, I share it with my friends.					
13.	When I read English, I usually get tired and sleepy.					
14.	Reading English gives me pleasure.					
15.	I like to read something that helps me in my life rather than reading for a test.					
16.	I only read English to answer comprehension questions.					

No	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17.	Reading English materials helps me understand the world around me.					
18.	Reading English improves other language skills I need.					
19.	Reading English also helps me read Arabic.					
20.	When I read English, I try to understand how other people think or behave.					
21.	Reading materials helps me to use language communicatively.					
22.	Reading English improves my critical thinking skills.					
23.	I only read what others ask me to.					
24.	I feel bored as soon I start to read English materials.					
25.	I do not consider myself a good reader in English.					
26.	I only like to read what I have a previous idea about.					
27.	I feel embarrassed if I do not know the meanings of some new words.					
28.	I feel encouraged if someone asks me to share what I read with him.					
29.	It takes me too much time to read a short passage in English.					
30.	I read English to increase my vocabulary.					

### Appendix C: The reading comprehension test with the model answers in bold

(كما وردت من المصدر)

	بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ	
University of Jordan	/50	Name:
Faculty of Educational Sciences	Post Test	Date:
Ninth Grade	Second Semester 2005/2006	Time: 30 min.

Read the following passage then answer the questions that follow. Use complete sentences.

Glass is an essential part of our modern way of life. If it weren't for glass, the world would be a darker, colder, and more dangerous place. We use glass to look through and to drink from. We make dozens of different things from glass, from light bulbs to television sets, from mirrors to microscopes. Techniques of mass production have given us cheap glass of high quality.

The main ingredient of glass is a kind of sand called silica ( $\text{SiO}_2$ ). Other ingredients are soda and limestone. Nowadays recycled broken glass is sometimes added to the mixture. When this mixture is heated to a very high temperature (about  $1500^\circ\text{C}$ ) it melts into a sticky liquid which can be shaped and moulded by a glassmaker. Colours can be added to the mixture when it is still very hot.

Until recently, most glass objects were made by blowing the glass into shape on the end of a pipe. Nowadays, very little glass is made in this way. Most glass is mass produced in factories. The glass is melted in huge furnaces then poured into moulds. One of the most common uses of glass today is to make windows for our houses. Nowadays we take glass windows for granted. But it was not until about a hundred years ago that people could afford to have glass windows in their homes. These glass windows were easily broken, but now there are stronger types of glass. One of these types of glass, laminated glass, is often used for shop windows and car windscreens. Laminated glass is much stronger than ordinary glass. Some kinds of laminated glass are bulletproof!

Another important use for glass is in the making of lenses. Lenses are pieces of curved glass which can make things look larger or smaller. Lenses are used in the making of cameras and glasses to help people see better. Darkened glass is used to make sunglasses. Some sunglasses are made of a special glass called photochromatic glass. Photochromatic glass becomes darker when the sun is bright and lighter when it is cloudy!

#### Questions

Question One: Answer the following based on the passage you have just read. Use complete sentences. (15)

1. How did techniques of mass production affect the price of glass? (3)

**They reduce the cost of production and made glass cheaper.**

2. What are the three main ingredients of glass? Write them on the lines provided. (3)

**a. silica ( $\text{SiO}_2$ )**

**b. soda**

**c. limestone**

3. What happens to the glass mixture when it is heated to about  $1500^\circ\text{C}$ ? (2)

**It melts and becomes a sticky liquid.**

4. How did the glassmakers use to shape the molten glass into the desired shapes? (3)

**They took some of the molten glass on the end of a pipe and blew air into it.**

5. Write down the names of two instruments that have lenses in them. (4)

**a. microscopes**

**b. cameras**

Question Two: Answer the following questions based on the passage you have just read. Use complete sentences. (10)

1. How do glass windows now differ from glass windows 200 years ago? (3)

**Glass windows are now found in every house and they are stronger.**

2. What kind of glass would be used in an important person's car (a king, a queen, a country's leader, etc.)? Explain why. (4)

**Laminated glass. It is strong and bulletproof so it can protect him/ her.**

3. How does photochromatic glass in sunglasses protect our eyes? (3)

**Photochromatic glass changes colour according to the brightness of the sun so it will protect the eyes against dangerous sun rays.**

Question Three: Are the following statements true or false? (10)

1. The invention of glass contributed to the safety of people. **true**

2. Glass has been found in houses since man started to build houses. **false**

3. The basic material of glass is sand. **true**

4. Glass fragments can be reused in producing new glass. **true**

5. Photochromatic glass is dark in colour. **false**