THE EFFECT OF CULTURAL CONTENT SCHEMATA ON EFL READING COMPREHENSION

(A CASE-STUDY OF SECOND YEAR INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE STATE OF BAHRAIN)

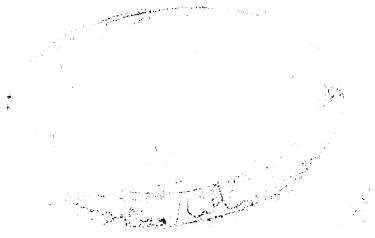
by

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent,

the Merciful.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

The Beneficent, the Merciful.

Master of the Day of Judgment.

Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help.

Keep us on the right path.

The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours.

Not (the path) of those upon whom Thy wrath is brought

down, nor of those who go astray.

The opening (Al Fatehah)

جامعة البحرين
المكتبة
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I DEDICATE THIS WORK TO

MY DEAR PARENTS, HUSBAND AND SON



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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of cultural content schemata on EFL reading comprehension at the Intermediate level in Bahrain. It attempts to examine whether EFL Intermediate students comprehend significantly better a text which is culturally familiar than a text which is culturally unfamiliar.

Subjects were two homogeneous groups of EFL Bahraini Intermediate level students. The actual number of students participating in the tests was 69. The reading materials representing both Bahraini native culture and a foreign culture, which is not related to Bahraini native culture, were designed for both groups. Two culture-specific texts were chosen as the testing materials. The adaptation of the materials was based on the idea that both texts should contain the same number of sentences, the same type of discourse structures, and should be at the same level of linguistic complexity. To better measure the subjects' comprehension of the texts, they were asked to read the texts and then answer some comprehension questions on each text.

Dependent and independent t-tests were used to analyze the data. The statistical analyses of results showed that the subjects comprehended the culturally familiar text significantly better than the culturally unfamiliar text. It was found that the culturally familiar text could improve the subjects' reading and writing skills, understanding grammatical structures, and increase the students' vocabulary. But the results showed no significant differences between both groups with regard to grammar.

The results of the study indicated that cultural content schemata play a significant role in EFL reading comprehension of Bahraini Intermediate students. And having cultural background knowledge of the content of a foreign language text may compensate for EFL students' low level of language proficiency. However, significant individual differences suggest that while cultural content of a text may facilitate comprehension of a foreign language text, the degree to which the background knowledge can facilitate the understanding of the text seems to depend on the reader's foreign language competence and reading skills. Implications for educational practice are that teachers of EFL Intermediate level students

should provide the students with appropriate background knowledge, especially cultural background knowledge. And they should attempt to choose reading materials, which are culturally familiar to the students.

Based on the findings of the study, it was also recommended that the content of Intermediate English textbooks should be re-examined and revised to include culturally familiar content.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

For more than a decade, there has been a great deal of attention directed toward reading English as a second language and English as a foreign language. A number of studies (Hudson, 1982; Devine, 1987) have been undertaken to investigate the effect of background knowledge on the reading comprehension of ESL students. The results have demonstrated that background knowledge can compensate for ESL readers' lower second language proficiency. Besides this, ESL researchers have also noted the significance of cultural background knowledge. Therefore, many studies (Johnson, 1981; Lee, 1986; Floyd & Carrell, 1987; Kitao, 1989; Malik, 1990; Zhang, 1993) have been done using ESL students to explore the effect of cultural content schemata possessed by the reader on ESL reading comprehension. These studies have shown that cultural variables are important factors in ESL reading comprehension and process. The results have indicated that a text dealing with a culturally familiar topic will be easier to comprehend - with all other factors equal - than a culturally unfamiliar one, because the reader is able to activate and utilize the relevant schemata to facilitate comprehension of the culturally familiar text. In addition, ESL readers can make appropriate extensions from the culturally familiar text more easily than from the culturally unfamiliar text (Carrell, 1987:P.482).

However, while the important role of cultural content schemata has received a great deal of attention in reading comprehension of ESL students, only a few studies have been conducted to explore the effect of cultural content on EFL reading comprehension. Moreover, there has been almost no research undertaken in EFL reading context to examine the effect of cultural content schemata on Intermediate stage Arab learners in general and Bahraini learners in particular. In searching for a solution to this problem, the researcher tried to hit upon a new cultural approach, which says that foreign language teaching should always be linked to the

culture and the environment of the learners. Also the more involvement students have in their lessons, the more interactive they become with each other. Though beyond the scope of this study, this research is a first step toward any such correlational studies.

Objective of the Study

To find out the effect of cultural content schemata on EFL reading comprehension at the second Intermediate level in the state of Bahrain.

Purpose of the Study

Difficulties facing the learning of English as a foreign language in Bahrain in general, and reading skills in particular in Bahrain Intermediate schools are "the responsibility of three partners", as stated in Alraffai (1995:P.31). They are the learners and their parents, the teachers and the Ministry of Education in Bahrain as the official establishment, which supervises the educational process. Their responsibilities differ according to the role and position they play in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the researcher believes that the textbooks in general and the reading materials in particular play a crucial role in the learning of a foreign or second language. In the researcher's view, reading efficiency depends on how much knowledge the reader brings to the text and how much he/she wishes to extract from it. Therefore, reading materials must be interesting with an authentic background, related to the readers' experience, and suitable to the students' age level.

Students' low level of achievement in English language in Bahrain Intermediate schools has become embarrassing and the standard will continue to decline unless some attempt is made to identify the causes and to suggest some practical solutions.

As there has been almost no research conducted among EFL Bahraini learners to explore the relationship between cultural background knowledge of content and reading comprehension, this study investigates the effect of cultural content schemata on EFL reading comprehension at Intermediate schools in Bahrain. This investigation seeks to determine whether EFL Bahraini students at the Intermediate level comprehend a text which is culturally familiar significantly better than a culturally unfamiliar one. There is also an attempt to

determine whether cultural content schemata play a significant role in improving reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar.

Research Hypotheses

To better understand the reading process and comprehension of EFL Intermediate level learners, and as the study was exploratory and fact-finding in nature, it was decided to address specific research hypotheses. One main research hypothesis was addressed and four sub- research hypotheses were formulated in this study based on the fundamental premise of cultural content schemata. The main hypothesis of the inquiry was:

EFL Bahraini Intermediate level students comprehend more information from a culturally familiar text than from a culturally unfamiliar text with regard to overall achievement at the level of .05.

To see the result of the main hypothesis, results of the following four hypotheses were sought:

Hypothesis (I): EFL Intermediate level students achieve higher scores on reading comprehension when studying a culturally familiar text than when studying a culturally unfamiliar text at the level of .05.

Hypothesis (II): EFL Intermediate level students achieve higher scores on English grammar when studying a culturally familiar text than when studying a culturally unfamiliar text at the level of .05.

Hypothesis (III): EFL Intermediate level students achieve higher scores on vocabulary when studying a culturally familiar text than when studying a culturally unfamiliar text at the level of .05.

Hypothesis (IV): EFL Intermediate level students achieve higher scores on writing when studying a culturally familiar text than when studying a culturally unfamiliar text at the level of .05.

Need and Significance of the Study

A consideration of the learners' social and cultural background and language learning objectives shows that the cultural settings in most of the units of the schools' English textbooks are not likely to be of genuine interest to the learners (Matter, 1989:P.346).

Generally speaking, students are likely to be more motivated when elements of their own culture are incorporated in the teaching material. This view is emphasized by Cunningsworth (1984:P.8), who argues that:

> "In evaluating the material we need to decide whether the settings used in the coursebook are sufficiently close to those in which the students will find themselves to be meaningful and acceptable".

The researcher, as an English language teacher, realized that most of the learners lack most of the basic skills in reading English language such as reading for specific information, reading for gist, understanding the main idea, understanding the structure of a written text and the relation between parts of a text, predicting what follows, guessing the meaning of unknown words from context, drawing conclusions and so on. Furthermore, the students' lack of interest in English lessons in general and their lack of interest in developing their reading skill in particular is a real problem in our Intermediate schools in Bahrain. Because of their low level in English language, and boring topics in textbooks, many students feel bored during the lesson (Alraffai, 1995:P.77). In other words, learners should be prepared and trained to use various learning strategies, in order to obtain knowledge.

Most of our learners in Bahrain, as mentioned in Alraffai (1995:P.76), also lack confidence in using the English language in general and reading skills in particular. The cause of this problem returns to the weakness and low standard in English language in general.

For this reason, the reading materials were designed to modify this problem, by encouraging learners to become more confident language users. Through culturally familiar activities, this might help the learners to strengthen their confidence. The individual differences between the learners may narrow, so the problem of mixed ability classes might have less affect as well. Furthermore, the learners may feel the importance of their active involvement in the reading process in order to improve their abilities in learning English.

These include the introduction of a variety of activities in the different language skills, which combines the recycling of the language taught with an increase in the level of difficulty. This is needed because most of the students who come into the Intermediate stage suffer from chronic problems in all of the language's lexical, phonological and grammatical dimensions. The solution is in the introduction of a single series, which integrate the skills with the aim to develop the communicative competence through usage and performance. In other words, the students must learn the different skills and how to put that knowledge that he/she gets from them to the test. But to know how to do this more effectively, we need to study the different elements involved in this reading process.

Unfortunately, reading comprehension exercises have often discouraged the reader from using his/her own knowledge. The reader has been told to "stick to the passage". Yet this is exactly what the reader must not do if he/she has to read for some purpose outside the English class. Lane (1998) maintained that poor readers often have an aversion to persisting during the reading process; they are unmotivated and passive learners. Students feel unable to cope with any difficulties that may arise during the learning process, and think that applying more effort has no positive result.

Our conception of the students' needs centers around what we aim to achieve at the end of the Intermediate stage. We have stated previously that the aim for the teaching of the English language is to develop communicative competency. That means that we hope to get the students to communicate independently by using the different skills without reverting to the use of the first language and hopefully achieving proficiency in due time. The main dimensions of the skills, which continue to hinder the students' progress, are the grammatical, lexical and phonological dimensions and those should exist in the learning of every language skill because the learners benefit best from the recycling of these items and become more

prepared to learn the next stage of the language. By this it is meant that the designed reading materials may contributes in solving this problem since it gives the learners the opportunity to express themselves, recognize their problems and weaknesses, and improve their English.

This study is undertaken to determine whether cultural content schemata play a significant role in the reading comprehension of EFL Intermediate students. Detailed analysis of the subjects' answers of the post-tests comprehension questions may provide some information about the reading comprehension and process of EFL Intermediate students. Therefore, the results of the study may suggest some changes in the teaching methodology and the choosing of teaching materials for EFL reading classes at the Intermediate level.

Limitations of the Study

As the study was carried out under certain limitations, it is hoped that all the results will be interpreted and examined in relation to these limitations. The limitations of the study are as follows:

1. All the subjects participating in this study were limited to Intermediate school students in the second grade. They were randomly sampled. The sample size was quite limited in number, containing only 69 students, 35 in the control group and 34 in the experimental group.

2. This study involved subjects from only one culture that is local Bahraini culture. Thus, one should be cautious about generalizing the results of the study to EFL Intermediate level students of other cultures or to EFL children.

3. The study examines the effectiveness of culturally familiar texts on students' level of achievement on EFL reading comprehension.

4. Since the researcher designed the reading materials, it was necessary that the researcher alone taught all the units for both groups. Also all the pre- and post-

tests were scored by the researcher. Consequently, the results of the data may unavoidably carry some subjective influences, which might have influenced the scoring data for each group.

5. Because of the subjects' limited language proficiency, they were asked to write their opinion of the reading materials in Arabic, their native language.

6. Writing skill and the linguistic aspects such as vocabulary and grammar were not taught individually. They were measured just to see to what extent they could improve reading comprehension.

Definition of Terms

- Background Knowledge: all that is known and "familiarity gained by experience" (Hornby and Cowie, 1991:P.693).

- Communicative Competence: "the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom" (Ritchards and others, 1985:P.49) (i.e. the ability to interpret written or spoken sentences within the total context in which they are used).

- Culturally Familiar Text: having a good knowledge of the topics presented in the reading materials, which are related to learners' native culture (Bahrain).

- Culturally Unfamiliar Text: having a poor knowledge of the topics presented in the reading materials, which are not related to learners' native culture (Bahrain). They are from a foreign culture.

- Own Culture: the subjects' "way of life, manners, beliefs, attitudes, customs, behaviour, social habits, etc." (Hornby and Cowie, 1991:P.291) as Bahraini culture is referred to in this study.

- English as a foreign language (EFL): the role of English in countries where it is taught as a subject in schools but not used as a medium of instruction in education nor as a language of communication (e.g. in government, business, or industry) within the country (Ritchards and others, 1985:P.93).

- English as a second language (ESL): English either in an English-speaking country or in countries such as India, Nigeria, Hong Kong, and Singapore, where English, though the mother tongue of few of the population, is wildly used in education and public life (Ritchards and others, 1985:P.93).

- Intermediate level: situated or coming between elementary level and advanced level. It lasts three years. Students who complete the third year of Intermediate education are awarded the Intermediate certificate. In Bahrain students at this level are about 12-15 years old.

- Reading comprehension: "the process by which learners understand and grasp the meaning of the content of a written text" (Ritchards and others, 1985:P.54). The understanding that results is called reading comprehension.

- Schemata: "previously acquired knowledge structures. A reader uses schemata to understand relationships among pieces of information and to fill in information that is not mentioned explicitly. Reading comprehension occurs when schemata exist and are instantiated. Two types of schemata are content and formal schemata" (Zhang, 1993:P.1). This study deals with content schemata, which relate to the background knowledge of the content area of a text.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The first section of this chapter presents the theoretical background for the thesis by introducing the reading process, and discussing the importance of reading skill and its integration to other language skills. The second section discusses the effect of cultural background knowledge on students' attitude and motivation and EFL reading comprehension. The third section reviews in detail the research which investigates how cultural content schemata affect reading comprehension in general and the reading comprehension of non-native speakers of English in particular.

Theoretical Background

The importance that countries attach to foreign language learning grew as the need to communicate in the modern world became more insistent and as the provision of secondary as well as primary education increased.

Over the past decade, a lot of research has been carried out to explore the effect of the background knowledge an ESL/EFL reader possesses on the reading process and reading comprehension of a text. All the results have shown a significant correlation between the reader's background knowledge and his/her comprehension and understanding of a second or foreign language text. And they have indicated that the pre-existing knowledge of the content area of an ESL/EFL text has a great influence on the reading comprehension of the text. This result has been indicated particularly for background knowledge of cultural content.

The Importance of Reading in Foreign Language Learning.

Reading has been considered an important part of any language class for providing information, activity and as a means of consolidating and extending the students' knowledge. Reading problems are the subject of intense discussion by parents, community groups, school administrators, political leaders, educational writers, and others. We all agree that reading instruction, particularly in comprehension, must be improved. The critical questions, of course, are *how, with what,* and *by whom.*

Sometimes definitions of reading comprehension are narrowed to the answering of questions on tests or in workbooks. Often, such questions depend more on memory or on knowledge of typical sentence patterns than they do on meaning. For example, Page and Pinnell (1979:P.3) stated that if students encountered a sentence like "the bazzappo was bripping the brop, they could answer a question such as what was the bazzappo bripping? Without knowing what the sentence means". Even when meaning is the focus, reading is sometimes viewed as the reconstruction of the literal meaning of a sentence without a concern for whether the sentence is true, or interesting, or consequential. These ideas about what reading means are inadequate as goals for what we want our students to be able to do as readers but what the goals of reading instruction truly should be. Comprehension must be the true and final goal of all instruction in reading.

In general, students seem to learn language well without any organized instruction without force, bribery, or even explicit persuasion. Page and Pinnell (1979:P.9) explained that the context in which our students find themselves is in itself "a persuasive environment that spawns language"

In the researcher's teaching experience in Bahrain, it has been found that teaching and learning to read seem interrelated. So one can see that lack of interest and boredom can result from the traditional practice in teaching reading which in turn lowers the students' standard of English. Unfortunately, teachers are used to concentrating on teaching content rather than reading skills, and much attention is given to decoding words, introducing the meaning and pronunciation of new vocabulary, reading the text aloud, asking oral questions and answering low level comprehension questions. The researcher of this thesis believes that none of the

activities involved are what the learner needs if he or she is alone and faced with a text to understand. Clearly, there is little here to help students become efficient readers. Perhaps this happens because some teachers have themselves had an inadequate education, or lack proper training in teaching reading skills. Moreover, they neglect to build up learners' confidence, as they do not encourage them to predict or guess the meaning of the text relying on linguistic cues. Thus, weaknesses of learners, teaching methods and techniques used by teachers, and unsatisfactory textbooks for reading, certainly affect the teaching and learning of reading process and make the students lose motivation.

In fact, we have learnt more about good readers read in their first language, and new procedures have been developed to help second and foreign language learners become efficient readers. Increasingly, reading has been "viewed as a twofold phenomenon involving process (comprehending) and product (comprehension)" (Silberstein, 1987:P.30). What this means can be seen if we look first at a classroom procedure that pays some attention to the product of reading, but fails to give the learners any useful training in the process.

Reading Process

There is certainly disagreement about the nature of the reading process, and the debates about methods for the teaching of reading stem from the lack of certainty about exactly what readers are doing when they read. Studies of eye-movements demonstrate that as we read our eyes seem to move backwards and forwards, up and down the page searching for meaning. Regarding the role of our brains in the reading process, Smith (1985) argued that in order to understand reading researchers must consider not just the eye, but also the mechanisms of memory and attention, anxiety, risk-taking, the nature and uses of language, the comprehension of speech, interpersonal relations, sociocultural differences, learning in general and learning of young children in particular. So neglecting or missing one or more of the above elements will absolutely affect the degree of understanding and interaction.

Coles (1988) emphasized that a reader must also bring his/her knowledge of the world to bear in the reading process. If you have a reasonable idea of what you are likely to read before you read it, then reading is bound to be more fluent. If words are seen as part of a

meaningful context then you do not need so much visual information. In other words, the less background knowledge we have when we read, the more we have to rely on visual cues or vice-versa - to some extent because our brain can only handle a limited amount of visual information.

According to one view, reading is a bottom-up process, that is to say, readers attend to letters and then begin to have expectations for the words they spell. As they learn to identify words, they are able to string these together and have further expectations for what they mean when assembled into phrases and sentences. According to this model, learners can understand a meaning of a text from the smallest textual units at the "bottom" (letters and words), to larger and larger units at the "top" (phrases' clauses, intersentential linkages). It aims at ensuring that the child masters the reading skills hierarchically from sub-skills such as phonemes formation and word recognition first before he/she can handle the overall skill of reading comprehension (Carrell, 1988).

Thus, bottom-up processing is decoding individual linguistic units (e.g. phonemes, graphemes, words) and building textual meaning from the smallest units to the largest, and then modifying preexisting background knowledge and current predictions on the basis of information encountered in the text. It assures that the reader will be sensitive to information that does not fit an ongoing hypothesis about the content and structure of the message.

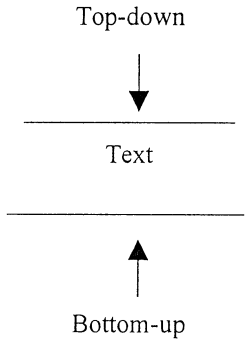
The contrasting view sees reading as a top-down process, that is, readers' knowledge of their language and their world suggest hypotheses, which are tested against what is printed. In other words, readers first make use of their background knowledge of syntactic constraints such as possible kinds of word order in English. Then, they are aware of semantic constraints related to a knowledge of the meaning of words and what kinds of words collocate with others. This perhaps means that background knowledge about what is read is important. Accordingly, Pumfrey (1991) explained that this model strongly encourages the knowledge of personal experiences, feelings and thought to guess the meaning of the texts. Therefore, it is easy to let the reader know learning to read is not mainly a matter of mastering rules and sub-skills.

Furthermore, in the top-down model, information is received under the direction of higher order, search-for-meaning stages. It encourages teachers to emphasize that reading is a

search-for-meaning process to students. It also considers that background knowledge can influence the reader, because this background knowledge may help the reader to understand the context of that text easily and quickly. Carrell (1988:P.4) pointed out that:

> "In the top-down view of second language reading, not only is the reader an active participant in the reading process, making production and processing information, but everything in the reader's prior experience or background knowledge plays a significant role in the process".

Thus, the readers' background knowledge of the content area of the text is also important. Under the top-down model, the readers are encouraged to deduce the meaning of new vocabularies by their interpretation of the piece of reading, but not by referring to a dictionary. Omaggio (1986) agreed that top-down processing helps the reader resolve ambiguities and select alternative interpretations of the input. An important aspect of top-down and bottom-up processing is that both should be occurring at all levels simultaneously. McDonough and Shaw (1993:P.110) show in the diagram below (Figure 1) that the top-down process interacts with the bottom-up process in order to aid comprehension.



(Figure 1) Reading Processes

In the context of reading, the fundamental premise of schema-based learning theory is that an individual comprehends material by using knowledge to produce anticipated meaning. This anticipated meaning can only be attained through "the interaction of material and the individual's previously acquired cultural background knowledge" (Zhang, 1993:P.11). These

previously acquired knowledge structures accessed in the comprehension process are called schemata.

Schema theory began to emerge and to be applied to processes like reading in the late 1970s. Rumelhart (1980:P.33) stated schema theory as the following:

> "A schema theory is basically a theory about knowledge. It is a theory about how knowledge is represented and how that representation facilitates the use of knowledge in particular ways. According to schema theory, all knowledge is packed into units. These units are the schemata. Embedded in these packets of knowledge is, in addition to the knowledge itself, information about how this knowledge is used".

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), in their discussion of schema theory and ESL reading, argued that comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. They added that efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge.

There is a growing amount of evidence that one very important factor affecting the reading comprehension of second and foreign language learners is a lack of necessary cultural background knowledge.

Clearly, reading in the foreign language deserves attention, and an aim of most language teaching materials should be to develop the students reading competence. In order to better understand the role of background knowledge in reading comprehension, it is very useful to draw a distinction between formal and content schemata. Formal schemata refer to the background knowledge of the formal structures of different types of texts. And content schemata refer to the background knowledge of the content area of a text (Carrell, 1987). Both kinds of schemata are important in textual processing and comprehension. However, for the purpose of this study, the emphasis is placed on discussing the effect of cultural content schemata on reading comprehension.

Thus, reading comprehension occurs when the appropriate schemata exist and are instantiated. That means when the reader does not possess appropriate background knowledge or fails to activate appropriate schemata presupposed by the text, then he or she will

miscomprehend or distort the meaning of the text. Comprehending words, sentences, and entire texts involves more than just relying on one's linguistic knowledge. Anderson and Pearson (1984) in Zhang (1993: P.12) suggested three ways in which background knowledge may affect comprehension. Background knowledge may "(a) enable students to make inferences about their reading; (b) direct their attention to information important in a knowledge domain; (c) provide a plan for recall".

Many writers such as Kitao (1989) and Harmer (1991) referred to the importance of the skill of reading and that it should be taught as a skill in its own right. Their justification is that reading is retained the longest and that, if learners use English at all, it may well be in reading as they study textbooks in English in further education courses or materials, for example, magazines and newspapers, or of other reasons, such as keeping themselves up-to-date in their job fields, current affairs, social issues, entertainment etc.

The above writers added that many learners may never say or hear English after leaving school, and for them, learning to read in English will equip them with reading skills which they can transfer to their own language. Furthermore, those who learn to enjoy reading English may become more motivated to learn English in general.

As Coady (1979:P.9) pointed out, "a typical reading class involves the reading of a passage followed by comprehension questions, vocabulary exercises, and, at times grammatical exercises. In such a class the student may read a passage in 5 to 10 minutes and then spend 50 to 100 minutes doing language exercises and correcting them".

However, if reading is not just a decoding of symbols but an interaction between an individual's background knowledge and the text, then it is certainly time to re-evaluate the traditional activities of a reading class. The purpose of this thesis is to examine an often-neglected element of the reading process, namely, the role of cultural content schemata.

Integrating Reading Skills

Reading is an interactive process of communication. It is part of the communicative use of the language, which integrates the skills in the process. Reading demands that the student who possesses a good command of the language should be more concerned with the

communicative message rather than with the language used to communicate it. Thus, the focus is on use (function) and not usage (form). This can be accomplished by treating the text not as an "object" but as a "process" as McDonough and Shaw (1993:P.105) exhibit in the diagrams below (Figure 2). Based on this, close interaction should be encouraged between the text and the reader, paving the way for creating more reading based activities related to their background knowledge.

Reader _____ Text

(background knowledge, previous knowledge' general intelligence)

(writer)

(Figure 2) The relationship between text and reader

The communicative approach's success depends on giving the reader a reason to read and the way to do that is by the writer of the text conveying something of use to the reader. "The reader has an information gap that can only be filled by reading" (Abdul-Latif, 1998:P.39). The process of integrating reading skill involves linking other language skills together in such a way that what has been learnt and practiced through the exercise of one skill is reinforced and perhaps extended through further language activities which bring one or more of the other skills into use.

Regarding the teaching of speaking, Rivers (1981) stated that the objective is successful communication. The teacher's task then is to bring the students from the stage of merely imitating a model or responding to a cue to the level where they can use the language to express their own ideas. Thus, the researcher believes that the teacher must provide opportunities for the students to master the skill of speaking by creating stimulating situations which are as nearly realistic as possible.

Obviously, the reading materials play an important role in teaching the spoken form of the language. A great deal of material has been suggested and developed by many writers. Harmer (1991) referred to materials which included different types of oral drills, information gap activities, games, personalization and localization (students talking about themselves or things they know), oral drills that encourage the practice of questioning mixed question-and-

answer drills. Materials may include social talk (students themselves discussing about their likes and dislikes and/or topics of current interest) in a relaxed way.

According to this study, speaking skill is used before the text in the form of questions. It is employed to promote interest and understanding of the text's topic. When used after reading, speaking serves to further discuss the students' impressions of the text. It is well known that we never speak in a vacuum and that when we speak it is with the purpose of conveying information to the listeners. Students can also collaborate in discussing composition topics, reading comprehension questions and in helping each other to understand the new vocabulary in a reading passage.

With regard to writing, one must not lose sight of the fact that the writing skills cannot be taught and developed in isolation. They cannot be achieved by chance as a product of other language activities. Rivers (1981) stated that writing gives students practice in the manipulation of structural and lexical elements of language. He added that writing answers to questions on the basis of a reading passage encourages attentive reading, and that even at more advanced levels, writing is very much dependent on other skills, especially listening and reading. It is by a great deal of listening and reading the language in its spoken and written form by native speakers that a foreign language learner can acquire the feeling for the appropriate use of language forms and combinations which are associated with writing.

We must further note that there is a special communicative relationship between both the reading and writing skills. The writing activity involves reading, as the writer needs to go over his writing making the necessary changes. In this regard, White (1981) suggested that the reader plays an active role in writing as the writer necessarily responds to the reader's needs and questions. This introduces the notion of reading as a conversation between the reader and writer, which is similar to the interaction present between the speaker and listener. The "listener/reader" can predict what the "speaker/writer" will say in advance of his saying it. Abdul-Latif (1998:P.37) pointed out that the ability of prediction depends on the basis of the schema theory, which builds its success on: " (a) our knowledge of the code and the likelihood of certain combinations to occur; (b) our previous knowledge of the topic; (c) our knowledge of the relationship between what is being communicated and the real world".

Furthermore, because of the nature of writing as a higher skill most of the approaches to teaching use it to conclude a skill's sequence. It is in its capacity to do this, that a writing activity usually makes use of a reading text's topic to relate it to the students experiences in the form of such a task which is related to the reading text. Writing is mainly used to conclude sequences of activities because writing is a good way to fully integrate the activities that were previously introduced and to set homework tasks. In this way writing is the culmination of the different skills. Cross (1992:P.255) related the skills of reading and writing. He stated that:

> "Good writing is probably the product of reading. We learned to write our mother tongue largely as a consequence of reading, not by practicing spelling and writing".

Generally speaking, reading passages are used to provide input for writing a similar topic, the use of the information in the text is used to practice the structure, vocabulary and organization of paragraphs. As students go through different stages of development, they need suitable materials, activities and exercises, which help them to develop their abilities in writing.

Cross (1992) mentioned that reading offers language input and that good readers become autonomous, able to read outside the classroom and to stay in touch with English through periodicals and books when they leave school. Through the rich language environment, readers can acquire a large vocabulary and an implicit command of limitless language forms, pleasurably and almost effortlessly.

Creating a role in which reading is better connected to writing moves it from the traditional view of it as a receptive skill, thus preparing it to play a productive role and thus integrating it with the rest of the skills. Since every activity is essential in enabling the learner to perform a higher task, this means that he/she is not only learning the language but using it as well, which is our ultimate objective.

Abdul-Latif (1998:P.48) stated that "the study of language skills could never be complete without examining the language dimensions, which allow them to exist and function.

These syntactic and lexical dimensions complement the four skills and can not possibly be separated from them. The attempt to teach them separately has failed mainly because they can not be taught out of context".

Since the adoption of the communicative approach focuses on the process of writing and the ability to convey the information, the reduction in the role of grammar caused a general weakness in the acquisition of language.

The application of the communicative approach led to the rise of the argument of whether grammar should be taught, as Harmer (1991) suggested, *covertly* where "grammar facts are hidden from the students" and where the focus is on the activities, or *overtly* where "grammatical rules and explanations are provided." Supporters of the first view feel that the overt teaching of grammar does not necessarily mean that it will be used and that language is used to perform functions (i.e. invitations, apologizing). While the supporters of the later view feel that the language, which includes these functions, is made from grammatical elements which the student needs to know in order to perform successfully. Ellis (1991) stated that formal instruction on language properties is related to the subsequent acquisition of those properties. This view is supported by Harmer (1991) who asserted that students do need to learn how to perform the functions of language but they need a grammatical base as well. The only situation in which the covert learning of grammar can be said to succeed is when the learners are in a position where they are exposed to the language constantly and for a long time (i.e. living in a foreign country and picking up the language), which is very difficult to achieve. This accounts for the failure of most of our students in acquiring the language. Harmar (1991) rightly felt that both covert and overt approaches play an important role in language teaching. A balance of these two concepts can help in improving the learner's performance.

In the researcher's view, to fully integrate grammar, coursebooks can present it through one of the other skills which is usually a reading text which is preceded by some covert brainstorming activities and followed by an analysis of the different parts of the texts. The new structure is practiced both overtly and covertly, through a sequence of activities, (i.e. listening, speaking and writing). The objective is to raise the student's competence to be able

to communicate naturally by using the new structure in every day activities and to develop their awareness of what they are using and why they are using it.

It is considered vitally important to train students in these skills (e.g. the ability to understand what is important even though the reader cannot understand everything) since they may have to comprehend reading in just such a situation in real life. Smith (1985) in Alraffai (1995:P.18) emphasized the importance of the feature of reading:

> "Discourse structures and story grammar are part of our own cognitive structures, part of the way we organize our own knowledge of the world. The more we can anticipate and employ formal structures that an author uses, the more we can understand and remember what we need because the structure also forms the basis of our understanding and remembering."

Reading then, involves transforming information from a visual code to a semantic one, taking into consideration the readers' background knowledge of their own language and of the world generally.

The lexical element forms the basis for all of the four skills' activities. In order to achieve good reception "comprehension" and develop it to reach production "conveying", the students need to know the meaning of the lexical items, which they are learning in listening, reading, speaking and writing, to best use them to communicate their message. Vocabulary is integrated in coursebooks activities by first presenting it in context to help the student to understand its meaning. The best choice for this is the reading text because of its role as a receptive skill. Hopwood, Rushton and Prowse (1990) presented the different methods of acquiring the meaning of the lexical items without the use of the dictionary and these depend on the use of (a) a mental picture of the situation; (b) any similar looking words which the student already knows; and (c) the knowledge which he/she already has about the situation from the rest of the sentence.

Thus, the new vocabulary is practiced in the other skills through the various tasks. A lot of vocabulary is introduced in pre-reading activities. Others are presented in the post

reading activities and its adoption is followed by application in both speaking and writing skills in the designed reading materials of this study.

Harmer (1991:P.190) stated that "reading is an exercise dominated by the eyes and the brain". The eyes receive messages and the brain then has to work out the significance of these messages. Harmer (1991) mentioned that it is often difficult to convince students of English as a foreign language that texts in English can be understood even though there are vocabulary items and structures the students have never seen before. Harmer emphasized that this is the case, not only for non-native speakers, but also for some speakers of English as a first language. Harmer added that skills such as extracting specific information could be satisfactorily performed even though students do not understand the whole text; the same is true for students who want to get the general idea of a text.

Generally speaking, as Broughton and others (1980) emphasized, to develop the skill of reading requires a familiar text whose content and language are clearly understood.

In the discussion of the four skills and their relevant language dimensions, the researcher has attempted to explore their different forms, which can be seen in the reading materials. In many situations where English is taught for general purposes, these skills should be carefully integrated and used to perform as many genuinely communicative tasks as possible. Where this is the case, it is important for the test writer to concentrate on those types of test items which appear directly relevant to the ability to use language for real life communication.

Furthermore, Heaton (1990:P.10) stated that "successful communication in situations which stimulate real life is the best test of mastery of a language". He claimed that no student can be described as being proficient in a language simply because he or she is able to discriminate two sounds or has mastered a number of structures of the language.

It can be thus argued that fluency in English - a person's ability to express facts, ideas, feelings and attitudes clearly and with ease, in speech or in writing, and the ability to understand what he or she hears and reads - can best be measured by tests which evaluate performance in those language skills used in real life.

The role of language in society and culture

The role of language in society and the relationships between language, society and culture have become a central subject of many studies, whether it has been approached from the point of view of anthropology and sociology or the point of view of anthropological linquistics or social psychology. Scholars are seeking more and more to integrate their views of language and society. That is to say, according to Stern (1990:P.191), "they are not merely seeking to find parallels between language and society or cause-and-effect relations between them but to create concepts in which language is not isolated from society or society looked at as if verbal communication could be ignored".

From the point of view of language teaching and learning, the concept of social context can be seen to be of great importance. First, Stern (1990:P.283) has seen that language itself must be treated in a social context. In addition, for foreign language teaching, "it is important to relate language and society, because languages are taught and learnt to establish contact and communication across language boundaries".

Society and culture are, after all, the concepts that represent people with whom the learner eventually must make contact if language learning is to have any value in human terms.

Page and Pinnell (1979:P.55) also indicated that "learners develop knowledge of the rules, patterns, and functions of language through interactions with others in the social context". They also explained that language development is best fostered in educational environments where students are encouraged to talk, participate in activities which suit their interests and needs.

The effective use of foreign language requires consideration of how children learn language and how language functions in society. King (1981) maintained that children learn a foreign language by using it in the meaningful interactions that occur within the daily life. He added that school is part of the community, so the student must be given the opportunity of coming into contact with cultural and recreational features of the community, its working life and activities.

Sun (1996) conducted research to investigate ESL learner 's perceptions of their motivation to learn English as a second language and how their motivation was affected by their contact with the environment. He found that learner's motivation to learn English as a foreign language was affected by the meanings they attached to learning English, which were defined by the degree of the linkage between learning English as a second language and their personal goals determined by their social environment. The learner's motivation was affected by their acculturation experiences to the degree they prepared for the new environment, and their motivation was affected by their new identity as aliens which decreased the significance of their learning English as a second language.

In fact, it is well to recognize that the physical environment itself is not a part of culture. Instead, it is people's response to their physical surroundings that qualifies as cultural. For instance, Milon (1988) explained that in the Scandinavian countries, the winter's snow and ice and the few hours of daylight are not parts of culture. Rather the cultural elements in those countries are the housing, modes of transportation, clothing, occupation and topics for poetry, and songs, which Scandinavians have devised in response to such physical surroundings.

It could be realized that there is a theme running through the whole discussion of customs, buildings and countries. That theme is the relationship between man, the environment, and the resources of the world. Obviously, the Arab world is having an increasingly important part to play in the way these relationships develop. As an international language, English is a medium which is bound up with this, and an English course should help students to conceptualize these relationships.

A learner may also be influenced by his attitude towards the aspects of culture of a foreign language; consequently his/her foreign language learning may be negatively affected if his/her attitude is negative and vice versa.

Students' Attitude and Motivation and EFL Reading Comprehension

Just as reading is a complex process for the learner and the teacher, requiring interaction between the producer and the receiver, motivation requires interaction between the motivators and inducers - either external or internal - of behavior.

Reading cannot be accomplished in the absence of a meaningful and comprehensible context, and motivation cannot be initiated without interests, goals or expectations. The interchanging relationship between reading and motivation is bound up in satisfaction. Attitudes towards reading usually develop if reading fulfills a need (Harris & Sipay, 1979). Satisfaction of psychological needs is one of the major factors involved in reading interest. Interest could be developed if there is the feeling of ease and security. Interest is important because of its relation to motivation. When the topic of a passage is not of interest to students, their motivation to read is substantially lessened. Without this motivation, it is exceedingly difficult to meet one of the generally accepted aims of a reading programme: to help get the learners to read in English on their own, outside the reading classroom.

Researchers such as Page and Pinnell (1979) and Krashen (1981) have documented that reading is a natural act, similar to speaking and listening. It is nurtured by the social and cultural environment. Reading is a mutually constitutive process because literacy is not simply an individual psychological process; and it is intimately linked with the sociocultural practices in which it plays a part. They also prove that motivational forces are vitally important for successful achievement.

According to El Shimy (1982), motivation and positive attitude are important in the sense that they help towards better achievement, and that students were intrinsically motivated and considered English as an important language to study, but this motivation and positive attitude was not developed by the teachers or the textbooks. However, positive attitude means better foreign language learning. Farch and others (1984) suggested that having a positive attitude increases motivation and consequently produces better results.

In other words, students interest, motivation and positive attitudes towards topics that are related to their local culture and their own environment may help them to develop their language proficiency in general and their reading skills in particular. That is because the

students will be eager to learn about their own culture by using another language such as English. Consequently, this might make them use English even outside the classroom. This also might develop their language skills, they may speak about the topic with their friends or their families, they will like reading those topics and finding more information about them, and they will use the words presented in the text even to write about their own experiences. Therefore, the students will use different language skills accordingly.

A study of high school students' reading habits, attitudes, and experiences by Steltenkamp (1993) investigated what high school students read for school assignments and for leisure reading. A review of major research was conducted, focusing on contexts, achievement, and interests of high school readers. Overall, the findings suggest that students have frequent interaction with print, particularly in magazines. The high-achieving readers interviewed have a positive and consistent home influence toward reading. This influence has fostered enjoyment and personal initiative for reading. In addition, these students have found a similarly supportive reading atmosphere among their friends. Although some of them expressed ambivalence about the constraints of their school reading environment, they generally found that it stimulated further reading interest through exposure to literature and peer discussion. They indicated that positive social experiences with reading among family and friends have helped them adjust to classroom reading commands. Steltenkamp (1993) concluded that the students could readily conceptualize current knowledge of the reading process. They have developed extensive prior knowledge in their reading experiences and have used it for subsequent transactions with text. They also show tendencies to read culturally familiar texts, with less engagement and a stronger focus on gaining information, The high-proficiency students were affected by a variety of influences to varying degrees.

It is clear that the learner's achievement or success in learning a foreign language is strongly linked to his/her attitude. This attitude can be towards the school subject, to the country of his/her target language, the language he/she learns or the people who speak the language as their native tongue.

Generally speaking, the EFL learners' motivation to learn English as a foreign language significantly increased when learning about their culture and learning culturally

familiar text, and reading comprehension is a synthesis between readers' own cultural background knowledge, the cultural content of the text, and the readers ' personal reaction.

Studies on the Effect of Cultural Content Schemata and Reading Comprehension

In the process of language comprehension, our knowledge is not static. Instead, it is continuously in a process of reorganization. Each of us has somewhat different representation for a given message, containing elements that cannot be derived directly or solely from the words themselves. That is, the comprehension and memory of any input cannot be adequately predicted or accounted for based on mere dictionary knowledge of the words that are read or heard. Zhang (1993) explained that the store of knowledge about the world that an individual possesses, as well as his or her analysis of the context, are both heavily involved in the process of fitting meaning to existing schemata. Any one individual's interpretation of a given text will be influenced by his/her background knowledge, interests, goals, and belief systems. These aspects of cognition serve as filters of relevant and irrelevant information; thus, culturally variant readers may distort text information or add information not relevant to the text.

Johnson (1981) was among the first to investigate the effect of cultural background knowledge on ESL reading comprehension. In her study, Johnson also compared the different effects of cultural background knowledge and linguistic complexity. The study sample consisted of 46 Iranian intermediate ESL students and, for comparison, 19 American subjects at the university level. The reading passages are two stories, which are culturally distinct, representing Iranian culture and American culture, respectively. Both the Iranian and American subjects were randomly assigned to two groups. Group 1 read the adapted texts of stories from their own culture and the foreign culture: group 2 read the unadapted texts, which were syntactically and semantically simpler than the adapted ones. After the subjects read each passage, they were tested for reading comprehension by recalling the story in written form and by answering multiple choice questions on the explicit and implicit information about the text. The results showed that the cultural origin of a text had a much greater influence on ESL

reading comprehension than did linguistic complexity. Moreover, the students comprehended the text with familiar inferences for the culturally familiar one. They made more appropriate inferences for the culturally familiar text than the culturally unfamiliar one. But when they did not possess the cultural schema to comprehend the text, they relied on the linguistic codes of the text. This study documents the interaction of culture and language in L2 text comprehension. However, the author did not mention whether there was any control of the formal schemata of the testing materials, as the rhetorical organization of the texts could also have had some impact on the results.

Since cultural background knowledge appears to have a significant effect on EFL/ESL students' reading comprehension, it is important for foreign language reading teachers to begin to give as much attention to cultural background knowledge as to the traditional reading language activities.

Johnson's (1982) later experiment studied advanced level ESL students in reading a text which contained sections of familiar and unfamiliar information about Hallowe'en. In the study, Johnson compared the effects of vocabulary and prior knowledge. The results indicated that exposure to meaning of difficult vocabulary did not seem to affect comprehension of the passage. Johnson concluded that cultural background knowledge helped enhance ESL reading comprehension more significantly than did knowledge of vocabulary. In her words, "the effects of vocabulary difficulty on reading comprehension are not as clear as the effects of background knowledge."

Hudson (1982) presented university level ESL students with ninth grade reading passages. Three treatment conditions included: (a) reading texts with a prior knowledge context, visual representations and questions; (b) reading tests with prior exposure to key vocabulary; (c) reading texts with no prior priming while advanced level ESL readers outperformed lower level readers; the prior content treatment was more effective at the beginning and intermediate ESL levels.

The results showed that the treatments were not crucial at the advanced level of ESL proficiency. Hudson concluded that induced schema can compensate for many negative effects of subjects limitations in second language proficiency or limited ability of lower level reading

skills. This study provides further evidence to support the claim that having and accessing appropriate schema for a text makes comprehension much easier and more accurate.

Floyd and Carrell (1987) conducted a study examining whether explicit teaching of cultural content schemata can enhance ESL reading. This study involved thirty-four intermediate level ESL subjects from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, who had never been exposed to the celebration of the Fourth of July in America. Two letters describing a celebration of the Fourth of July in Boston were chosen as the testing materials. Using pre- and post-tests with experimental and control groups, half of each group received syntactically more complex versions of the test passages than the other half. The experimental group was taught appropriate cultural background knowledge between pre-and post-tests. Overall results indicated that the experimental group scored much higher in both questioning and recalling tests than the control group which received no training. Statistical analysis of the data showed that prior knowledge of culture-specific content is a more important factor than linguistic complexity in ESL reading comprehension. The results suggest that cultural content schemata can not only affect ESL reading comprehension but also can be explicitly and effectively taught.

In another study, Carrell (1987) compared the effect of content and formal schemata on ESL reading. This study included two groups of high Intermediate ESL students from different cultures whose religious backgrounds were Muslim and Catholic, respectively. They were instructed to read, recall and answer questions about each of two texts on religious topics. For each group, one half of the subjects read the text in a familiar, well-organized rhetorical version, the other half read the texts in an unfamiliar, altered form. The results of this study indicated that the familiar content and rhetorical form of a text produced much better comprehension of ESL reading than the unfamiliar ones. Moreover, the results showed that content schemata had a much greater effect on reading comprehension than formal schemata when the rhetorical form of a text is not very complex and when the content schemata are culturally conditioned. They also demonstrated that the cultural content presupposed by the texts had great impact on the elaboration's and distortions made by the subjects as this study was the first to examine the combined effects of content and formal schemata on ESL reading,

and it involved only one manipulation of form and content with one proficiency level of ESL students from rather specific cultural groups.

Besides the above studies, there is other research showing the significance of cultural content background knowledge on second and foreign language reading. In a recent study, Kitao (1989) investigated how East Asian ESL speakers at intermediate and advanced levels made use of schemata when they read English. In the study, she particularly compared the amount of background knowledge and their reading proficiency. The results demonstrated that second language readers did make use of their prior knowledge in reading an L2 passage, and the cultural background knowledge of the reading texts influenced the comprehension of the ESL readers. In addition, the results indicated that these readers seemed to use background knowledge to compensate for their inadequacies in reading proficiency. This study is an indication that, even in the native language or a strong L2, the reader's knowledge of the schematic background of a text greatly aids comprehension. In addition, lack of an appropriate schema for a text hampers accurate comprehension. The result suggests that it is likely to be an even more serious problem for readers of L2 who have less-than-adequate language proficiency.

Not only has schema theory research shown that readers' background knowledge has great influence on the product of reading, but also some recent studies on reading strategies have found that cultural background knowledge, especially cultural schemata, can have strong impact on the process of reading. Most of the studies indicated that strong relationships do exist among background knowledge, strategy use, and reading comprehension. Moreover, the result showed that the cultural background knowledge possessed by the reader influenced his/her selection of strategy use, and ultimately has an impact on ESL/EFL reading comprehension.

Malik (1990) may have been the first to explore the relationship among cultural schemata, reading strategy and L2 reading comprehension. In his study, he examined the culturally familiar and culturally unfamiliar expository texts. These two texts described the belief systems of the respective cultures: Iranian and Japanese. The subjects read the two texts one by one and then were asked to retell the text. The readers' reading comprehension was determined on the basis of the recalled idea units. The readers' strategies included predicting,

confirming correcting, and integrating. According to the analysis of the idea units, relevant cultural background knowledge made the subjects able to distinguish the most important ideas from the least important ones in the text. But for the unfamiliar text, the subjects could not differentiate the relative importance of the segments of information. The comprehension scores indicated that the elaboration's made by the subject were more culturally appropriate for the familiar text than for the unfamiliar one. As for the reading strategies, Malik found that the confirming correcting strategy was used significantly more often by the subjects for the non-familiar expository text, whereas integrating and predicting strategies were more often employed for the familiar expository text.

In a related study, Pritchard (1990) examined how cultural schemata influence students' reported strategies and their reading comprehension. The results included that cultural schemata had great effects on readers' processing strategies and the level of comprehension they achieved.

Leenman (1993) conducted an experiment that studied the role of cultural schemata on oral reading of Thai College students reading English as a foreign language. Leeman found that the participants, as a group, made more miscues in the reading of the unfamiliar text than they did in the reading of the familiar text. They use better reading strategies in reading the familiar text than they did in reading the unfamiliar text as they made significantly larger proportions of high level miscues in the familiar text. He maintains that the reading of the unfamiliar text seemed to have stronger grammatical relationship than those in the reading of the familiar text but they revealed lower levels of meaning construction. The participants relied more heavily on syntactic information when reading the unfamiliar text than they did when reading the familiar text.

In regard to the effect of cultural aspects on EFL reading comprehension, Zhang (1993) attempted to examine whether ESL beginners comprehend significantly better a text, which is culturally familiar. Two stories representing Chinese and Western cultures respectively were chosen as the testing materials. Through the analysis, it was found that the subjects recalled and comprehended the culturally familiar text significantly better than the culturally unfamiliar text. They made more culturally appropriate elaborations and fewer

distortions from the Chinese story than from the Western story. They spent less time reading the familiar story than the unfamiliar story.

The results of the above study indicated that cultural aspects play a significant role in the reading comprehension and recall of ESL students. And having indigenous cultural background knowledge of the content of a second or a foreign language text may compensate for ESL student's low level of language proficiency.

Abu-Rabia (1994) examined attitudes and indigenous cultural background and their relationship to reading comprehension in second language among students from three different social context: Arab students in Israel learning Hebrew, Israeli students in Israel studying English, and Arab students in Canada studying English. The major findings of this study indicated that the instrumental motivation and the cultural content of texts were the strongest factors affecting reading comprehension in second language regardless of social context, which supports the proposed reading model. These results demonstrate that second language readers did make use of their prior knowledge.

Research in foreign language teaching has begun to focus on cultural as well as linguistic aspects in language teaching, and especially on the teachers' involvement in transmitting cultural information.

A study of Ryan (1994) investigated teachers' perceptions of culture and the relationship behavior. It was found that all of the teachers had distinctive ways of talking about culture. In addition, teacher's beliefs fell into structural categories such as culture is knowledge gained through reading, or culture is the daily life of a group of people, or culture is lived and experienced. Teachers believed in the need for students to have culture contact and attempted to convince them of this need.

Flasgraf (1995) concluded his study about language and culture, that children do acquire cultural concepts while acquiring the language itself.

The effects of cultural background knowledge are also examined by AI (1995) on graduate students to see their response to reading American and Chinese short stories in English and Chinese. In this study, six Chinese and six American graduate students were assigned to read two stories, one from each culture. The major findings were as follows: when reading the Chinese story, the Chinese readers expressed empathy with the characters. The

American readers had difficulty understanding the motives and behaviors of the characters, and were very judgmental about the characters' action in the Chinese story. When reading the American story using Chinese, the American readers grasped the meanings and immediately. The Chinese readers had difficulty understanding the implied meanings of the story although they had no difficulties with the language.

This result could be applied for two different cultures, Arab culture and Western culture, which have different modes of social behavior and different values of a whole community.

It seems clear also that these results are in agreement with the findings of Zhang (1993), AI (1995) and Abu-Rabia (1994) whose students comprehended better in the reading of the familiar text than they did in the reading of the unfamiliar text.

Akagawa (1996) also investigated whether providing EFL learners with information relating indigenous cultural knowledge of the content of reading text and inducing leaders to pay careful attention to specific lexical items in the text are effective in helping learners understand the text and acquire target words. Providing subjects with information relating to the cultural background knowledge of the content of a reading text resulted in improved comprehension and vocabulary knowledge out of context, whereas inducing subjects to pay careful attention to specific lexical items in the text was not effective in comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

In conclusion, this review has attempted to analyze literature pertaining to cultural content effectiveness on EFL reading comprehension. Studies reported previously indicated the following: the learners comprehended better in the reading of culturally familiar text than they did in the reading of culturally unfamiliar text. The cultural content schemata results in significantly improved teaching and learning skills when compared to those subjects who are denied the cultural content experience. The EFL learners motivation to learn English as a foreign language significantly increased when learning about their own culture and reading culturally familiar texts and reading comprehension is a synthesis between the readers' own cultural background knowledge, the cultural content of the text, and the readers' personal reaction.

On the whole, these findings demonstrated high correlation among cultural schemata, reading strategy use, and reading comprehension. Readers' knowledge of cultural content, represented in culturally variant texts, can influence their constructions of the meaning of the text. Furthermore, they suggested that cultural background knowledge has a strong effect on readers' selection of strategies and ultimately influence his/her interpretation of a text.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

It is the purpose of this study to investigate the effect of cultural content schemata on EFL reading comprehension of second Intermediate school students. This investigation seeks to explore whether EFL Intermediate school students comprehend significantly better a text which is culturally familiar rather than a text which is culturally unfamiliar. This chapter is a description of the experimental design and procedures used in gathering the data to test the research questions stated in Chapter 1.

The Sample

The study sample was a stratified sample of 69 Bahraini Intermediate level students in Um Kulthoom Girls School who received a uniform English language curriculum adopted by the Bahrain Ministry of Education. The study was conducted in two groups of the same proficiency level. One was the control group and the other one was the experimental group. Thirty-five students in the second grade were randomly assigned to each level of the independent variable. During daily reading instruction, the 35 students using each of the reading materials worked with those materials for 55 minutes. The students came from socioeconomic backgrounds reflective of the social structure of the country. This does not mean that the notion of cultural content schemata can be accomplished only with certain learners at a certain level. There are two reasons for specifying the learners' level and nationality: first, to limit an otherwise unlimited area of research as we need to focus on how a culturally familiar text serves to fulfil specific needs of specific learners; second, to achieve the maximum benefits to the researcher in classifying the cause of current problems in the country's educational system and hopefully to find possible solutions for these problems.

The nature of this study required that the subjects be EFL students at the Intermediate level. Moreover, it was necessary to have a group of students who had the same cultural and linguistic background for two reasons: first, the study is to examine the cultural effect of a certain sample and thus cannot be culturally mixed. Second, the subjects were going to be asked to answer some comprehension questions in the testing materials. Thus, this way would better control their background knowledge and help the researcher to analyze the data. Considering the fact that testing reading comprehension ability of EFL students required some degree of proficiency, Intermediate students were deemed to be more appropriate than beginners for the study.

The average age of the students was 13-15 years. All students stayed in the same class during the entire study year (from December1, 1997, until January 15,1998). No additional students entered the class during the study period.

The school is located in Isa Town. It is one of the biggest Intermediate schools in Bahrain. Eleven teachers of English covered the thirty classes of the school, which provided a wide range of subjects to investigate. The classrooms are air-conditioned, well lighted and equipped for audio-visual aid use. Chairs and desks in these classes are not fixed, allowing for easier arrangement and rearrangement of the class setting especially for group activities, role-plays and class discussions. The school enrolls students from the same neighborhoods of Isa Town (i.e. a new town) and their families originally come from nearly all areas in Bahrain, even from villages which provided a range of students for the study with different views of English learning in general. All of the students were native-born Bahrainis and native speakers of Arabic.

Skierso (1991) provides a good survey of the students background that is found applicable to illustrate the subjects' background information of this study:

Table 1: Background Information on the Students

Age Range	13-15
Sex Distribution	Segregated
Background Languages	Arabic
Background Culture	Arabs
Socio-economic level	Middle and lower
Environment	Urban
Language Setting	EFL
Level of General English	Matches students' age.
Proficiency Level in English	Elementary to first Intermediate
Attitude Toward Target Language	Negative (as measured in Abdul-Latif, 1998)
Reasons for Studying English	Required
Incentives	Academic, economic and communicative.
Skills Needed	Reading, Speaking, Listening and Writing (syntactic, lexical and phonological).

The students came from families with varied backgrounds. The parents of the students were engaged in occupations ranging from managers, businessmen and school teachers to police officers and custodians.

Occupation in Bahrain is associated with the level of schooling one has accomplished. Four students' parents occupy the posts of carpenters and custodians. They are unable to read or write, or speak English. Seventeen parents occupy the posts of police officers, and taxi drivers. These parents received primary level education and some of them joined "Holy Quran" recitation groups in their earlier childhood; their literacy abilities are limited, they can hardly read and write in Arabic. There are thirteen parents who occupy posts such as clerks, cashiers, and technicians. These parents are literate. They received Intermediate level education. They have a low command of English. The English language is used at home only in case of the availability of a foreign domestic helper in the house with limits on when children need some help with their homework. Twenty-one parents are secondary school

graduates. These parents occupy the posts of clerks, officers, and small private businessmen. These parents' English ability ranges from low to moderate, yet English is not widely spoken at home. These parents provide their children with adequate help in English. Finally, fourteen parents are university graduates. Their language ability ranges from moderate to high (see Table 2).

Table 2: Parents' Schooling, Occupation and English Language Ability

Parents' Schooling	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Occupation**	**English language ability**
Illiterate	4	4.5%	Retired, Carpenter, Custodian	None
Primary	17	24.7%	Custodian, Police officer, Taxi driver	Very poor
Intermediate	13	18.8%	Clerk, Cashier, Technician	Low
Secondary	21	30.4%	Clerk, Offices, Small private businessman	Low/moderate
University	14	20.3%	Manager, Businessman, Doctor, Teacher	Moderate/high

The Reading Materials

Since there was no appropriate existing reading materials, the researcher decided to produce materials suitable to the purpose of the study and to her students' specific needs. Block (1991) supported the idea of preparing one's own materials. He gave teachers three good reasons for preparing their own materials: (1) their materials may have a local context to allow learners to focus on language use rather than battling with strange contexts; (2) materials produced in-house can be easily updated; (3) students appreciate the personal touch of their teacher in materials produced specially for them.

In this study, eight reading texts were chosen as the materials followed by grammatical structure, vocabulary focus and writing tasks. Four were culturally familiar from Bahraini culture and the other four were culturally unfamiliar. The content of the eight texts was within the same domain, (i.e. these texts were culture-specific,) therefore, this might better control the subjects' background knowledge.

All the reading materials contain the following cultural dimensions: historical dimension, social dimension, scientific aspect of modern life dimension, humanistic dimension, Arab Islamic culture dimension and skills dimension.

By introducing cultural and environmental topics into the EFL class, we can transcend the often-narrow limits of language teaching and more effectively link classroom activities to real life situations. Those topics are of considerable interest and relevance to students. They also engage the minds and feelings of learners and encourage real language use. Students are stimulated to discuss those topics, and share their reactions with other students and the teacher as well.

The teaching strategy for both groups depended on direct reading activity. This strategy applied to expository text (Singer and Donland 1980). Lesson plans were developed similarly at both groups, generally include specific reading objectives and pre- and post-reading activities.

The teacher in this study used the following methodology while teaching the reading materials for both groups. The teacher explains the purpose or goal for reading the text, relates the text to students' background knowledge, teaches the technical terms, guides the students through the text, explains and demonstrates how to read and interpret it, and how to evaluate whether the goal has been reached, for example, whether an answer to a question has been found and how to check whether the answer is correct. If students have difficulty in comprehending the text, teachers usually explain the content. But the teacher should next have the students go back to the text to perceive the way the text explains the content. Thus, MacGinitie (1981) indicated that by doing so, teachers can teach students how to learn from texts. It is organized in two major sections: extensive reading (reading a great deal of comprehensible material); and intensive reading (focusing on specific skills and situations: pre-reading; prediction; comprehension; main ideas; structure; scanning; skimming; academic

reading; vocabulary; and writing activities). Since some of the texts in the reading materials were too difficult and too long for EFL learners, it was necessary to adapt them to meet the subjects' foreign language proficiency level.

The reading materials were designed to improve Intermediate students' reading skills in English. Some of the texts were prepared and written by the researcher in order to meet the students' need and their level of ability. However, the rest were adapted from a variety of authentic sources. The reading materials consist of eight units. Four units were designed for the experimental group, while the other four were designed for the control group. Each unit contains pre-reading activities, a reading text, comprehension exercises, discussion points, vocabulary work, grammar practice and a related writing task. Though students will meet quite complex language, the tasks they are asked to do are at their level of ability. An answer key is provided at the end of the book (see Appendix A).

The materials were designed and submitted to an initial round of feedback concerning the need for and utility of such materials and then evaluated by professionals and tested at Um Kulthoom Intermediate Girls School.

The Adaptation of the Testing Materials

The adaptations of the testing materials were based on the idea that the texts should contain approximately the same number of words and sentences, the same type of discourse structures, the same type of sentence structures, and should be at almost the same level of linguistic complexity. In this study, linguistic complexity involved sentence length, passage length, frequency of vocabulary, and syntactic difficulty. To meet those requirements, the researcher modified the reading texts for the post-test in the following way. Both groups had a different text about trees. Each text was composed of twenty sentences. As for the passage length, the control group's text had 280 words, 4 paragraphs and 24 lines and the experimental group's text also had 280 words, 4 paragraphs and 24 lines. Both texts shared nearly the same type and the same number of sentence structures. In addition, the level of vocabulary difficulty was almost equivalent. The vocabulary items in the post-test were strictly controlled to ensure their appropriateness. Apart from the vocabulary control, attempts

were also made to ensure that the contents of the vocabulary questions or tasks were not outside the range of the experience of the learners and so we have used situations, names, places etc. with which the subjects are familiar. Through the testing materials, the lexical items, the different grammatical environments, tense, number and person are kept consistent. The testing materials for both groups consist of four sections: a reading passage followed by some comprehension questions, structure, vocabulary and writing.

Testing Procedures

In order to attain the goal of this study, the subjects were first instructed to read the culturally unfamiliar text for the control group and the culturally familiar text was given to the experimental group in the post-test. Then, they were asked to answer ten comprehension questions that cover the information of the text. Both texts were followed by structure, vocabulary and writing questions.

Pre-tests were administered to both groups before the treatment began to establish target language items and structures unfamiliar to all subjects in both groups and a comprehension pre-test to determine their background knowledge on the subject of the treatment text. The tests were followed by six weeks of reading instruction to both the experimental and control groups. The experimental group received four units on reading comprehension containing culturally familiar texts followed by structure, vocabulary and writing tasks. The control group also received four units on reading culturally unfamiliar texts followed by the same tasks. Immediately after the treatment, both groups were given a post-test. Scores from reading comprehension tests were used to provide an indication of group or individual attainment, to identify the reading materials strengths and weaknesses, and to diagnose individuals' strengths and weaknesses with respect to specific sub-skills presumed to constitute comprehension.

Although there are many methods to assess reading comprehension in L1, it was very difficult to find appropriate ways of measuring the reading comprehension of EFL learners. However, "since drawing inferences seems to be a particular problem in materials from another culture, it is important that the method of assessing reading comprehension be able to

assess ability to draw inferences from a text" (Kitao, 1989). In order to achieve the purpose of the study and to suit the foreign language proficiency level of the subjects, a set of true-false questions and matching questions was developed for each text. All the questions were based on the factual information in the texts. Various analyses were performed (see Chapter 4).

Classroom Observations during Teaching the Reading Materials

Since all the students who participated in the study were randomly selected, the subject behaviour varied greatly. When the researcher started giving the students the materials in the experimental group, they looked at the topics and the pictures, e.g. Ramadan Celebrations (i.e. special celebrations in Ramadan the holy month for Muslims), Soug Al Mogasses (i.e. a popular market in Bahrain), Sports Battle (i.e. very famous basketball match between the best two teams in Bahrain), etc., and looked at each other and smiled. They were excited and eager to study those units. During the course, the students were found to be excited. They participated a lot. They were very eager to learn the vocabulary of topics that were familiar to them. They also talked about their own experiences and started to use the vocabulary and speak English outside the classroom. Generally speaking, the students were very interested in learning culturally familiar materials. On the other hand, when the control group was given the culturally unfamiliar materials, they looked at the topics and asked many questions about them. Some of the topics were for example: The Empire State Building, the Nootka live near the sea, etc. Although the standard of the texts for both groups were the same, they started to feel that those topics were not easy. They showed a kind of resistance towards the topics of the reading materials. So their first impression was negative.

This phenomenon impressed the researcher greatly. Although it might be for other objective reasons, this phenomenon itself suggests something relating to the importance of cultural background knowledge in reading comprehension. That is, EFL Intermediate level students, when they are given a culturally familiar text to read, may have great interest in reading it. However, if they are given a culturally unfamiliar text to read, their behaviour could be quite different. They might tend to show a kind of resistance towards a text they are not familiar with. Thus, this resistance might affect their interest in learning reading, and

ultimately influence their reading comprehension. This possibility implies that teachers of EFL students, especially of beginners, should try to provide the students with reading materials, which are culturally familiar to them in reading classes.

Scoring the Data

It is important to mention that, in the control group, thirty-five students who were eligible for the study stayed and did the test. However, in the experimental group, one student did not attend the post-test because she had a serious illness and was in the hospital.

After collecting all of the data, the researcher numbered and then scored them. All of the ratings were done by the researcher alone. Hence the scoring of the writing test might be subjective, but it is consistent.

Differences Between Learners' Performance on the Two Groups Tests

Since there are only two comparisons involved, the pre and post- tests relationship was further investigated using the SPSS sub-programme t-test for independent and paired samples. This is mainly to determine whether the differences between means of the four language areas on the two groups were statistically significant (see Chapter 4).

Validity

The testing materials are valid because:

- Every question in the test paper is related to the content of the reading materials taught in the second grade Intermediate school;
- The tests were graded by the researcher and the teachers who teach this level, and revised and approved by the adviser;
- The tests took place under the supervision of the students' TEFL teachers and in their own school. This made them feel secure when answering questions. (A copy of the tests is shown in Appendix B)
- The tests were examined by a number of jurors in order to determine the degree of their validity. These jurors (Appendix F) comprised four of the instructors at the

University of Bahrain including in particular the researcher's statistical adviser. The content of the test was checked by the jurors who agreed unanimously that the test was valid in content and that it could be deemed to measure what is intended to measure.

A last step of ascertaining the validity of the students reading and testing materials was taken during the pilot and the main studies when both students who took the reading and testing materials and the teacher who administered it in the main study expressed their views that they faced no difficulty in following the instructions given for each section of the test and that the whole test was simple and clear with no ambiguities.

Reliability

To determine the reliability of the students' achievement scores, it is required that they are correlated with their scores for a similarly designed test. This technique will not only measure the reliability of these scores but should also determine whether the examinations set can be considered to be a standardized form of achievement tests. A number of statistical methods are commonly used in the measurement of the degree of reliability of a test instrument. In this study, the researcher, therefore, correlated the students' scores in the pre-test with their scores of the post-test. Alpha correlation is used to measure the degree of reliability. It was found as follows: Reliability Coefficients

N of cases =69. α = .9084

Chapter 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This study was intended to explore the effect of cultural content schemata on EFL students at the Intermediate level. It was especially undertaken to examine to what extent cultural content affect student achievement.

The statistical analyses of all the data were performed with the SPSS statistical package on a mainframe IBM computer. An alpha level of 0.05 was chosen as the level of significance. Independent t-tests were employed for most statistical analyses of the data, because different subjects in two groups were used to test reading comprehension of two different texts. All the statistical analyses and results of the study are presented in this chapter.

Main Hypothesis:

EFL Bahraini Intermediate level students comprehend more information from culturally familiar texts than from culturally unfamiliar text with regard to overall comprehension achievement at level of .05.

To test this hypothesis, the subjects were asked to answer some comprehension questions on reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and writing. A t-test was performed to compare the means the subjects had for both pre-test and post-test for the control group and for the experimental group. The results are displayed in Table (3).

Table (3): Overall Achievement of both Groups in Pre-test and Post-test

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	T-VALUE	DF	SIG
Pre-test						
Control	35	18.6429	16.7203	.943	67	.349
Experimental	34	22.5588	17.7686			
Post-test						
Control	35	40.9000	25.9396	2.534	67	.014
Experimental	34	57.4559	28.3087			

The content of Table (3) indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the achievement of group members with regard to the pretest. As far as the post-test is considered, it is found, however, that there is statistically significant difference in the achievement of the group members at level .014. This explains that the use of culturally related texts would play a good role in the improvement of English for EFL students. Moreover, it is perhaps necessary to find out which area of EFL had the best influence in the improvement of students' achievement. Thus, the results seemed to support the hypothesis that the subjects could comprehend more information from the culturally familiar text than from the culturally unfamiliar text.

These results seemed to show that cultural background knowledge played an important part in the comprehension of EFL. The results suggest that the subjects comprehended much more information from the texts they had high cultural background knowledge of than that from the texts for which they had low cultural background knowledge. A closer look at the results revealed that the standard deviation of the experimental group was much higher than that of the control group. This result seemed to indicate a high individual difference, which suggests that when reading a culturally familiar text, the prior knowledge which EFL students have may enhance their comprehension of the text, while when reading an unfamiliar text, the foreign language ability may play an important role.

Hypothesis (I)

EFL Intermediate level students achieve higher scores on a reading comprehension test when studying a culturally familiar text than on a test using culturally unfamiliar text at the level of .05. Table (4) presents the results of a reading comprehension test for both control and experimental groups.

Table (4): Value of t-test with regard to Reading Comprehension

Reading	N	MEAN	SD	T-VALUE	DF	SIG
Pre-test						
Control	35	5.3286	4.2822	0.244	67	.808
Experimental	34	5.5882	4.5468			
Post-test						
Control	35	7.6286	3.8660	3.074	67	.003
Experimental	34	11.0000	5.1698			

The results showed that there is a statistically significant difference in the achievement of the subjects at level 0.003 for both groups. This result seemed to indicate that culturally familiar text has a great influence with regard to reading comprehension. They showed that the subjects answered more questions correctly when they read the culturally familiar text in the experimental group than the subjects who read the culturally unfamiliar text in the control group. Thus, the results seemed to support the hypothesis that EFL Intermediate level students achieve higher scores on a reading comprehension test when studying a culturally familiar text than on a test using a culturally unfamiliar text.

Hypothesis (II)

EFL Intermediate level students achieve higher scores on English grammar when studying a culturally familiar text than when studying a culturally unfamiliar text at the level of 0.05.

The results of English grammar tests are displayed in Table (5).

Table (5): Value of t-test with regard to English Grammar

Grammar	N	MEAN	SD	T-VALUE	DF	SIG
Pre-test						
Control	35	8.4000	6.2647	.553	67	.582
Experimental	34	9.2353	6.2719			
Post-test						
Control	35	19.4429	10.2029	1.915	67	.060
Experimental	34	24.1471	10.1984			

The results in Table (5) indicated that there was no significant difference in the achievement of the subjects with regard to English grammar at the level of 0.05. However, these results showed that EFL students could achieve higher scores on English grammar when studying a culturally familiar text than when studying a culturally unfamiliar text at the level of 0.05.

Hypothesis (III)

EFL Intermediate level students achieve higher scores on vocabulary when studying a culturally familiar text than when studying a culturally unfamiliar text at the level of .05. Table (6) presents the results.

Table (6): Value of t-test with regard to Vocabulary

Vocabulary	N	MEAN	SD	T- VALUE	DF	SIG
Pre-test						
Control	35	0.8000	1.4512	0.273	67	.786
Experimental	34	0.8824	1.0080			
Post-test						
Control	35	5.1429	4.9787	2.181	67	.033
Experimental	34	7.8529	5.3393			

The results in Table (6) indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the control group and the experimental group with regard to vocabulary. Since the exercises in this section are based on the lexical items which appear in the text, they help students understand the meaning and build up their vocabulary in a specific lexical area. Thus, the results seemed to support the hypothesis that EFL Intermediate level students could achieve higher scores on vocabulary when studying a culturally familiar text than when studying a culturally unfamiliar text.

Hypothesis (IV)

EFL Intermediate level students achieve higher scores on writing when studying a culturally familiar text than when studying a culturally unfamiliar text at the level of .05. A t-test was performed to compare the means the subjects had for each test for both groups. The results are displayed in Table (7).

Table (7): Value of t-test with regard to Writing

Writing	N	MEAN	SD	T- VALUE	DF	SIG
Pre-test						
Control	35	3.5429	6.4013	1.795	67	0.077
Experimental	34	6.8824	8.8899			
Post-test						
Control	35	8.6857	9.2530	2.353	67	0.022
Experimental	34	14.1029	9.8702			

The results in Table (7) indicated a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and control group with regard to the subjects' achievement in writing. Because of the nature of writing as a higher skill, most of the approaches to teaching use it to conclude the skills sequence. A writing activity usually makes use of the reading text's topic to relate the students' experiences. This showed that the students could improve their writing when the topic was interesting and related to their own experience. The students' background

knowledge of the reading text's topic helped them to relate their own experiences in the form of writing.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

All the results of the statistical analyses described in chapter 4 are summarized and discussed in this chapter. Conclusions in the form of discussions are also presented.

Discussion of the Results

First, the study was based on the hypothesis that the Bahraini EFL Intermediate level students could comprehend more information from culturally familiar texts than from culturally unfamiliar texts. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences between a control group and an experimental group with regard to the overall achievement of the learners.

A consideration of the learners' social and cultural background knowledge and the language learning objectives show that the cultural settings in most of the units of the reading materials are likely to be of genuine interest to the learners. Students are likely to be more motivated when elements of their own culture are incorporated in the teaching material. This view is emphasized by Cunningsworth (1984:P.8) who argues that "in evaluating the material we need to decide whether the settings used in the coursebook are sufficiently close to those in which the students will find themselves to be meaningful and acceptable".

Generally speaking, the overall statistical results suggest that the subjects comprehend the culturally familiar text that is related to their native culture significantly better than culturally unfamiliar text that is not related to their native culture.

A close look at the raw data of the students' performance with regard to reading comprehension (see Appendix E) reveals significant individual differences. For example, the score range for the familiar text was more than that for the unfamiliar text. The subjects' reading comprehension test scores for the culturally familiar text of the experimental group

ranged from 3.5-20 (out of 20), the score range for the culturally unfamiliar text in the reading comprehension test of the control group was from 2-20. In the control group, twelve students got a passing score, while in the experimental group, twenty students passed. The level of significance was 0.003 in the post-test. This result showed that when the subjects read the familiar text, although individual differences did exist, their cultural background knowledge of the text could help them comprehend the text. And when the subjects of the control group read the unfamiliar text, they seemed to depend more on the language of the text. This wide range of scores does suggest an important fact that cultural background knowledge of content play an important role in influencing how an EFL text can be comprehended. While an EFL Intermediate familiar cultural content for an EFL text can facilitate comprehension of the text, the degree to which the cultural background knowledge can facilitate the understanding of the text seems to depend on the reader's foreign language competence. Therefore, in reading comprehension of EFL Intermediate level learners background knowledge and linguistic knowledge may interact to help learners comprehend an English text. This result supports what most of the studies found significant in chapter 2. This aspect of the results to some degree supports the research done by Johnson (1981) who found that cultural origin of a text had a much greater influence on ESL reading comprehension than did linguistic complexity. Floyed and Carrell (1987) also found that background knowledge of culture-specific content is a more important factor than linguistic complexity in ESL reading comprehension. Hudson (1982) maintained that schemata can compensate for many negative effects of EFL subjects' limitations in foreign language proficiency or limited ability of lower level reading skills. It is realized that the readers' foreign language proficiency and reading ability are probably the most important factors. According to this study, readers employed a number of specialist skills when reading. Harmer (1991) mentioned six specialist skills, which are important in reading. They are as follows: (a) predictive skills; (b) scanning for special information; (c) skimming for gist; (d) extracting detailed information; (e) recognizing functions and discourse pattern; and (f) deducing meaning.

For foreign language readers the above skills become difficult to apply because of the barriers that the foreign language creates. So, to help our learners, the researcher of this study designed classroom-reading activities to develop the reading skills in teaching reading.

Furthermore, the researcher's class observation during the study found that students were initially surprised that scanning and skimming in particular are indeed types of reading, but they quickly saw their usefulness for their studies. Thus, through the use of familiar local materials for the teaching of reading skills, the readers were able to comprehend the skills more easily in the reading course.

In spite of an EFL Intermediate level reader having high cultural background knowledge for an EFL text, her/his limited foreign language ability may impede the facilitating effect of background knowledge on his/her understanding of the text. As stated by Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) in their discussion of schema theory and ESL reading, in the review of literature, efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge. Thus, the results seemed to support the hypothesis that EFL students could achieve higher scores on a reading comprehension test when studying a culturally familiar text than when studying a culturally unfamiliar text.

Skills learned through reading are transferred to other areas of language, such as writing, speaking and other language dimensions (Kembo, 1993). This study was also intended to find out whether EFL Intermediate level students achieve higher scores on English grammar when studying a culturally familiar text than when studying a culturally unfamiliar text. Interestingly, after analyzing the data, the results showed no significant differences between the control group and the experimental group at the level of 0.05, but did show significant differences in the mean scores of the test (see Table 3). In the control group 13 students passed the grammar test with the mean 19.4, while in the experimental group 21 students passed the test with the mean 24.15.The t-test value in the pre-test on grammar was 0.55, while in the post-test the value was 1.92 with significant value 0.06. These results indicated that the students got benefit and learned from the grammatical points raised in the reading materials. However, the results showed that there is no significant difference between the control group and the experimental group. This supports what Smith (1985) emphasized, that discourse structures and grammar are part of our cognitive structures, part of our way we organize our own knowledge of the world. No evidence of a significant relationship was present. As found by the researchers in the review of literature, such shortcomings in students' English grammar could be attributed to the unsuitability in terms of the large quantity of grammatical material

which the reading materials contain according to the study period. This makes it difficult for them to deal with each aspect appropriately. It must be recalled that the errors the students make point to the fact that the grammatical forms presented in the materials are perhaps beyond the students' grasp. Also, perhaps they were presented inappropriately in the reading materials, from difficult grammatical forms to simple ones, (i.e. starting with reported speech and then presented subject/verb agreement). The shortcomings of students' performance in terms of grammar, as the study showed, are considered to be partly attributable to the approach or the method used in teaching grammar. In fact the teacher used covert and overt approaches which were emphasized by many writers such as Harmer (1991). However, a possible reason for this result might be that there was no balance of these two approaches as Harmer stated that the balance of these two approaches could help in improving the learners' performance. As mentioned earlier the material contains different types of exercises and activities which aim at accuracy in grammar and the formation of the sentences. At the same time perhaps a very small proportion of the exercises are devoted to these aspects. Another possible reason for this is perhaps that students need more activities to practice the grammatical rules mentioned in the reading materials or perhaps the period of study was short in regard to teaching and practicing grammar. Moreover, the results suggested that "grammar is an area of controversy" (Alfolath, 1994:P.30). It has proved to be "one of the most productive and most controversial areas for linguistic analysis" (Stern, 1990:P.131). Views have been various and sometimes contradicting. What should be considered when teaching a language? Grammar as forms and a system or grammar as functions? Should grammar rules be left to the learners to induce or should they be taught deductively? Or should they be translated and practiced?.

Like "vocabulary focus" the grammar section moves on from the reading lesson and focuses students' attention on a particular structure which occurs in the text. The objective is to raise the students' competence to be able to communicate naturally by using this structure in everyday activities and to develop their awareness of what they are using and why they are using it. This explains that the use of grammatical structures is not meant to improve or practice these structures. However, grammatical structures are used to develop the students' comprehension of the topic and consolidate what they have learnt. Therefore, the lesson does

not concentrate on grammar and perhaps this affects the result of the students' scores with regard to English grammar.

With regard to vocabulary, the results showed statistically significant differences between the control group and the experimental group. In the control group, 10 students passed the post-test with the mean score 5.14, while in the experimental group 16 students passed the test with 7.85 mean scores. The t-test value was 1.94. The level of significance was 0.03. The result supports the hypothesis that students can gain more vocabulary items when dealing with a culturally familiar text than when dealing with a culturally unfamiliar text. A close look at the raw data of the results of the vocabulary test (see Appendix E) reveals that the scores for the unfamiliar text ranged from 0-15 (out of 15), but just 10 students out of 35 get the passing score. In the experimental group, the scores ranged from 0-15 (out of 15), and 16 students out of 34 get the passing score. This result showed that the subjects could not remember the meaning of the words of the culturally unfamiliar text, but the subjects could remember the meaning of the words of the culturally familiar text. Hence, if the students in the control group did not know the vocabulary, they simply created a word, while when reading the culturally familiar text, in spite of having some new words, the subjects could use their cultural background knowledge to compensate for their vocabulary inefficiency. This also suggests the effect of culturally familiar content on EFL reading comprehension for Intermediate level students.

This emphasized that direct instruction in vocabulary could improve reading performance if it is offered as part of overall reading process.

It is the researcher's contention that the materials contain an excessive amount of vocabulary, which is difficult to grasp and absorb. It is, as Harmer (1991) mentioned and supported in Chapter 2, difficult to convince students of English as a foreign language that texts in English can be understood even though there are vocabulary items the students have never seen before. It is very likely that the methods used play a role in the students' performance. The method on which the materials are based involves students practicing new words in comprehension exercises, which are closely related to the reading passages. There are provisions and suggestions, which could encourage the students to use the new vocabulary to express individual thought.

Hence, if they did not know the vocabulary, they simply created a word. While when reading the culturally familiar text, in spite of having some new words, the subjects could use their cultural background knowledge to compensate for their vocabulary inefficiency. This also suggests the effect of familiar cultural content schemata on EFL reading comprehension for Intermediate level students.

Generally speaking, class application of this reading material has proved it a success. The students find it stimulating and rewarding, and are eager to learn any unknown word which appears in their reading material. Once they learn a new word, they learn it in its complete context, not as a merely isolated word.

Since the exercises in this section are based on the lexical items which appear in the text, they help students understand the meaning and build up their vocabulary. The students gained more vocabulary related to the culturally familiar text than they did when studying vocabulary related to the culturally unfamiliar text. Thus, reading broadens and increases the students' vocabulary, which is important for effective communication.

With regard to writing, the results showed significant differences between the control group and the experimental group. The level of significance was 0.02. The raw data of the results (see Appendix E) showed that the scores of the control group in the writing test ranged from 0-25 (out of 25), but just 12 students out of 35 got a passing score. In the experimental group, however, the scores ranged from 0-25 (out of 25), and 21 students out of 34 got a passing score. Thus, this high score in writing in the experimental group suggests that the culturally familiar topics effect the students' level of achievement. In other words, since subjects were asked to write about something related to their own culture and also related to their own experiences, the results were high and significant. This result supports what Cross (1992) mentioned, that good writing is probably the product of reading and one could write largely as a consequence of reading, not by practicing spelling and writing. This showed that the students could improve their writing when the topic is interesting and related to their own experience. The results also showed that the students' cultural background knowledge of the reading text's topic helped them to relate their experiences in the form of writing. Since that the writing task requires learners to create an essay or a composition on a given topic, sometimes students are simply invited to write on a personal topic - their hobbies, what they

did on holiday, interesting experiences and the like. The reading materials provide a reading passage as a stimulus for a piece of writing on a parallel topic, usually with comprehension questions between the two activities. In general, this result supported what Cross (1992) said when he related skills of reading and writing and said that good writing is probably the product of reading.

Fortunately, some students in both groups, in the control and experimental group, reviewed their opinions on their own words about the reading materials and the reading course in general in papers. In the experimental group, ***Mariam A***.wrote her opinion. She stated: "*I get benefit from the reading materials more than our English school textbook. I learnt how to use grammar to form good sentences and I learnt too many words with their meanings in both Arabic and English. This helped me a lot in my writing. Now I know how to write paragraphs, letters, etc*," ***Mariam*** addedd. " *I learnt how to talk to people in English*," wrote ***Sakina***. She added, "*I really thank the teacher who let us feel that we really learn English*". ***Meaad*** wrote, "*My way in writing was weak, but now I feel that I can form sentences and write strong paragraphs without too many mistakes*". In addition, ***Shaikha*** wrote, "*I knew how to write a composition and form good sentences that is because of the wide range of vocabulary which helped me with my writing*". She added, "*I use the words in the materials more than my use of the words in the school textbook, the units were exciting so, as I feel that every girl in the class improved her English, I hope to study more units with the same style. I like the reading materials. The texts were really nice because they were talking about Bahrain. I will never forget this reading course because I understood it and it was related to our real daily life, to Bahrain, our country, local culture. I did not like reading comprehension but now I do*". ***Huda*** wrote, "*I learnt too many words and their meanings either in Arabic or in English that are related to Bahrain and to our way in life*". ***Wala*** wrote, "*Vocabulary was the best among all because it helped me use English even outside my classroom with my friends and my family. I felt that I know English I like English now*".

It could be seen that the students were perhaps exaggerating, but they wrote what they felt about the reading course in general. Their feeling about the course suggests that they enjoyed it and that the reading course itself helped them to improve many skills.

On the other hand, students in the control group wrote their opinions too. ***Asma*** wrote, "*the reading passages are not related to our environment and our way of life such as talking about the church*". ***Shaikha H.*** argued and wrote, "*Those topics were not related to our customs and our religion. In my opinion, if the topics were related to our life, we will understand them more easily*". ***Ameera Jawad*** wrote, "*Reading texts were nice but hard and English grammar was alright, but we need more tasks and more practice to understand it more*". ***Fatima Ali*** wrote, "*The topics were strange and not related to our life. There was no chance for us to participate or discuss the new piece of information*". She added, "*The new words could not be fixed in my mind I wonder why. The grammatical forms were easy and nice*". ***Zahra A*** wrote, "*In general, the reading materials were better than the school textbook. Teachers should always remember that Bahraini students' level is rather low in English and they there should be a variety in topics of the textbooks. In my view, we need to study from topics about our country and our environment not just about foreign countries*".

As stated previously, the students in the control group wrote what they felt about the reading course. There is no doubt that it helped them a lot in improving their level, but some students wrote that the topics were not related to their own life. As a result they could not comprehend the texts easily. In fact, without the feeling of ease and security, as Harris & Sipay (1979) stated in Chapter 2, the learners' interest and motivation could not be developed. Therefore, the researcher agrees with El Shimy (1982) that motivation and positive attitude are important to help towards better achievement. The EFL learners' motivation to learn English as a foreign language significantly increased when learning about their own culture and reading a culturally familiar text.

In conclusion, it seems clear that the results of this study are in agreement with the findings of most of the studies in the review of literature, (see Chapter 2), which show that the readers' cultural background knowledge, especially cultural content schemata, has great influence on the product of reading and on the level of comprehension achieved. Cultural content schemata also could improve teaching and learning skills when compared to those texts which did not contain cultural content experience. This study provides the evidence showing that cultural content schemata, reading strategy, and foreign language reading comprehension are significantly related.

Summary of the Findings

The major findings of the study are that EFL Intermediate students do appear to make use of the culturally familiar texts. They achieved considerably higher scores when the background knowledge of a text is in accordance with their cultural background knowledge of content. Also they achieved higher scores in reading comprehension, vocabulary and writing when using a text that deals with a culturally familiar topic than when using a text that deals with a culturally unfamiliar topic. On the other hand, a culturally familiar text had no influence on the students' achievement with regard to English grammar. This suggests that besides cultural background knowledge, foreign language ability is a very important aspect in EFL reading comprehension. These results agree with schema theory, which proposes that efficient reading comprehension require the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge. They suggest that EFL Intermediate level students make use of their background knowledge in their reading comprehension. Overall results seem to have indicated that "a good communicative test of language should have a much more positive effect on learning and teaching and should generally result in improved learning habits" (Heaton, 1990:P.5).

In general, there is a noticeable improvement in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing and very slight English grammar loss among EFL students. In other words, the results showed that the treatment led to significant differences between the experimental group and control group on all measures used in the study except grammar. It could be argued that all these reading activities awakened a keen interest in the students, and they showed a marked improvement in the course. Moreover, they could face any reading text with confidence. Texts with environmental and cultural content would also provide the students with the opportunity both to see how they can identify themselves with the characters and situations described and to express their reactions to these texts.

It is concluded that while these results are not conclusive, the procedure can be used as a means of fostering text awareness and comprehension. The results of this study led to two conclusions that can guide researchers in future investigations of the reading process. First, the data suggest that reading is an open-ended process, beginning with the background to the

reader's first exposure to the text, and having a complex comprehension process that may continue indefinitely. Second, reading is a dynamic process including variables which lie beyond the parameters of the currently accepted definitions of reading. These perspectives and their interactions provide fertile ground for new areas of research. More studies are necessary which will include students from diverse cultural backgrounds and different language proficiency levels. In the meantime, future research should also pay attention to the impact of discourse structures on reading strategies and foreign language reading comprehension.

Chapter 6

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teaching Implications

The results of this study suggest the following teaching implications for EFL reading classrooms. First, teachers, educators and those who are responsible for curricula and content development of foreign language reading should attempt to relate the students' background knowledge of the content to their native culture, especially cultural content schemata. Second, teachers of EFL Intermediate students should try to provide the students with materials which are culturally familiar, and these materials should not just focus on vocabulary and grammar. Thirdly, despite the influence of cultural schemata, individual differences in foreign language skills must also be recognized as important.

Contemporary models of reading comprehension treat the process as an interaction between reader and text. The reader brings the encounter prior knowledge and ways of organizing that knowledge (schemata). Text content is then integrated into these pre-existing cognitive structures through a process of hypothesis formulation and confirmation and disconfirmation. On the other hand, reading comprehension tests are constructed as if meaning is inherent in the text, without regard to any possible differences in the schemata that examinees bring to the reading task. As the evidence accumulates supporting the view of reading as an interactive process, new approaches to comprehension testing seem necessary.

Generally speaking, recent research indicates that reading comprehension is the interaction of the reader's knowledge of the topic and the language with the writer's choice of content and use of the language.

As previously mentioned, that our immediate goal as EFL/ESL reading teachers is to minimize reading difficulties and to maximize comprehension by providing culturally relevant information. So in EFL classrooms, what methods should teachers employ to help students develop appropriate content schemata, and to help them activate these schemata appropriately in textual processing? Foreign language researchers have suggested some teaching methodologies, which are useful for teachers of foreign language reading. Among the methods, pre-reading activities may be one of the most effective. The use of pre-reading is based on the assumption that if readers activate appropriate text-relevant background knowledge, they will be able to relate the textual information more meaningfully to their existing knowledge structures, and thus comprehend and assimilate text content more effectively. As observed, pre-reading activities can enhance EFL/ESL reading comprehension. These pre-reading activities include pictorial context, vocabulary pre-teaching and pre-questioning. For pictorial context, some slide shows relating to the context of a text are presented to EFL students. In vocabulary pre-teaching, the students are taught some words which are considered difficult in the text. Pre-questioning refers to giving out a one sentence summary of the text and then asking the students to formulate some questions they think the text may answer. All of the pre-reading activities have been proved to be effective in facilitating the reading comprehension of EFL students.

So, pre-reading activities build new knowledge or activate existing background knowledge of the content of the reading passage, involving interaction with either the topic or the language of the text. Varied techniques also actively engage students with the text while reading. Post-reading activities help students to think about what they have read.

In conclusion, it appears that the primary information EFL teachers should be aware of is to relate the content to the local culture. In addition, an appropriate choice of materials for EFL students should also include materials, which are interesting and culturally familiar to them. This implication might disagree with the current trend in EFL reading materials which emphasize the target culture; however, the findings of this study does suggest the importance of culturally relevant materials particularly for beginning EFL reading classes. It is useful to provide the students with materials whose topics are about their native cultures. As a result, the students would not have as many frustrations as they have when reading a completely

unfamiliar English text. Therefore, teachers of EFL beginners may provide their students with English texts, which are translated from their native culture.

As mentioned in the review, the cultural content of a course derives from official language policies and national educational ideology. And cultural studies in the classroom centre on a balanced relationship between foreign and native culture and include the management of attitudes towards foreignness and the construction of a new perception of learners' native culture.

Besides the importance of cultural content schemata, the individual difference brought out in the study show that foreign language proficiency is also an important factor in reading comprehension of EFL learners. Therefore, those who teach reading to EFL students should pay attention to improving the linguistic skills of their students. Among the linguistic aspects, vocabulary development may be crucial to efficient reading comprehension. So, vocabulary should be taught along with the conceptual knowledge associated with it. Besides vocabulary, reading teachers of EFL students should pay attention to developing other grammatical skills as well.

On the whole, teaching practices, which minimize the cultural knowledge gap between the native culture of the reader and the new cultural information in the text should be implemented.

Recommendations

As a result of the findings of this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations and suggestions to provide suitable language support for TEFL teachers and students in the Intermediate stage in Bahrain.

On the basis of the results of this study, it is important that EFL reading teachers should be given a chance to develop their own teaching materials by selecting texts and exercises from different published sources and adapting them to meet their students' needs. This is due to the fact that textbooks are merely an aid to the teacher who should find his own way of using the book to meet his students' real needs. Even textbook authors will agree that no textbook is totally appropriate for a particular teaching situation.

In order that the textbooks achieve the aims and objectives of teaching English as a foreign language in the Intermediate school in Bahrain, the materials should be developed in such a way that they help students to use the language in communication instead of merely learning language usage by means of grammatical rules and idioms.

The Intermediate syllabus should pay greater attention to the Bahraini culture because it is beneficial for students in the sense that it establishes that their target language can be used to teach them about their own culture.

The better the teachers understand their EFL students traditions, customs, cultural reservations and inhibitions, the better they manage to introduce aspects of the target-language culture. Probably trained teachers can forestall potential difficulties while remaining sensitive to the moral values of their students, thus winning their trust and captivating their attention, which may enhance their levels of motivation and positive attitudes considerably.

However, if students are to develop independence in learning from texts, whether narrative or expository, the teacher has to shift responsibility to the students by having them set their own goals, arouse their own curiosity, formulate their own questions, monitor their progress to the goal, and evaluate their accomplishments. For example, teachers may develop independence by asking students what they would like to learn from a given text, where they might find the information, how the information may be related to what they already know, why the facts in the text are significant, how they can be used, and how they would know they had accomplished their goal. Thus, teachers can develop students into active readers who read to answer their self-generated questions, and in doing so, direct, monitor, and evaluate their own cognitive processes and affective reaction to the text and themselves. Teachers initially guide students toward comprehension.

Foreign-language teachers often play a dual role with regard to developing cultural knowledge. While investigating the cultural aspects of their target language, they too are expected to play the role of informants of their cultural habits to the learners. It is recommended that only qualified, well-trained, well informed, open-minded teachers can succeed in easing any threatening aspects of social and psychological distance in the foreign-language classroom.

Thus, the attitude of the teacher should be more friendly and warm to the students and the rigidity should be replaced by leveling and softness in order for the students to obtain some self-confidence; in this way, the high level of anxiety will drop.

It is a fact that English language teachers and all of those responsible for Muslim/Arab education must bear in mind that what is more important, is not simply to teach students everything that they do not know, as much as to concentrate on teaching them what they need to know. It is emphasized that teachers must never provide the students with programmes which have little or nothing to do with their own preoccupation, doubts, hopes and fears.

Arab educators, in general, have a great responsibility towards building a new Arab society and to achieve civilized progress, but they should also realize that it is important to create Arab individuals who are able to play a creative part in the movement and civilization of this age, while at the same time preserving their moral values, traditions and historical identity.

In order to know exactly how or why the learners are motivated, the teacher must find out how they feel about the target language at the beginning of a course. Foreign-language teachers need to be sensitive to their students' problems of cultural conflict in order to help them accept the differences with a minimum of stress. It is important that in planning we select the activities that will be suitable for our students. In order to do so we obviously need to know a lot about them.

Generally speaking, foreign-language teachers need to know *who their students are* (cultural background), *what the students bring to the class* (levels of motivation and attitudes), and *what the students need* (what they need to use the language for). Once the focus is strongly on the actual needs, most of the educational settings will be based on clear objectives that are closer to the learners' expectations and reality.

Although the designed reading materials in this study represent a new attempt at teaching English as a foreign language, teachers may be unaware of its methodological aspects, such as initiating in their students the potential to read and comprehend.

Conclusions

In this study, we have seen evidence of how EFL Intermediate students comprehend and make inferences while reading an EFL text. When they read a text with a familiar topic from the native culture, EFL students appear to be able to use their prior knowledge to predict the meaning about its content and thus better understand the information in the text. However, when reading a text from an unfamiliar culture, EFL Intermediate students appear to have to depend more on the language of the text for understanding. If they fail to understand a sentence because of lack of vocabulary or knowledge of syntax, the EFL students may be unable to guess the meaning of the content. Thus, they may understand the text through the screen of their native culture or their imagination toward the target culture. However, when a text is not very culturally specific, e.g., culturally common, they may rely not only on their background knowledge of the native culture but also on their general prior knowledge of a universal culture.

It is realized that EFL students find texts related to their culture more comprehensible than texts related to other topics. When learning a foreign language, students are influenced by a number of factors that affect their language achievement. Among these factors are their age, language ability, their interests, attitude and motivation making these factors work towards a more positive effect depends on the teacher, the resources, the syllabus, classroom situation, the availability of learning materials and the teaching methodology. The environment, in fact, affects the learners' general motivation, attitudes, expectations and acceptance. So learners should take more responsibility for their learning and should be trained to use the various resources around them for self-study and should realize that teachers cannot teach them all the knowledge and skills they need to know. Self-motivation is an important element and more effective where both the teachers and the learners should acquire and develop. Moreover, it has been suggested that performing well or poorly in a language learning program could influence the learners' attitudes towards the people or the culture represented. Hence, it seems that negative attitudes could result in poor performance, which in turn may diminish the opportunity for the benefits to be gained through acquiring the language.

We thus have quite clear guidelines to enable the teacher or materials writer to plan reading activities that will give the learners training in the reading-and-comprehending process. The teacher (or materials writer) chooses tasks for the students to perform while they read, in light of the type of text, its organization, its content, the new language it contains and -most importantly - the reading styles that are appropriate for the act of comprehending. So, classroom's reading activities are designed to teach students the reading comprehension process.

Since the background knowledge of EFL readers plays a critical role in their comprehension of the passage, teachers should make sure that the passage is on a topic that is known or familiar to their students. If the passage deals with an unknown familiar topic, there are two possibilities; either it can be rejected or students can be made familiar with the topic. The difficulty with the latter is that the more time we spend teaching our students about the topic of the passage, the less time there is to devote to the actual purpose of the reading class-learning reading skills and strategies.

The factor of background knowledge in EFL reading texts may be seen as an issue of course design. However, if one of the goals of the reading course or programme is to broaden the students' knowledge of the English-speaking world, then having the students read passages about the societies and cultures of English-speaking countries would be appropriate. Time spent in reading class expanding the students' knowledge on such topics would be meeting one of the goals of the course. However, if increasing students' knowledge of the English-speaking world is not one of the goals of the reading course, the reading teacher might not care to spend class time building up her students' background knowledge of the English speaking world.

In conclusion, further studies involving a larger number of EFL students from different cultural backgrounds need to be undertaken before the importance of cultural content schemata in EFL reading comprehension can be fully examined. However, while this study may have been restricted by the limitations discussed in Chapter 1, the results presented appear to provide evidence of the importance of familiar cultural content in the reading comprehension of EFL Intermediate level students. These findings also suggest, as others

before it, that in EFL classrooms, cultural content schemata may be of primary importance as well.

In other words, it has been suggested so far that the world the learner knows is the basis for his/her learning because it provides a natural starting point for a school programme. The school should help the learner to understand and interpret experiences in the local environment and then extend his/her knowledge and understanding to other places, times and cultures.

It is enjoyable to see the situation more clearly after the writing of this dissertation. There is a strong feeling that the writing of this dissertation has offered the researcher great value and the researcher is now well prepared and eager to put what has been learned into practice.

Suggestions for future research

To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first attempt to examine the effect of cultural content schemata on EFL reading comprehension among Intermediate level students in Bahrain. The results of this study have demonstrated that, while familiar cultural content in a foreign language text may compensate for EFL students' low level of language proficiency, the degree to which background knowledge can facilitate the understanding of the text seems to depend on the readers' foreign language competence. Based on the findings of many studies, the current trend in EFL reading materials is to focus primarily on the target culture. However, having done this study, it is found that in addition to that, providing EFL Intermediate students with culturally familiar-reading materials is also very important. In addition, this study suggests several issues which should be addressed in future research.

- As this study involved only a limited number of Bahraini students from one proficiency level, further studies are needed to examine the effects on more students of other language proficiency levels and other cultural groups;

- As the texts used were descriptive, future researchers may use other types of texts such as narrative, expository, etc. to investigate the role of cultural content schemata on the EFL reading comprehension for Intermediate students;
- This study investigated only the effect of cultural content schemata. Future studies may pay more attention to examine the effect of formal schemata on EFL reading comprehension.
- Similar studies are recommended for other subject matter areas to get a broader picture of the nature of the content of the entire curriculum.
- At the same time the experimental models could be used in various ways to throw more light on the cultural content schemata. Research of this sort will help us determine when content schemata have the most powerful influence.

The results of this study can guide researchers in future investigations of the reading process. First, the data suggest that reading is an open-ended process, beginning with the background to the reader's first exposure to the text, and having a complex comprehension process that may continue indefinitely. Second, reading is a dynamic process including variables, which lie beyond the parameters of currently accepted definitions of reading. These perspectives and their interactions provide fertile ground for new areas of research.

It is hoped that this study will offer useful information for language researchers, curriculum developers and textbooks editors, with which they can better understand the nature of reading comprehension and therefore prepare more effective English teaching materials for students who learn English as a foreign language.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A

A copy of the designed reading materials:

- Reading comprehension course for the experimental group
- Reading comprehension course for the control group

READING COMPREHENSION COURSE

(AN EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM READING PROGRAMME
FOR BAHRAINI STUDENTS)



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Map of the Course				
Unit	**Topic**	**Reading Skills**	**Vocabulary**	**Grammar**
1	**Sports Battle** Newspaper article	*Read the text*: Scanning *Check your understanding*: 1. Meaning from context 2. Extracting relevant information	Count nouns	Reported Speech
2	**Ramadan Celebrations** Annual events relationships	*Read the text*: Skimming *Check your understanding*: 1. Relations between parts of a text 2. Details	Word fields	Subject/verb agreement; simple present
3	**Souq Al Maqasses** Historical market non-fiction	*Read the text*: Gist *Check your understanding*: 1. Meaning from context 2. Extracting relevant information	Partitives	Comparative and superlative forms of adjectives
4	**Bahrain Traditional Medicine**	*Read the text*: meaning from context *Check your understanding*: 1. Meaning from context 2. Extracting relevant information	Illnesses	Wh-questions word/ Genitive's

INTRODUCTION

This course is designed to improve Intermediate students' reading skills in English. Some of the texts are prepared and written by myself. However, the rest were adapted from a variety of authentic sources. The adaptation took the following forms: summarizing, simplifying, merging from several sources and writing the appropriate tasks.

This course consists of eight units. The first four units are designed for an experimental group, while the other four are designed for a control group Each unit contains pre-reading activities, comprehension exercises, discussion points, vocabulary work, grammar practice and a related writing task. Though students will meet quite complex language, the tasks they are asked to do are at their level of ability. An answer key is provided for the teacher and for students using the book on their own.

Each unit consists of nine sections (Eckstut and others, 1991). The nine sections of each unit are described below.

What about you?

This section includes discussion points to introduce students to the general subject of the text and arouse their interest. The discussion points activate students' previous knowledge on the subject and relate the material to their own experience. Students should share all information with each other as the more background knowledge they possess on a subject the more comprehensible texts will be.

In many units new vocabulary also appears in this section. Students who know the meanings of any of these words can explain them to others. If not, the teacher will need to explain.

Students should look at this section before they see the text, and students working on their own should also consider these questions.

Before you read

This section introduces students to the text. The activities use the visuals and graphics to help students learn as much as they can about the text before they actually read it. Other activities ask students to scan the text for specific information and/or to predict its contents.

Read the text

Students are asked to read the text in order to complete a specific task. This may include skimming the text, checking the correctness of their predictions. In this way students always have a reason for reading the text.

Text
The text appears after the pre-reading tasks. Visuals that accompanied the original text and/or aid comprehension also appear with the text.

Check your understanding
These exercises are designed to teach comprehension, not to test it. They draw attention to the writer's main points, help students understand difficult areas of a text, and give them practice in skills that they can transfer to their reading outside of the classroom.

Some of the skills dealt with in this section include:

- Guessing meaning from context
- Understanding explicitly stated information
- Understanding implicitly stated information
- Understanding details
- Understanding the main idea
- Understanding relations between parts of a text

What do you think?
Students relate what they have read to their own experience. They should discuss their feelings about what they have read and the implications of points raised by the writer.

Vocabulary focus
This section takes students beyond the reading lesson and allows them to work on extending their vocabulary in a specific lexical area. The exercises in this section are based on one or more lexical items, which appear in the text. They recycle and practice vocabulary in contexts outside the text and help students build up their vocabulary through word study.

Grammar focus
This section focuses students' attention on a particular structure, which occurs in the text. Structures chosen normally occur in course material at this level and/or are problematical for students.

Writing task
The writing tasks are designed to extend the topic of the unit rather than to practice specific vocabulary or structures. Some tasks ask students to write a description or instructions for a subject related to that of the text. By finishing the unit with a written task, students have the opportunity to consolidate what they have learnt.

Unit 1

Sports Battle

* **What about you?**

1. What kind of sports do you like?
2. Which sports club do you prefer? Why?
3. Do you prefer watching a football match to a basketball match? Why/Why not?
4. Would you like to be a great athlete one day?

* **Before you read**

1. What is the title of the article below?
2. Who wrote it?
3. What is it about?
4. Do you think it will be interesting or boring?



* Read the text

Read the article. Did you predict what the article is about?



Manama v Ahli: Let battle commence

HE non stop excitement of atelco Basketball League venings will climax today ith the coronation of the new hampions.

Will it be Al Ahli or Al Manama? Venue: Juffair ome. Time: 7pm. Both teams ave won one game each in e best of three final.

Whenever Manama and hli have come to cross words, basketball fans have een blessed with some of the ost thrilling moments.

In the last two matches of the Golden Square, each showed its capability to strike.

In the first match it was Ahli who took Manama by surprise and proved to be superior both in technique and skill.

Coach Andrew Young made his players work out the moves he had prepared on the board.

The speed with which Manama moves was checked effectively by Ahli. Manama was denied space to move into the board. There was Nedal

Raghava Varma
Staff Reporter

Abbas sparkling all the way. He is fast and goes for the ball well both in the air as well as on the ground. Ahli's trump-card, Murtaza Mohammed was in his element too.

More importantly, Ahli played a brilliant team game to win the day 70-66 and gained the vital psychological advantage of going one up.

However, Manama did not let Ahli get away with that advantage in the second final last Thursday. They came prepared. Manama played their usual fast game with confidence. It was Ahli's turn to succumb to the hiccups.

Even though Shahram and Hussain Qahri could not rise to the occasion, there was Nuh Najaf the captain to take the attack to the rivals. Nuh played a wonderful game with timely help from Ameer and Ali Yousuf. The match was a low scoring one which shows how hard both teams had to work for points. Manama equalised the series with a 59-46 win.

Since both teams are equally strong, and have played against each other so many times, it all depends on how each perfoms on court today. Now, it is down to the players. No more chances. Today or any other day this year.

● Manama Club will be awarded the Excellence Cup for the basketball league season. This is the fourth time Manama have won the cup, which will be presented after the final.

Manama has 11 points with Khaleej Club second with five points. Sitra is third (4). Isa Town (3) and Rasl Man (2) follow in the list. The clubs will be presented BD15 each for each point they won on the excellence scale.

* **Check your understanding**

1. Match the definitions with the words in the text. Write the words from the text in the blanks. Look at number 6 as an example:

1. the condition of being full of strong, pleasant feeling; not calm (paragraph 1) _____
2. the most powerful or interesting part of the match (paragraph 1) _____
3. a person who has won competitions of courage, strength, or skill (paragraph 1) _____
4. very keen followers or supporters of a sport or famous person (paragraph 3) _____
5. a person who trains sportsmen and sportswomen for games, competitions, etc. (paragraph 6) _____
6. an act of violence intended to harm (paragraph 11) **attack**

2. Read each statement. If the statement is correct put a tick (✓). If the statement is wrong, put a cross (X), and correct the statement. Look at number 5 as an example.

1. Basketball fans were highly excited. ( )
2. In the first match it was Manama who took Ahli by surprise. ( )
3. Manama did not let Ahli get away with that advantage in the second final match. ( )
4. Both teams were equally strong. ( )

Manama Club

5. Ahli Club won the match and got the Excellence Cup for basketball this season. (X)

* **What do you think?**

1. Did you watch the Manama and Ahli basketball match on T.V?
2. Do you think the match was interesting?
3. Do you like the final score? Why/Why not?
4. Do you think the players of both teams played well?
5. Would you like to have a sportswomen's team in Bahrain? Why? Do you think it will succeed?

* Vocabulary focus

- Find five nouns from the article in the box. Put a circle around each of them, (they appear only once in the box). Look at the example:

t	h	o	b	m	c	h	a	m	p	i	o	n
e	i	d	i	r	o	u	f	v	s	q	w	a
a	t	e	o	i	m	o	m	a	p	k	u	y
m	m	f	w	o	e	a	i	o	y	t	v	s
u	a	f	a	n	s	g	h	u	o	p	e	p
r	k	j	f	c	o	a	c	h	i	p	c	e
s	e	y	p	n	m	a	v	a	i	c	b	e
r	r	j	p	m	u	e	w	v	m	b	f	d
s	t	r	i	k	e	o	k	e	m	o	i	u
n	m	o	c	a	n	i	o	q	w	o	q	p

2. Fill in each blank with one of the words from the box above. (Note: the first one is done for you.)

a. Football is a **team** game.
b. A tennis ----------.
c. The famous singer employed two people to answer his ---------- mail.
d. Both teams showed their ability to ----------.
e. They won because of their ---------- with the ball.
f. Andrew Young is a good ----------.

* Grammar focus

The reporter said, "Both teams **are** equally strong."

The reporter said (that) both teams **were** equally strong.

1. Change these sentences into reported speech.
a. Ali will help you.
He said _____
b. I like my new house
She said _____
c. Can I borrow your pen?
She asked _____

2. Read what Hala said to her friend Amal.

" My mother is not very well so I've decided to stay at home to look after her. When she gets better, I'll go back to work."

Now write what Hala said:

Hala said that her mother_____
_____
_____ She
also said that when _____
_____.

* **Writing task**

- Think of some famous sportsmen/sportswomen.
- Who is your favorite sportsman/sportswoman?
  Why do you like him/her?

Write **a letter** to your favorite famous sportsman/sportswoman.
Ask him/her some questions. Tell him/her something interesting about yourself.

Unit 2

Ramadan Celebrations

* **What about you?**

1. Which month of the year do you think is the most interesting? Why?
2. Do you remember anything special about Ramadan?
3. Which celebrations in Ramadan do you like the most? Why?

* **Before you read**

A. Look at the picture below:

1. What are these children doing?
2. What are they holding?
3. Where are they going?
4. When does that usually happen ?

B. Have you ever done the same? Talk about your own experience.



* Read the text

Read the text. Did you guess what the text is about even before you read it ?
Yes No

Celebrations of the Holy Month (Ramadan)

The measurement of time also has its own traditional form in Bahrain. The Islamic year is a lunar one of twelve months, each of 29 or 30 days; it lasts for 354 days and is about 11 days shorter than the solar year. The lunar year repeats itself every thirty-one years. The calendar began in AD 622 with the emigration of the Prophet Mohammed to Madina.

Ramadan is a holy month respected by the Muslim community in the world. Muslims fast from dawn to sunset. They pray, read the Qura'an and visit each other to exchange good wishes. During Ramadan, Bahrainis celebrate many activities, such as on the night of the 14th of Ramadan. Children wear their best clothes and go around with cotton bags and drums, calling on their neighbours to give them mixed sweets, dried figs and nuts *(girga'oun)*. Some of them hold more than one bag, claiming that they are for their brothers or sisters. Sometimes children fight to get their girga'oun first. The young people form bands and perform dances while going round the houses, and in return receive a small amount of money or some *girga'oun*.

Before dawn, during Ramadan, a Ramadan drummer *(Al-Mussaher)* walks from street to street, beating his drum, to wake people for their last meal before the beginning of the fast. In the middle of Ramadan, the drummer collects *girga'oun* and dried dates from people. At the end of Ramadan, he sings goodbye. Some children and young people like following him clapping and singing loudly. People like watching him, especially children. On the first day of Eid, people give him money, rice and corn.

Celebrations of Eid Al Fitter start on the first day of Shawal and continue for a week. Families put on their best clothes and exchange good wishes. In the afternoon, there are celebrations: musical groups perform traditional dances and many other interesting ativities.

* Check your understanding

A. Read the text again. Then match each word in column A with the correct word in column B. Write the correct letter next to the correct word in column A. Look at number 1 as an example. (Be careful there are two extra answers in column B).

Column A			Column B	
1.	they (line 7)	(b)	a.	people
2.	them (line 11)	( )	b.	Muslims
3.	his (line 17)	( )	c.	families
4.	their (line 17)	( )	d.	children
5.	their (line 23)	( )	e.	clothes
			f.	musical groups
			g.	Al-Mussaher

B. Read each statement. If the statement is correct put a tick (✓). If the statement is wrong, put a cross (X), and correct the statement. Look at number 1 as an example.

1. Children go round on the night of the 14th of Ramadan exchanging good wishes.(X)
Calling for girga'oun

2. After dawn, Al-Mussaher walks from street to street beating his drum. ( )
3. Al-Mussaher wakes people for their last meal before they fast. ( )
4. Celebrations of Ramadan start on the first day of Shawal. ( )
5. On the first day of Eid people put on their best clothes and exchange good wishes. ( )

* **What do you think?**

1. Do you like "*girga'oun*"? Why/Why not?
2. Do you prefer to celebrate Ramadan in Bahrain or somewhere else? Why/Why not?

* **Vocabulary Focus**

1. Put a circle around the word which is different from the others. (Note: the words in the text). Look at the example

Example: milk water bread

1. oranges figs apples grapes
2. table chair cotton board
3. jewelry shirt skirt scarf
4. cleaning washing fasting flushing
5. rice corn spaghetti money

2.

mix sweets, dried figs and nuts.

mix is a verb.
mixture is a noun.

Fill in the blanks with four nouns from the verbs below. Look at the text again to help you.

VERB	NOUN
a. celebrate	----------
b. sing	----------
c. collect	----------
d. clap	----------

3. Fill in each blank with a word from exercise 2.

a. The people liked the singer and gave him a ----------.
b. Birds ---------- loudly in the early morning.
c. We ---------- the New Year with a party.
d. Fatma has a very good ---------- of foreign stamps.

• **Grammar Focus**

1. Fill in the blanks with the present simple forms of the verb (Note: you can use verbs from the text). Look at the example.

Subject	Verb	Subject	Verb
I	_____	We Nawal and I	_____ _____
You	_____		
He She It Celebration	_____ _____ _____ Starts	They the children	_____ _____

2. In this exercise you have to put the verb into the correct form.
Example: Al-Mussaher **walks** (walk) from street to street to wake people up.

1. Children----------(go) around with cotton bags and drums.
2. Young people----------(receive) a small amount of money or some girga'oun.
3. Al-Mussaher----------(collect) girga'oun and dried dates from people.
4. Eid Celebrations usually----------(start) on the first day of Eid.
5. During Eid, women----------(gather) in large courtyards.
6. They----------(wear) their finest dresses and jewelry.

* **Writing Task**

Write statements about your own experience of Ramadan in your country. Use the text as a model.

Unit 3

Souq Al-Mogasees

* **What about you?**

- Do you like shopping? Why/Why not?
- What do you usually buy?
- To which market do you like to go?
- When do you usually go?

* **Before you read**

The following text is about popular markets in Bahrain in general and Souq Al Mogasees in particular from early times to the present.

Look at the list of words below. Put a tick (✓) next to the words which you think will be in the text.

shopping ( )	women ( )	import ( )
local ( )	goods ( )	pottery ( )
bargain ( )	children ( )	credit cards ( )
museum ( )	fishing equipment ( )	



* Read the text

Read the text. Did you guess the correct words? Check your answers.

Souq Al-Moqasees

Bahrain has been famous for its popular markets since early times. These markets were gathering places and very active centers for selling various goods made locally or imported from India, Persia, Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula. Among the important markets were "Souq AL-Moqasees", "Souq Al-Kharda", together with individual markets for selling dates, wood and pearls. There were also open-air markets, which were held on certain days of the week such as the Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday markets.

In the past and up to the present , "Souq Al-Moqasees" is a very popular shopping venue and one of the most interesting markets in Bahrain. It is held near Manama Central Market and is invariably attended by a bustling crowd of Bahrainis and many people of different nationalities. Some people go there to buy either new or second hand goods, while others go there to watch and have fun.

A wide variety of local goods are sold there including pottery, mats, baskets, and clothes as well as domestic birds. In addition, many imported goods are also available like furniture, carpets, plants and others.

The souq hasn't changed much over the years. In the souq it may be necessary to bargain a little. Sometimes some goods can be bought for half price. This can be fun. You will find that all times traders are extremely cordial in typical Bahrain style.

* Check your understanding

A. Put a circle around the correct answer.

1. Gather (line 2) means:
   a. to come together
   b. to obtain

2. Import (line 3) means:
   a. to bring in goods from abroad
   b. to send goods out for sale

3. Cordial (line 18) means:
   a. warmly friendly
   b. fruit juice

B. Complete the information in the box with words from the text. Look at number 1 as an example:

1. Various goods were made locally or **imported**.
2. There were_____ markets which were held on certain days of the week.
3. Local goods were sold there, such as _____, _____, _____, and _____.
4. The market has changed over the years, now one can _____, and can use _____ in most supermarkets and larger stores.

* **What do you think?**

1. Do you like buying your things from the popular markets or from modern department stores and shopping complexes?
   - Why?

2. What are the differences between them in:

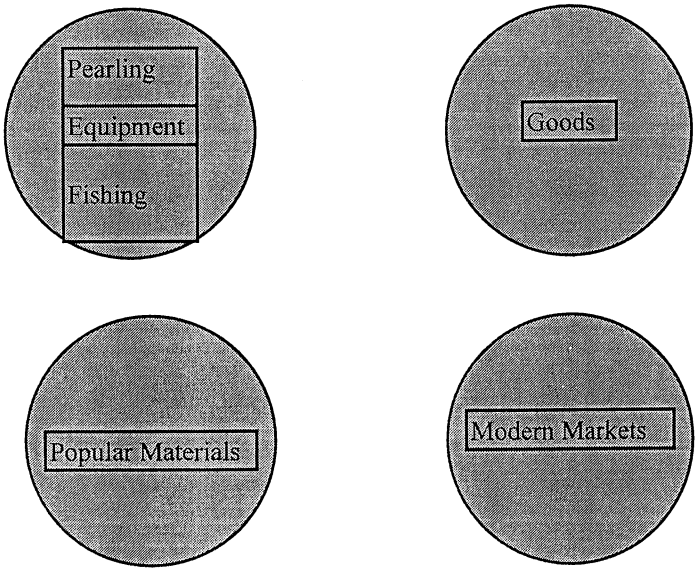
   - the price
   - the quality

* **Vocabulary Focus**

A. Look at the words below. Put a tick (✓) next to each word which you know. Use your dictionary to find the meaning of the words which you do not know.

Local	( )	Pottery	( )	Baskets	( )
Mats	( )	Goods	( )	Clothes	( )
Equipment	( )	Fishing	( )	Import	( )
Coffee shop	( )	Bargain	( )	Pearling	( )
Shopping complexes	( )				

B. Write the correct words from exercise 1 in each circle. Look at the example. (Note: You can use some of the words in more than one circle).



* Grammar focus

Souq Al- Moqasees is **the most interesting** market in Bahrain.

1. Write the comparative (*more isolated, taller*) and superlative (*the most isolated, the tallest*) forms of the adjectives in the correct columns below. Look at the examples:

bad	common	easy	high	safe
big	dangerous	good	isolated	warm
cold	different	healthy	pretty	young

-ER THAN	*-IER THAN*	*MORE... THAN*	*IRREGULAR*
taller than		**more isolated than**	
THE -EST	*THE -IEST*	*THE MOST...*	*IRREGULAR*
the tallest		**the most isolated**	

2. Fill in each blank with the correct form of one the adjectives below. Add ***than*** or ***the*** where necessary. Look at numbers 1 and 2 as examples.

Bad	difficult	good	safe
dangerous	easy	healthy	warm

1. Water in a pool is usually **warmer than** water in the sea.
2. Swimming in an isolated river is one of the **most dangerous** places to swim.
3. Swimming in a pool _____ swimming in a lake or river.
4. _____ time to go swimming is immediately after you have eaten.
5. All exercise is good for you, but swimming is _____exercise of all.
6. Taking exercise at least once a week is _____ taking no exercise at all.
7. The article in this unit was _____ the reading in Unit One.

* Writing Task

1. Write about a funny or embarrassing experience you had in a market. Say:

- When it happened and whom you were with.
- Exactly what happened.
- How you felt at that time.
- How you feel about it now.

2. Write about one of these places in Bahrain:

- Muharraq Central Market.
- Manama Central Market.

- Popular Markets.

* Use these ideas in your writing:

- Title.
- Location.
- Visiting hours/Shopping hours.
- Things to see and buy.

Unit 4

Bahrain Traditional Medicine

* What about you?

1. Look at the pictures below:
   1- What are these two men doing?
   2- Who do you think are they?
   3- What do they use?
   4- Have you ever seen these kinds of operations? If yes, what did you feel?

2. When was the last time you had:

A. a headache — dizziness[1]
   a fever — a serious illness
   epilepsy[2] — jaundice[3]
   a stomach ache — a backache

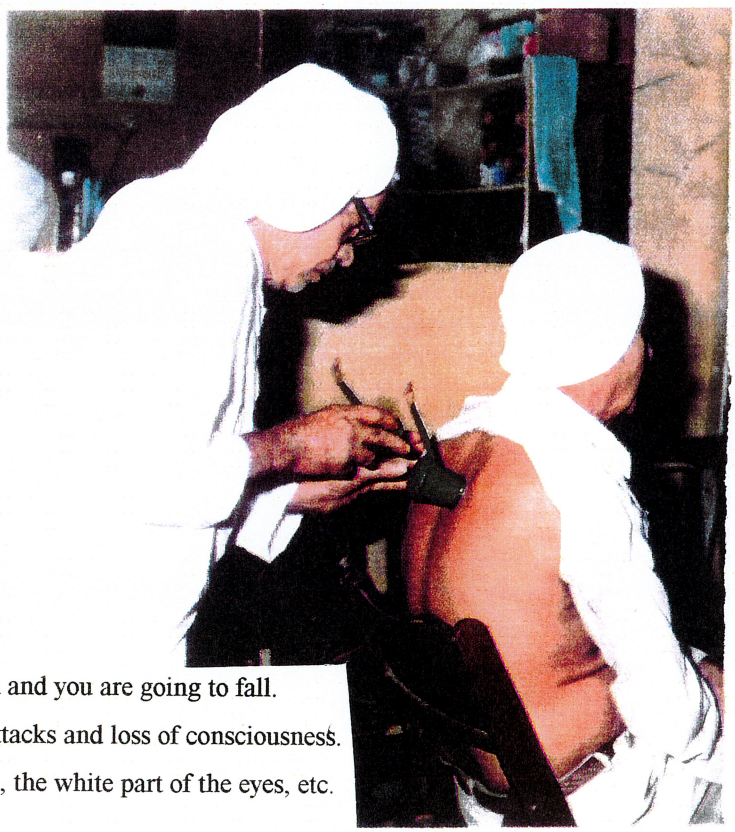
B. What did you do about it?

* Before you read

The text you are going to read is about traditional medicine in Bahrain. Look at the list of words below. Seven of the words appear in the text. The other three words do not. Put a tick (✓) next to the seven words which you think are in the text.

Money	( )	Herbs	( )	Red	( )
Patient	( )	Dizziness	( )	Blood	( )
Nails	( )	An evil eye (al-ayn)	( )	Wash	( )
Minerals	( )	Holy Qur'an	( )		





[1] Dizziness: the feeling that things are turning round you and you are going to fall.

[2] Epilepsy: a disease of the brain which causes sudden attacks and loss of consciousness.

[3] Jaundice: a disease that causes a yellowness of the skin, the white part of the eyes, etc.

* **Read the text**

Read the text. Did you choose the correct words? (Note: do not worry about the words which you do not understand).

Bahrain traditional Medicine

When you are ill, your doctor will probably give you penicillin or another of the "Wonder Drugs". They are called antibiotics and they kill bacteria.

Folk medicine sometimes involves the use of herbs or minerals to cure physical illness. These herbs were bought at the medicine seller (Hawaj) in their dried, liquid or natural state. Sometimes specialists were involved: one specialist (Chawai) cured jaundice, epilepsy and back pains with hot nails, another specialist cured headaches, fevers and dizziness by blood-letting.

Knowledge of herbal medicine is the result of thousands of years of practice. It is mentioned in Sumerian and Egyptian inscriptions, and the Greeks wrote about the subject in the fourth and fifth centuries BC. Later, the Arabs built on this tradition and added new ideas.

Illnesses sometimes can be cured by rituals, such as reading the Qur'an over the patient; drinking water from a China-plate on which Qur'anic verses have been written with saffron water; reading over a cup engraved with Qur'anic verses; or wearing an amulet containing Qur'anic verses as protection. Some people can cast an evil eye (Al-ayn) on somebody whose good fortune they envy. After the "eyer" has been secretly located, the sick person can remove the spell by inhaling smoke from a burning piece of cloth which belongs to the "eyer" or by drinking from the remains of water which the "eyer" had used.

* **Check your understanding**

1. Put a tick (✓) in each correct blank, and guess the meaning of the words in ***italics.***

A. Illness can sometimes be cured by ***rituals***. Does *rituals* mean:

- herbs or minerals. ( )
- customary acts which are often repeated in the same form for the patient. ( )

B. If someone wants to buy a herbal medicine where does he/she go?

- to the chemist. ( )
- to Hawaj. ( )

C. 1. If somebody ***suffers from*** fevers and dizziness he/she can be cured by:

- blood-letting.
- rituals.

2. Does ***suffer from*** mean:
   - to have a pain or illness, usually over a long period of time. ( )
   - to feel good because you do not have a pain or illness. ( )

D. When some people can cast an evil eye (al-ayn) on somebody, they envy his/her good fortune
   - Yes ( )
   - No ( )

2. What does the text tell you about traditional medicine? Put a tick (✓) next to the correct statement.
   1- The medicine seller (Hawaj) never give sick people a herbal medicine. ( )
   2- Back pain was cured with hot nails. ( )
   3- Herbal medicine is mentioned in Sumerian inscriptions. ( )

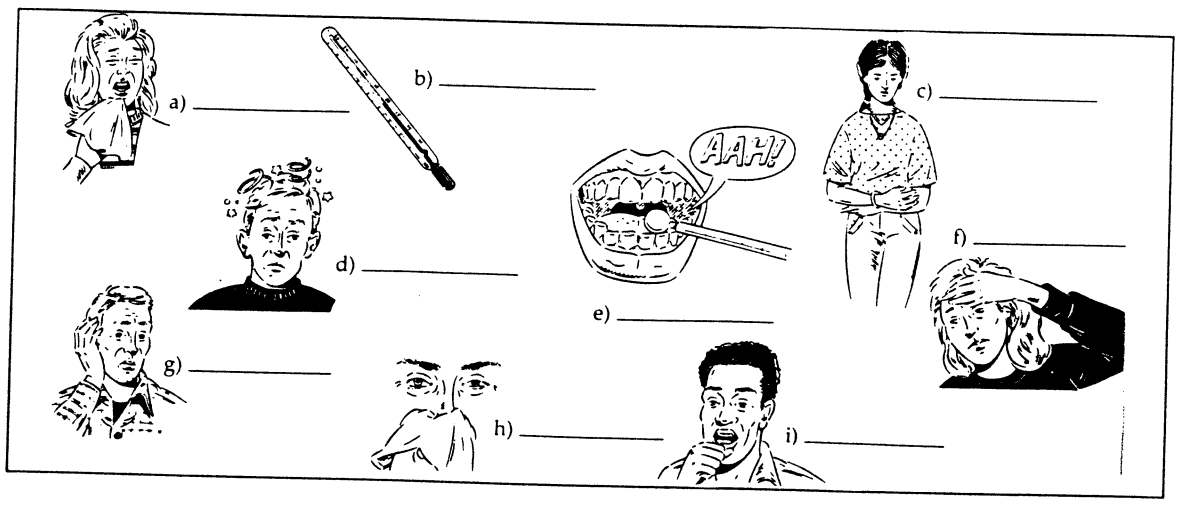
3. Give the opposite of these words:
   a. large
   b. first
   c. ill
   d. a few

* **<u>What do you think?</u>**

- Do you think that traditional medicine is better than new ones for curing sick people? Why/Why not?
- When you have a headache, do you prefer to be cured by bloodletting or by penicillin? Why/Why not?
- If someone advises you to use a herbal medicine instead of chemical ones, which medicine would you prefer?

* **<u>Vocabulary focus</u>**

1. Match each picture with the correct word or phrase in ***italics*** from the box at the top of the next page. Write the correct number in each blank next to the picture.



The last time you were ill		
	Yes	**No**
1. Did you have a ***headache***?	1.	1.
2. Did you have a ***stomachache***?	2.	2.
3. Did you have an ***earache***?	3.	3.
4. Did you have a ***runny nose***?	4.	4.
5. Did you have a ***fever***?	5.	5.
6. Were you ***dizzy***?	6.	6.
7. Did you ***sneeze*** a lot?	7.	7.
8. Did you ***cough*** a lot?	8.	8.

2. Now answer the question in exercise 1 about the last time you were ill. Put a tick (✓) in the correct box after each question.

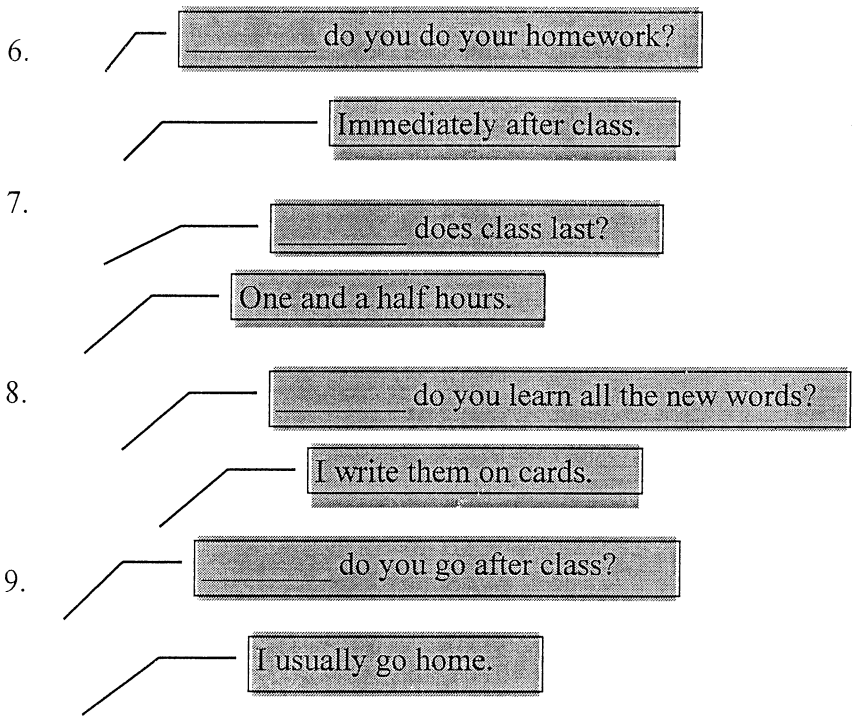
* **Grammar focus**

A.

How often do you visit your doctor in a six-month period? **Wh-questions**

1. Fill in each blank with one of these question words:
How often How long How Who Why When Where What Which
(Note: use each word only once.)

1. _____ do you do in English class?
   Oh, many different things.
2. _____ do you want to learn English?
   I need it for my work.
3. _____ do you have English class?
   Three times a week.
4. _____ books do you like best?
   That's difficult to say.
5. _____ is the best student?
   Ask the teacher.



2. What are your answers to the questions in Exercise 1. Write them in the blanks below.

1- _____
2- _____
3- _____
4- _____
5- _____
6- _____
7- _____
8- _____
9- _____

B.

the specialist**'s** cure

In English we use **'s** with people and animals. In British English if the word is plural and ends in **s** , we only add an apostrophe (')

1. Put **'s** or **'** in each blank.

1. I went to a pearl merchant --- house.
2. The Bahraini lady --- "thoub al-nashel" is a gown of grace and beauty.
3. The woman --- cloak or *daffa* is a long garment which opens at the front. It covers the head and is worn to veil the woman when leaving the house.
4. Bahraini weavers supplied the local markets with cloth for both men --- and women --- clothing.

5. Bahrain ---- pearls were internationally famous for their brilliance, clearness and beauty.
6. A wedding room was prepared in the bride --- house.
7. Traditionally, children --- toys were made by the children themselves.
8. Where are the men --- shoes?

2. Complete the sentences with **'s** or **'**. Look number 1 as an example.

1. My grandfather lives in this house. This is my grandfather 's house.

2. My parents have a friend. She lives in Kuwait. My _____lives in Kuwait.
3. The teacher asked some questions. They were difficult. The_____ were difficult.
4. Dr.Mahmoud has an office. It's on the third floor. _____is on the third floor.
5. My brother has a friend. His name is Ali. My _____is Ali.

* **Writing task**

Write a paragraph about this topic:

- what old people do when they are ill.
- where old people go to be cured.
- what people think about the importance of traditional medicine.

ANSWER KEY

UNIT 1
Sports Battle

Check your understanding
A
1. excitement
2. climax
3. champion
4. fans
5. coach

B
1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T

Vocabulary Focus
1.
- Champion
- fans
- coach
- strike
- speed

2.
b. champion
c. fans
d. strike
e. speed
f. coach

Grammar Focus
1.
a. Ali would help you.
b. she liked her new house.
c. if she could borrow my pen.

2.
Hala said that her mother was not very well so she had decided to stay at home to look after her. She also said that when her mother got better, she would go back to work.

UNIT 2
Ramadan Celebrations

Check your understanding
A
1. children
2. Muslims
3. Al Mussaher
4. people
5. families

B
2. F
3. T
4. F
5. T

Vocabulary Focus
1.
1. oranges
2. cotton
3. jewelry
4. fasting
5. money

2.
a. celebration
b. song
c. collection
d. clapping

Grammar Focus

1. go
2. receive
3. collects
4. start
5. gather
6. wear

UNIT 3
Souq Al Mogasees

Check your understanding
A.

1. a
2. b
3. a
4. a

B.

2. open air
3. pottery , mats, baskets and clothes
4. buy / credit card

Vocabulary Focus

B.

Goods: mats-pottery baskets-clothes
Popular materials: mats-pottery baskets
Modern markets: credit cards - shopping complexes

Grammar Focus

A.

Bad worse worst
Good better best
big bigger biggest
cold colder coldest
easy easier easiest
high higher highest
healthy healthier healthiest
young younger youngest
common more common most common
dangerous more dangerous most dangerous

B.

3. healthier than
4. the worst
5. the best
6. better than
7. easier than / more difficult than

UNIT 4
Bahrain traditional medicine

1.

a. 2
b. 2
c. 1/1
d. 1

2.

1. F
2. T
3. T

Vocabulary Focus

a. sneeze
b. fever
c. stomach-ache
d. dizzy
e. toothache
f. headache
g. ear-ache
h. runny nose
i. cough

Grammar Focus

A.
1. What
2. Why
3. How often
4. Which
5. Who
6. When
7. How long
8. How
9. When

B. 1.
1. 's
2. 's
3. 's
4. 's - 's
5. 's
6. 's
7. 's
8. 's
9. '

B. 2.
1. parent's friend
2. teacher's questions
3. Dr. Mahmoud's office
4. brother's friend

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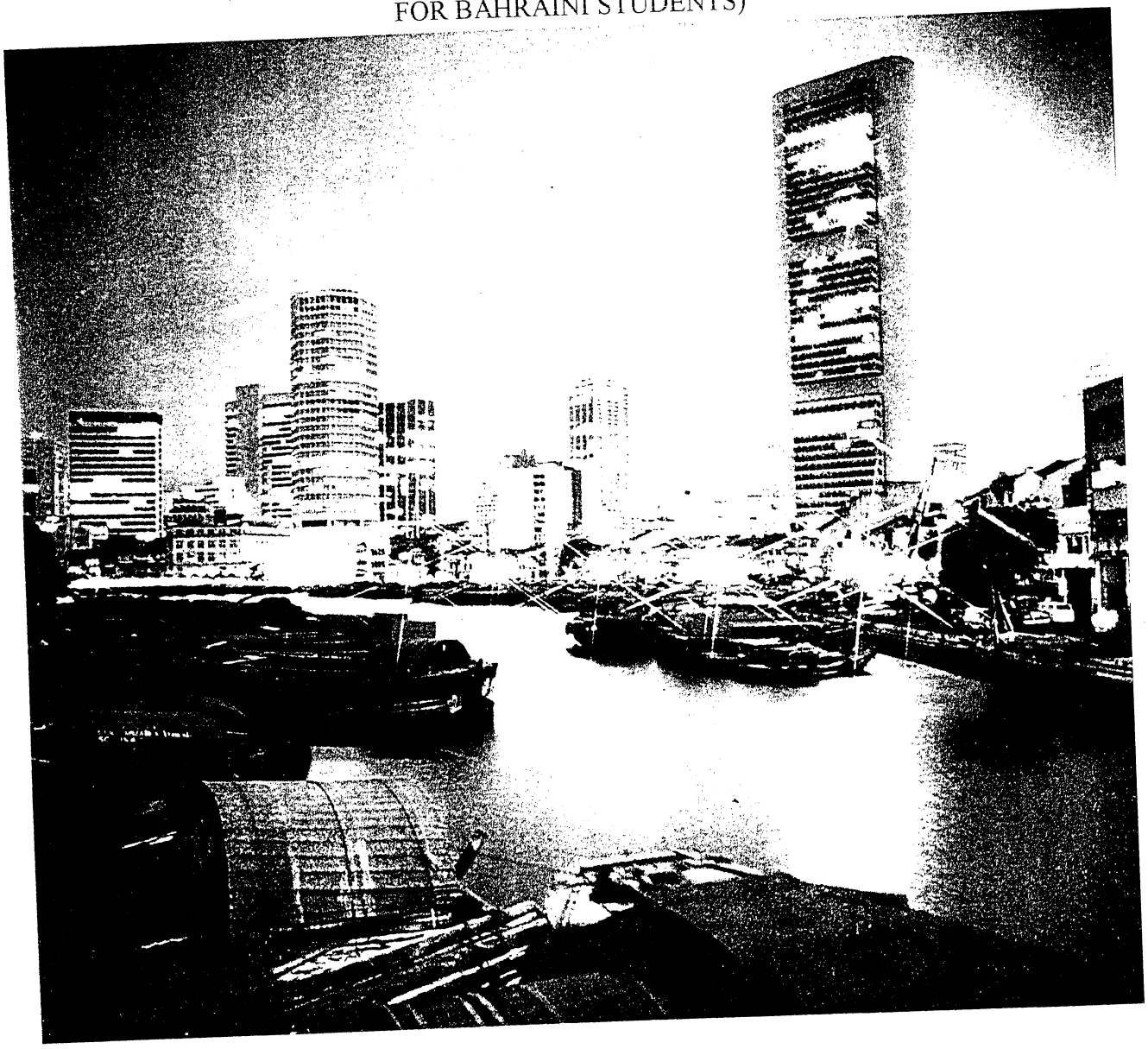
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READING COMPREHENSION COURSE

(AN EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM READING PROGRAMME
FOR BAHRAINI STUDENTS)



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Map of the Course				
Unit	**Topic**	**Reading Skills**	**Vocabulary**	**Grammar**
1	The Church with a Missile on Top	*Read the text*: Scanning *Check your understanding*: 1. Meaning from context 2. Using reference words (details)	Count nouns	Reported Speech
2	The Nootka Live Near the Sea	*Read the text*: Skimming *Check your understanding*: 1. Relations between parts of a text 2. Details	Acronyms Antonyms Synonyms	Subject/verb agreement; simple present
3	The Empire State Building Newspaper article	*Read the text*: Gist *Check your understanding*: 1. Meaning from context 2. Extracting relevant information	Dictionary skills Nouns	Comparative and superlative forms of adjectives
4	The Early Explorer of Mississippi	*Read the text*: Meaning from context *Check your understanding*: 1. Implicity stated information 2. Meaning from context	Antonyms	Wh-questions word/Genitive's

Unit 1

The Church with a Missile on Top

* What about you?

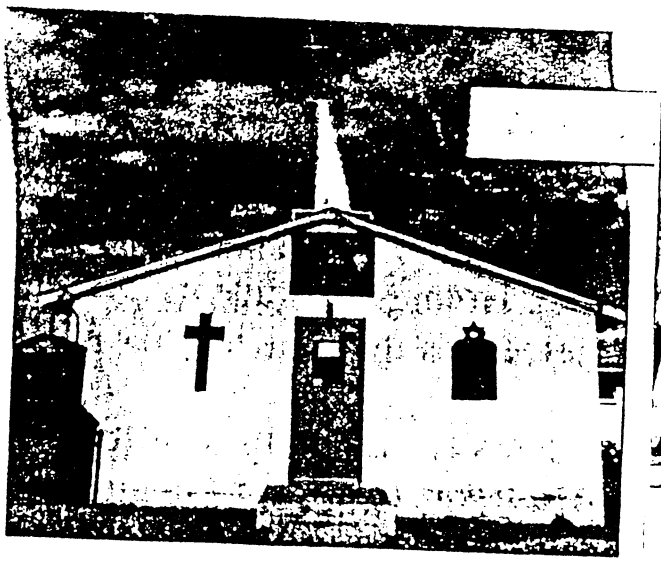
1. Look at the pictures below. What is the subject of these pictures?
2. Have you ever seen a Church? What is it like? Have you ever entered one?
3. How much do you know about Churches?

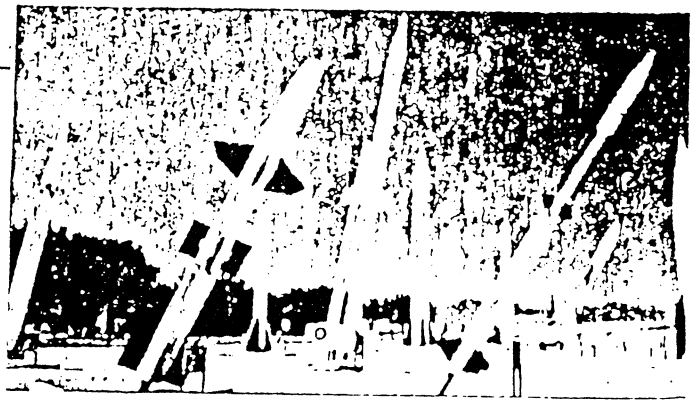
* Before you read

Read the definitions and sentences below. Match the words in *Italics* with the correct definitions. Write the correct words in each blank.

1. _____: a building made for public Christian worship.
2. _____: an explosive weapon, which can rise under its own power (rocket).
3. _____: a small dish for cigarette ash
4. _____: a loud noise caused by an act of exploding.

- He put his cigarette ash in an ***ashtray***.
- ***noise*** in this restaurant I can hardly hear you talking.
- David always goes to the ***Church*** on Sunday.
- When she lit the gas there was a loud ***explosion.***
- All kind of nuclear ***missiles*** are tested in the area.





* **Read the text**

Read the article. Did you write the correct words in the blank? Check your answers.

The Church with a Missile on Top

Where can you find a school with a team called *The Rocket*? Where can you take your children to a Missile Park full of old guided missiles? And where can you find a church that actually has a missile on top?

The answer is El Paso, an American city of 489,000 inhabitants: This is the center of the American missile program, and all kinds of missiles, both nuclear and non-nuclear are tested in the area. Missiles are everywhere in El Paso. People collect them and put them in their gardens. Their ashtrays are made from bits of old missiles, and farmers buy old missiles for their cows to drink water from!

If you live near El Paso, though, life is a bit frightening! In 1947, for example, a rocket was fired and it flew north. Then, for some reason, it changed direction and flew back over El Paso. It made a noise like an express train, said one old inhabitant of the city. The missile flew over the border and landed in the Mexican town of Juarez.

Recently the Americans wanted to simulate a nuclear explosion. They used chemicals to make a mushroom cloud. It looked very realistic, but many people had not been warned about the simulated explosion. They saw the cloud and thought it was the start of World War III !

If you visit the area and feel nervous, please don't worry. You can always relax with a drink at the 'Missile Inn' hotel. The best drinks are in the 'Rocket Bar'.

* **Check your understanding**

1. Match the definitions with words in the text .Write the words from the text in the blanks. Look at number 1 as an example.

1. A group of people who work/play together. (Paragraph 1) _____.
2. A large grassy enclosed piece of land in a town, used by the public for pleasure and rest. (Paragraph 1) _____
3. People who live in a particular place. (Paragraph 2) _____
4. Worried. (Paragraph 5) _____.
5. A place with a counter where alcoholic drinks or food and drinks are sold. (Paragraph 5) _____.

2. What do the following words refer to? Write your answers in the blank. Look at number 1 as an example:

1- This (line 4) **El Paso**
2- Them (line 7) _____
3- Their (line 7) _____
4- Their (line 8) _____
5- It (line 10) _____
6- They (line 14) _____

* **What do you think?**

1. Do you think El Paso is a safe place to live in?
2. Would you like to live in El Paso?
3. If someone wants to take you to visit a place full of missiles. Will you be happy and interested in visiting such an area? Why/Why not?

* **Vocabulary focus**

1. Find six words from the text in the box. Put a circle around each of them. Look at the example:

m	l	n	u	i	r	h	r	b	d	r	h	s	p
i	e	c	h	u	r	c	h	a	n	d	l	w	a
s	g	o	e	k	e	m	d	a	e	j	l	e	r
s	n	l	n	m	l	h	e	r	t	l	q	d	k
i	s	l	u	i	a	d	x	v	b	z	c	j	n
l	e	e	t	n	x	v	d	r	t	q	n	u	d
k	n	t	j	o	p	e	q	w	s	m	l	r	t

2. Fill in each blank with one of the words from the box above.

1- I would like to see a _____ one day.
2- Muslims pray in a mosque, but Christians pray in a _____ .
3- There is a _____ power station in the USA.
4- I like to visit a _____ weekly to have fun and _____ .
5- They _____ stamps and coins.
6- The _____ is a kind of transport.

* **Grammar focus**

The reporter said, "Missiles **are** everywhere in El Paso"
The reporter said (that) Missiles **were** everywhere in El Paso.

1. Change these sentences into reported speech.

a. Andrew will help you.
He said _____
b. I like my new house
She said _____
c. Can I borrow your pen?
She asked _____

2. Read what Laura said to her friend Janet

"My mother is not very well so I've decided to stay at home to look after her. When she gets better, I'll go back to work."

Now write what Laura said:

Laura said that her mother _____
_____
_____. She
also said that when _____
_____.

* **Writing task**

Describe a time when you had to do something of which you were very afraid.
Say:

- When it happened and where.
- Why you had to do it and how long it took you?
- Who was with you and how you felt with other(s) around?
- How you felt when you finally did it and if you ever did it again?

Unit 2

The Nootka Live Near the Sea

* **What about you?**

1. Have you ever visited America? If yes, did you visit the North?
2. Have you ever heard about the Nootka?
3. Who are they?

* **Before you read**

Look at the picture below. This man is from the Nootka tribe.

1. Where do the Nootka live?
2. What do they do?
3. What do they eat?



• **Read the text**

Read the text. Find out if your answers are right.

The Nootka Live Near the Sea

The Nootka live near the sea. They make canoes from trees. When the Nootka go fishing they use the canoes. They fish either close to the coast or out at sea.

The Nootka make their canoes by following these procedures: First, they cut down a tree and remove the branches. Next, they cut the tree in half down the middle. They use one half for each boat. The round part of the tree on the uncut side is the bottom of the boat. The bottom and sides of the canoe should not be very thick, so they cut out the inside of the tree and shape the outside with a knife. When they finish, the sides of the boat are about one finger thick at the top and about two fingers thick at the bottom.

The Nootka put water inside the canoe. They then put hot stones in the water so it becomes very hot. They also heat the outside of the canoe with nearby fires. The hot water and the heat make the wood soft. The Nootka place sticks inside the boat. The sticks stretch the wood and make the inside of the boat wider.The Nootka then make the wooden pieces for the front and back of the canoe. They fasten these pieces to the canoe very tightly with wooden pins, so no water can get in when they use the canoe.

Finally, the Nootka fasten long pieces of wood along the top of the sides. Sometimes they paint pictures on the sides of the canoe.

Check your understanding

1. Read the text again, then match each word in column B with the correct meaning in column A. Write the correct letter in each box. Look at number 1 as an example. (Be careful !! there are two extra answers in column B)

Column A	Column B
1. a group of people who live on the west coast of North America.(line1) (**c**) 2. a long light narrow boat, moved by a paddle. (line 7) ( ) 3. a piece of rock, not very large. (line 11) ( ) 4. make hot. (line 13) ( ) 5.a small thin piece of wood used for a special purpose. (line 13) ( ) 6. to put paint on a surface. (line 19) ( )	a. paint b. stick c. Nootka d. Canoe e. fire f. stone g. wood h. heat

2. Read each statement. If the statement is correct put a tick (✓) If the statement is wrong put a cross (X), and correct the statement. Look at number 1 as an example.

1-The Nootka is a group of people that live under the trees. (X)
near the sea.

2- The Nootka like fishing. ( )
3- They fish either close to the coast or out at sea. ( )
4- They don't make the canoes themselves. ( )
5- Hot water and heat are used to make the wood hard. ( )

* **What do you think?**

1. Do you like the Nootka's life?
2. What kind of people are they?
3. Would you like to live with them? Why/Why not?

* **Vocabulary focus**

1. Find the words from the text which give you the same meaning of the words below. Write the words in the blanks.

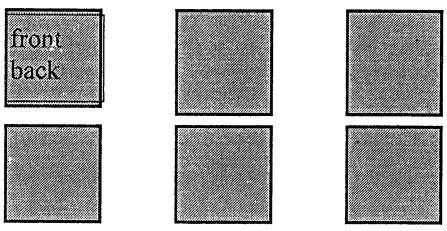
1) _____: hold together.
2) _____: it grows from the main part of the tree, which is the trunk.
3) _____: make into the shape of something.
4) _____: make wider.
5) _____: adjective from the noun *wood*.

2. Look at the words in column A. Find the opposite of each word in column B. Write the correct letter in each box below.

Column A	**Column B**
1. wide ( )	a. short
2. long ( )	b. flat
3. thick ( )	c. narrow
4. bottom ( )	d. thin
5. round ( )	e. top

3. Put the words that belong to the same family together. Choose one word from each column and put them together. For example:

A	B
front	branch
finish	water
fish	toe
finger	cold
hot	begin
tree	**back**



Grammar focus

1. Fill in the blanks with the present simple forms of the verb (Note: you can use verbs from the text). Look at the example.

Subject	Verb	Subject	Verb
I	_____	We Nawal and I	_____ _____
You	_____		
He She It	_____ _____ _____	They the children the Nootka	_____ _____ live

2. In this exercise you have to put the verb into the correct form.
Example: The canoe is (be) a light narrow boat, moved by a paddle.

1. The sun---------- (rise) in the east.
2. Cats ----------(catch) mice.
3. Carpenters ----------(make) things from wood.
4. Trees ---------- (protect) good soil.
5. Rain---------- (wash) away good soil.
6. Farmers ----------(grow) crops.

* **Writing task**

1. The following three paragraphs describe how an Eskimo builds an igloo (a house made of hard icy blocks of snow as built by Eskimos). Put them in the right order:

The man finds the right kind of snow. It is thick, and will be the floor of the house.

After this the man stands in the circle and cuts pieces, or blocks, of snow. These are about 8 by 48 centimeters. He places the blocks around the circle.

He then draws a circle. The circle is 3 to 5 meters across.

2. Imagine that you are planning to visit the Eskimo. Write about:
- things you'll take with you.
- your life there.
- things you would eat, etc.

Unit 3

The Empire State Building

* **What about you?**

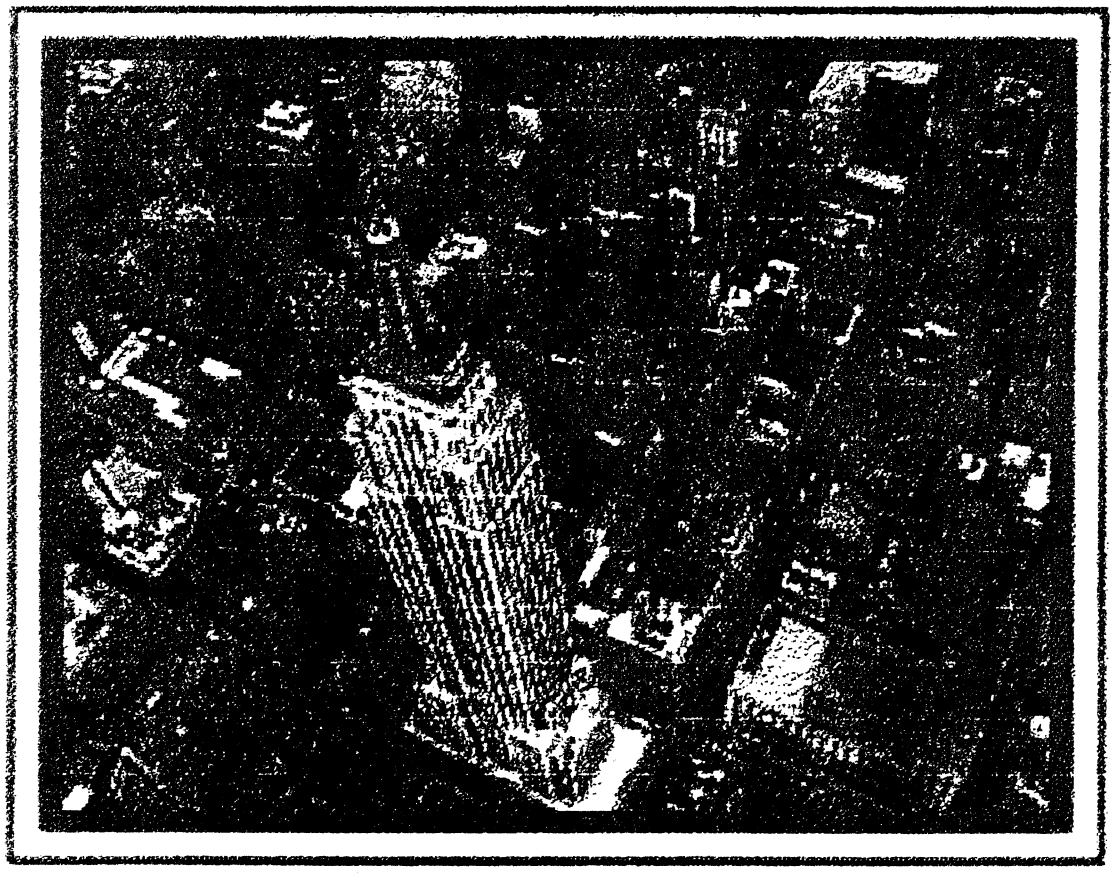
1. Have you ever visited New York city?
2. How much do you know about it?
3. Have you seen The Empire State Building? Try to fill in this chart.

Things you know	Things you are not sure of	Things you would like to know

* **Before you read**

The following text talks about New York city and the Empire State Building. Look at the list of words below. Put a tick (✓) next to the words which you think are in the text.

Hudson River	( )	Jeble Al Dukhan	( )
The Island of Manhattan	( )	Liberty	( )
Sky-scrapers	( )	Most-Hated city	( )
The Empire State Building	( )	Christmas tree	( )



* **Read the text**

Read the text. Did you guess the correct words? Check your answers.

The Empire State Building

NEW YORK CITY is situated at the mouth of the Hudson River on the East coast of the USA. It is made up of five boroughs with a combined population of over 17 million people. The heart of New York City is the Island of Manhattan, where, in the Midtown and Downtown districts, the buildings 'scrape the sky'.

One of these skyscrapers is the Empire State Building on Fifth Avenue, between 33rd and 34th street. Like the statue of Liberty and Brooklyn Bridge, it is instantly recognized as a symbol which captures the power, energy and excitement of the world's most-loved and most-hated cities.

When the 102-story structure was built in 1931, it was the tallest building in the world. From the top, on a clear day, you can see over a 50-mile radius. Its towering height and distinctive Art Deco style made the Empire State Building an instant success with the public.

Its record as the world's tallest building has since been beaten - the World Trade Center in New York and the Sears Tower in Chicago are both taller - but the Empire State Building remain uniquely fascinating.

At night it is floodlit with colored lights. Some people love the lights but others complain that their favorite New York building has been turned into the biggest Christmas tree in the world.

* **Check your understanding**

1. Put a circle around the correct answer.

1- Coast (line 3) means:
   a. not fine or smooth
   b. seashore

2- Capture (line 18) means:
   a. to take control of something by force.
   b. to take prisoner

3- Storey (line 22) means:
   a. a room where goods are kept till needed.
   b. a floor or a level in a building

4- Unique (line 35) means:
   a. something unusual
   b. something ordinary

5- Complain (line 38) means:
   a. to express feelings of agreement, happiness, etc.
   b. to express feeling of annoyance, pain, unhappiness, etc.

2. Complete the information in the box with words from the text. Look at number 1 as an example:
   1- New York City is situated on the **east** coast of the USA.
   2- Its_____ is over 17 million people.
   3- The Empire State Building is one of _____ in New York City.
   4- The Empire State Building is a symbol, which captures the _____, _____, and _____.
   5- New York is one of the world's _____ and _____ cities.
   6- The World Trade Center in New York and the Sears Tower in Chicago are both _____ than the Empire State Building, but this building remains.

* **What do you think?**

1. Do you think New York City is interesting?
2. Do you think it is a good place to live in?
3. Do you like living in such places?
4. What do you think of the Empire State Building? Is there a similar one in your country (Bahrain)?
5. "New York City is one of the world's most-loved and most-hated cities", the writer said.
   What do you think of this opinion? Discuss?

* **Vocabulary focus**

1. Look at the words below. Put a tick (✓) next to each word which you know. Use your dictionary to find the meaning of the words that you do not know.

Population	( )	Statue	( )
Coast	( )	Liberty	( )
Island	( )	Bridge	( )
Sky-scrapers	( )	Power	( )
Excitement	( )	Fascinate	( )
Tower	( )	Storey	( )

2. Choose the correct word to fill in the blanks of the following sentences:
   island - liberty - power - energy - excitement
   1) Young people usually have more _____ than the old.
   2) Bahrain is an _____ .
   3) People often have to fight for their _____ .
   4) As the time of the game grew near, the crowd's _____ increased.
   5) You can really feel the _____ of the sun here.

* Grammar focus

- The World Trade Center and the Sears Tower are both **taller than** The Empire State Building.
- New York City is one of the **most-loved** and **most-hated** city in the world.

1. Write the comparative (*more isolated, taller*) and superlative (*the most isolated, the tallest*) forms of the adjectives in the correct columns below. Look at the examples:

bad	common	easy	high	safe
big	dangerous	good	isolated	warm
cold	different	healthy	pretty	young

-ER THAN	*-IER THAN*	*MORE... THAN*	*IRREGULAR*
taller than		**more isolated than**	
THE -EST	*THE -IEST*	*THE MOST...*	*IRREGULAR*
the tallest		**the most isolated**	

2. Fill in each blank with the correct form of one the adjectives below. Add *than* or *the* where necessary. Look at numbers 1 and 2 as examples.

Bad	difficult	good	safe
dangerous	easy	healthy	warm

1. Water in a pool is usually **warmer than** water in the sea.
2. Swimming in an isolated river is one of the **most dangerous** places to swim.
3. Swimming in a pool _____ swimming in a lake or river.
4. _____ time to go swimming is immediately after you have eaten.
5. All exercise is good for you, but swimming is _____exercise of all.
6. Taking exercise at least once a week is _____ taking no exercise at all.
7. The article in this unit was _____ the reading in Unit One.

* Writing task

Describe the biggest city in your country and its tallest building in detail.

UNIT 4

The Early Explorer of the Mississippi

What about you?

1. How much do you know about the rivers in the world?
2. Can you name them?
3. Which is the longest river in the world? How much do you know about it?

Before you read

Read the definitions and sentences below. Match the words in ***italics*** with the correct definition. Write the correct words in each blank.

1. _____: a person controls a certain type of organization or place.
2. _____: land along the side of a river.
3. _____: unofficial news; common talk, perhaps untrue.
4. _____: a group of people formed for some common purpose and often with a leader.
5. _____: a group of animals of one kind, which live and feed together.

- the ***banks*** in the North Sea can be dangerous for ships.
- a ***band*** of robbers.
- all kinds of strange ***rumours*** about Jean are going around.
- the school ***governor.***
- a ***herd*** of elephants.

Read the text

Read the text. Did you write the correct word in each blank? Check your answers.

The Early Explorer of the Mississippi

Hernando de Soto, the Spanish governor of Cuba, was the first white man to reach the banks of the Mississippi. On 3 June 1539 he landed with 730 men and 237 horses at Tampa Bay in Florida. He took possession of the area in the name of the king of Spain, and marched inland in search of gold and rubies. Rumours of fabulous treasure had been brought back and de Soto, who had taken part in the conquest of Peru, believed the undiscovered lands beyond Florida to be a new Eldorado of incredible wealth.

For two years his little band wandered in all directions, killing Indians, destroying and plundering their villages, crossing rivers, mountains and deserts, but the gold proved elusive, search where they might. On 8 May 1541, when half his company had succumbed to disease, privation and Indian arrows, de Soto, following the sound of a herd of wild pigs, found himself on the shores of an immensely broad, muddy river. It was so wide that one could scarcely discern the other bank clearly; in the water could be seen trunks of trees from the green forests lining the river.

The "great river" was the Mississippi. From the point where he had chanced upon it de Soto organized further marches in all directions, but instead of gold he found only mosquitoes - and died of malaria a year later. His men sold his slaves by auction and buried him, but afterwards dug up his body and flung it into the Mississippi, to

persuade the Indians that the 'son of the sungod', as they called him, had not died but had gone on a voyage to the Indian Olympus.

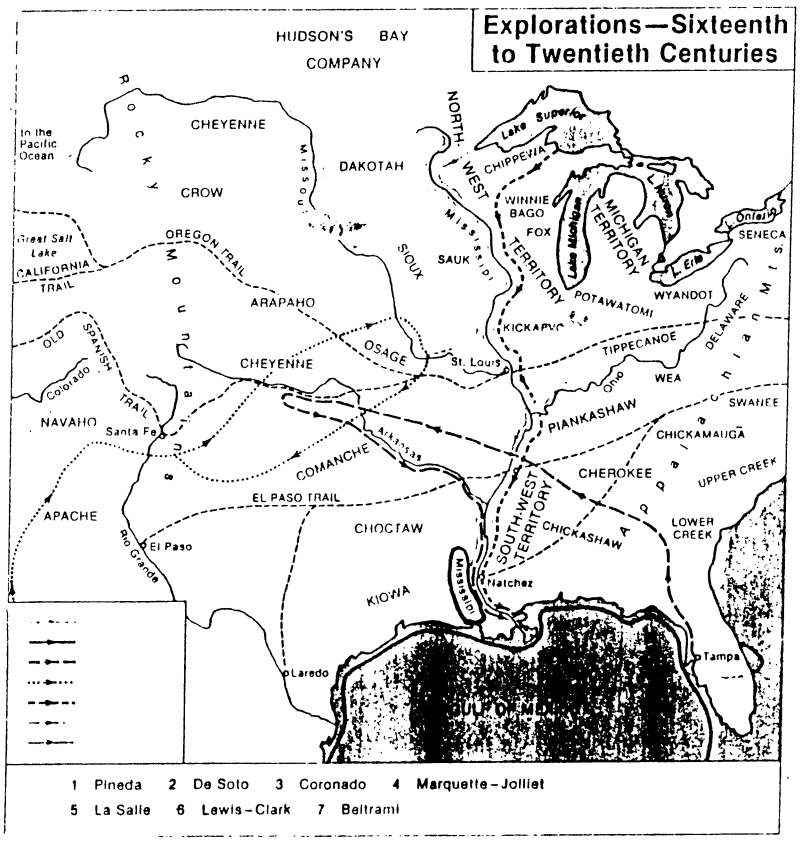
Check your understanding

1. Put a tick(✓) next to the statements which are correct. (Note: you can tick more than one statement)

The text says that:

( ) a. Hernando de Soto was the second white man to reach the banks of the Mississippi.
( ) b. He took possession of Tampa Bay in the name of the King of Spain.
( ) c. The Mississippi was discovered by de Soto on 8th May 1541.
( ) d. The Mississippi was very narrow and muddy.
( ) e. De Soto died of malaria in 1542.

2. After reading the text and looking at this map, can you match the explorer, De Soto, and his route? Be careful! Six explorers in this map have not been mentioned in the text.



What do you think?

1. Do you think Hernando de Soto and his band were successful? Why ? Why not?
2. Why do you think De Soto believed it was so important to discover the lands beyond Florida? What sorts of people are interested in such things?
3. Do you think De Soto's exploration of the Mississippi was an important event? Why?

Vocabulary focus

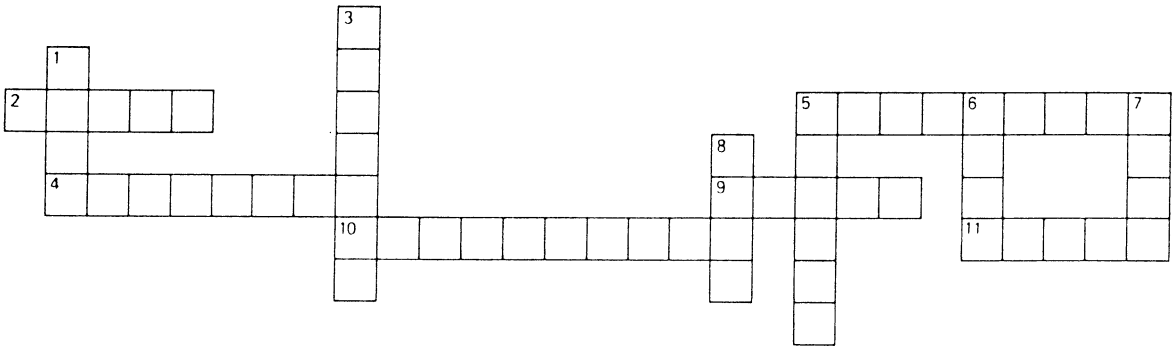
Fill in the crossword puzzle with the opposite of each word in italics. You can look at the text to help you.

ACROSS

2. The bands all get on ***well***
4. We have a ***great*** band
5. before the ***end***
9. ***before*** the end
10. His first try was ***unsuccessful***
11. ***began*** their trip

DOWN

1. De Soto's ***first*** try
3. The ***fastest*** exploration
5. ***Worse*** weather
6. ***All*** of the band
7. Things aren't nearly as ***bad*** as...
8. ***rough*** weather



Grammar Focus

A.

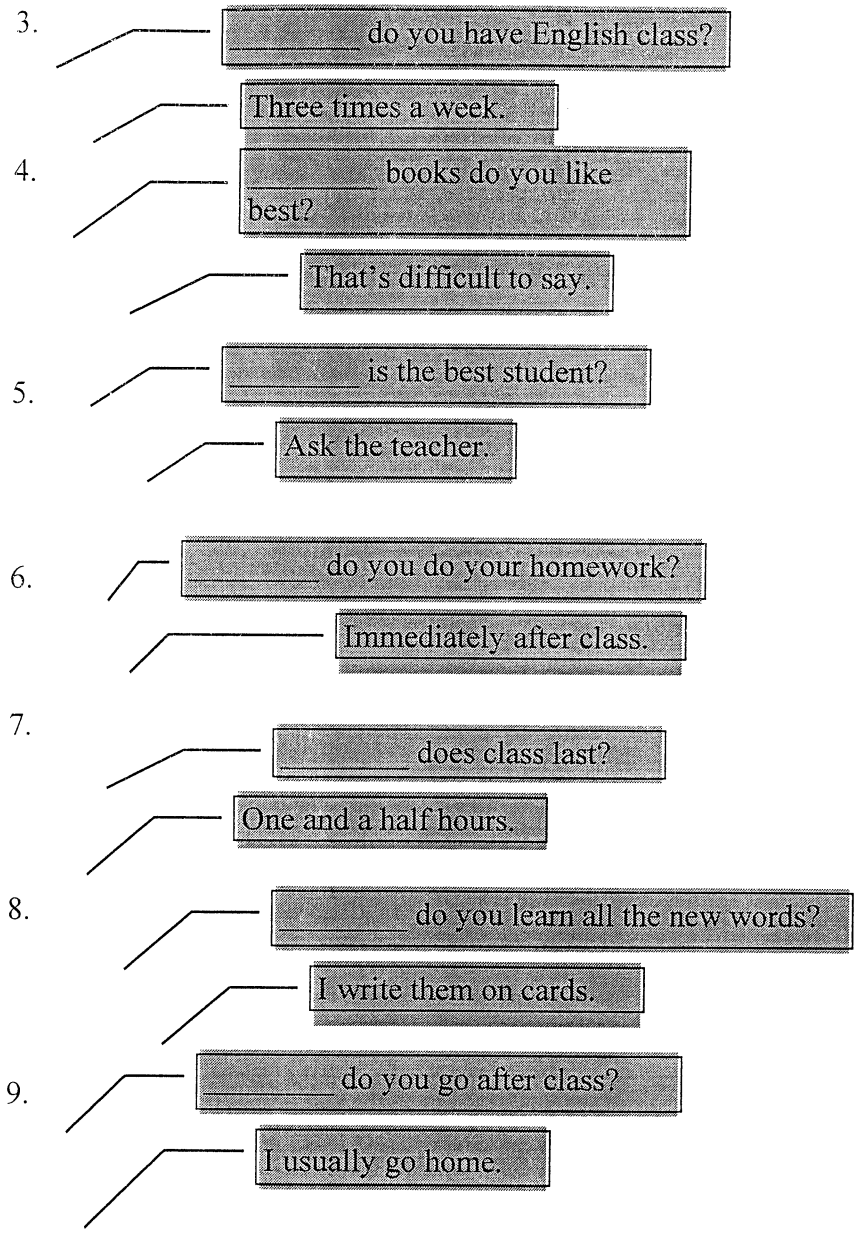
How did de Soto die? **Wh-questions**

1. Fill in each blank with one of these question words:

How often How long How Who When
Where What Which
(Note: use each word only once)

1. _____ do you do in English class?
   Oh, many different things.

2. _____ do you want to learn English?
   I need it for my work.



2. What are your answers to the questions in Exercise 1? Write them in the blanks below.

1- _____
2- _____
3- _____
4- _____
5- _____
6- _____
7- _____
8- _____
9- _____

B.

de Soto's company

In English we use **'s** with people and animals. In British English if the word is plural and ends in **s** , we only add an apostrophe (')

1. Put **'s** or **'** in each blank.

1. I went to girls --- school.
2. The girl --- mother is a doctor.
3. Children --- clothing can be very expensive.
4. The waitresses --- coats are over there.
5. Mr Thompson doesn't remember all of his students --- names.
6. Where are the men --- shoes?
7. Do you know who that man --- wife is?

2. Complete the sentences with **'s** or **'**. Look at number 1 as an example.

1. My grandfather lives in this house. This is my grandfather's house.
2. My parents have a friend. She lives in Kuwait. My _____lives in Kuwait.
3. The teacher asked some questions. They were difficult. The_____ were difficult.
4. Dr. Mahmoud has an office. It's on the third floor. _____is on the third floor.
5. My brother has a friend. His name is Ali. My _____is Ali.

Writing focus

Imagine that there are rumours of fabulous treasure of gold and money and that your grandfather had buried it under the ground of his house, and you believed that story. Write a paragraph about:

- your feeling and your reaction to that news.
- things you might do to get that treasure.

ANSWER KEY

UNIT 1
The Church with a Missile on Top

Check your understanding

1. team
2. park
3. inhabitants
4. nervous
5. bar

2.2.missiles
3. people in El Paso
4. farmers
5. rocket
6. Americans

Vocabulary Focus
2.1. war
2. church
3. missile
4. park / relax
5. collects
6. train

Grammar Focus
1. a. Ali would help you
b. she liked her new house
c. if she could borrow my pen.

2. Lura said that her mother was not very well so she had decided to stay at home to look after her. She also said that when her mother got better, she would go back to work.

UNIT 2
The Nootka Live Near the Sea

Check your understanding
1. 1.c
2. d
3. f
4. h
5. b
6. a

2. 2. T
3. T
4. F
5. F

Vocabulary Focus

1.
1. Fasten
2. branch
3. shape
4. stretch
5. wooden

2.
1. c
2.a
3.d
4.e
5.b

3. finish-begin
fish-water
finger-toe
hot-cold
tree-branch

Grammar Focus
2.
1.rises
2.catch
3. make
4. protect
5. washes
6. grow

UNIT 3
The Empire State Building

Check your understanding
1.
1. b
2. a
3. b
4. a
5. b

2.
1. east
2. population

3. sky scrapers
4. power, energy and excitement
5. most-loved and most-hated
6. taller

Vocabulary Focus
2.
1. energy
2. island
3. liberty
4. excitement
5. power

Grammar Focus
A.

bad	worse	worst
good	better	best
big	bigger	biggest
cold	colder	coldest
easy	easier	easiest
high	higher	highest
healthy	healthier	healthiest
young	younger	youngest
common	more common	most common
dangerous	more dangerous	most dangerous

B.
3. healthier than
4. the worst
5. the best
6. better than
7. easier than / more difficult than

UNIT 4
The Early Explorer of the Mississippi

Check your understanding
1. a. F
b. T
c. T
d. F
e. T

Vocabulary Focus
ACROSS
2. badly
4. terrible
5. beginning
9. after
10.successful

11. ended

DOWN
1. last
3. slowest
5. better
6. none
7. good
8. calm

Grammar Focus
A.
1. What
2. Why
3. How often
4. Which
5. Who
6. When
7. How long
8. How
9. When

B.
1.
1. ’
2. ’s
3. ’s
4. ’
5. ’
6. ’s
7. ’s

2.
1. parent’s friend
2. teacher’s questions
3. Dr. George’s office
4. brother’s friend

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Appendix B

A copy of the testing materials: pre-test and post-tests

for both groups: control and experimental

PRE-TEST

ENGLISH COURSE

1. Read the instructions carefully before you answer the questions.

2. Check your answers before you hand in your paper.

NAME:----------

CLASS:----------(GROUP 1& 2)

MARKS: QUESTION 1----------
QUESTION 2----------
QUESTION 3----------
QUESTION 4----------

TOTAL: ----------

READING

Read the text carefully then answer the questions below:

TEN TORS ENTRY LIMITED TO 2,400

More than 2,000 young walkers are taking part today and tomorrow in the 24th annual Ten Tors Expedition on Dartmoor.

The massed start at Okehampton Camp provides a spectacular sight as the 2,400 walkers, all aged between 14 and 19, and wearing brightly-coloured safety clothing, set off to cover some of the wildest and most beautiful moorland in the Westcountry. More walkers wanted to enter this year but the number has been restricted to 400 teams of six to protect the countryside and for safety.

The Ten Tors is an adventurous event demanding endurance and teamwork. The walkers come from a wide variety of organizations with boys aged 15 and 17 covering 45 miles. Young men aged 18 and 19 hike 55 miles and girls walk 35 miles, although some can take longer routes. Each team has 24-routes to choose from, but they must visit Ten Tors in a certain order and they have to carry enough food to last for the two days as well as their tents and bedding. Times for completing the course can vary widely, but it is expected that the main group will return to the camp by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Hundreds of service men and women have given up their weekend to help to run the event. There will be also support from the Dartmoor Rescue Group, the police, the St. John Ambulance Brigade, volunteer doctors, nurses and others.

The expedition is organized by the Army's South West District Headquarters at Bulford Camp. There will be also support from the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, and the Royal Air Force. A special one-day event is also being run for handicapped people. These will be taking routes cross-country on army roads with support from volunteer helpers.

Now amswer these questions (10X2=20)

1. Match the definitions with the words in the text. Write the words from the text in the blanks. Look at number 1 as an example.

1. every year / once a year. (Paragraph 1) **annual**

2. a place where people live in tents or huts usually for a short time. (Paragraph 2) :_____
3. large numbers of people. (Paragraph 2) :_____
4. to ask for something very strongly. (Paragraph 3) :_____
5. a long walk in the country. (Paragraph 3) :_____
6. materials on which a person or an animal can sleep. (Paragraph 4) :_____

2.Read the statement, if the statement is correct put a tick (✓). If the statement is wrong, put a cross (X), and correct the statement. Look at number 1 as an example.

1. There are 2,500 walkers who start at Okehampton Camp. (X)
   2,400
2. The walkers are all aged between 14 and 19. ( )
3. The number has been restricted to 400 teams for safety. ( )
4. The girls should walk 45 miles. ( )
5. Each team must visit Ten Tors. ( )
6. There is also a special one-day event for the handicapped. ( )

STRUCTURE (20x2=40)

1. Write questions to the following sentences:

----------?

a. Rita comes from **India**.

----------?

b. Ahmed is **a doctor**.

----------?

c. I go to the library **twice a week**.

----------?

d. They own **three cars**.

----------?

e. I study English **because it's an important language**.

2. Put the verbs into the correct form in the following sentences.

a. Eid celebrations usually ----------(**start**) on the first day of Eid.
b. Trees----------(**protect**) good soil.
c. Rain ----------(**wash**) away good soil.
d. Women----------(**gather**) in large courtyard at Eid.
e. We played tennis until it ---------- (**get**) dark.

3. Put **'s** or **'** in each blank.

a. I went to girls--- school.
b. The girl --- mother is a doctor.
c. Children --- clothing can be very expensive.
d. The waitresses --- coats are over there.
e. Do you know who that man --- wife is?

4. Fill in each blank with the correct form of one of the adjectives below. Add **than** or **the** where necessary. Look at numbers 1 and 2 as examples.

bad	good

1. Water in a pool is usually **warmer than** water in the sea.
2. Swimming in an isolated river is one of **the most dangerous** places to swim.
3. ---------- time to go swimming is immediately after you have eaten.
4. Taking an exercise at least once a week is ----------taking no exercise at all.

5. Change these sentences to reported speech.

a. He said, " I am studying English."
He said ----------

b. "Do you want to study at Bahrain University?"
c. Fatima asked me ----------

VOCABULARY (15x1=15)

Choose the correct word from the box below to fill in the blanks of the following sentences.

1. She owns BD 30 millions. She is----------.
2. The ---------- showed its capability to strike.
3. Bahrain weavers supplied the ----------.
4. Women like wearing ----------.
5. David is an ---------- person.
6. All kinds of strange ----------about Jean are going around.
7. The school ---------- is kind and friendly.
8. When she lit the gas, there was a loud----------.
9. People often have to fight for their ----------.
10. The Bahrain ---------- depends mostly on oil.
11. The ---------- in the North Sea can be dangerous for ship.
12. ---------- is an explosive weapon which rise under its own power.
13. Andrew goes to the ---------- on Sundays.
14. Our neighbour said he'd ---------- about us to the police if we made any noise.
15. ---------- is a long light narrow boat, moved by a paddle.

Adventurous- rumors- governor- team- jewelry- liberty- economy- local- explosion- wealthy- canoe- church- complain- banks- missiles.

WRITING (25)

A. Complete the following interview using suitable words:

Interviewer: First, I would like to ask you a few questions about your educational background.
Where _____ to college?
Peter: England.
Interviewer: Oh, really? And when _____?

Peter: I finished last year.
Interviewer: I see. What _____ there?
Peter : Well. I _____subjects, but my major study was computer science.
Interviewer: Oh? And did you take any French lessons?
Peter: No, I _____at college, but I took some French at school.
Interviewer: What did you do after college?
Peter: I_____.
Interviewer: Well, _____.

B Read this letter and add FIVE sentences of your own to complete it:

P O BOX 129
Manama
Bahrain
15 August 1997

Dear Mona,

We're all having a good holiday on the beach. Yesterday morning we went shopping in the town. I bought a camera and my sister Layla bought six postcards. In the afternoon,_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____.

See you soon,
Huda Ali

POST-TEST

ENGLISH COURSE

1. Read the instructions carefully before you answer the questions.

2. Check your answers before you hand in your paper.

NAME:----------

CLASS:----------(GROUP 2- EXPERIMENTAL)

MARKS: QUESTION 1----------
QUESTION 2----------
QUESTION 3----------
QUESTION 4----------

TOTAL: ----------

Reading

Read the text carefully then answer the questions below.

Bahrain's Bountiful Tree

Bahrain was famous as the land "Land of a Million Date Palm Trees". Bahrainis consider that God has blessed the date palm tree with gifts not found in other trees. Everything in it is useful to man. The dates are food for man and animals. The trunk and branches are used for building houses, boats, fish traps and animal troughs. Its leaves are used to weave mats, fans, and baskets; fibers may be woven into ropes. The thick bases of the branches provide a valuable source of fuel.

Throughout Bahrain many farms grow palm trees - the dominant plant known locally as "Nakhale". The growing season for the date palm fruit begins in the spring. The fruit grows and ripens all through the summer. At the end of the summer season, the ripe dates are picked and ready to eat. Clusters of this tasty and valuable fruit ripen in three stages on the palm tree. First it is "Balah" when the small green fruit starts to grow. "Rotteb" is the second growing stage when the bigger fruit is yellow and red and can be eaten. The third and last growth is the fully ripened fruit, which is the brown date. The ripe date is packed and stored for as long as two years and can be eaten during that time.

In Bahrain there are many different names for dates. The date palm tree has played a significant role in the lives of Bahrainis and in the country's history and culture. Bahraini dates have a special reputation for their sweetness.

All over the world the date is known as a valuable food and to many people it is their favourite fruit.

***Now answer these questions**: (10x2=20)

1. Put a tick (✓) next to the statements which are correct. (Note: you can tick more than one statement)
The text says that:

( ) a. The growing season for the date and palm fruit begins in the summer.
( ) b. The date is fully grown and ripe at the end of the summer season.
( ) c. There are three ripening and growing stages for the date.
( ) d. The ripe date can be stored and eaten for about two years.
( ) e. The date is known as a healthy food.

2. Match the definitions with the correct words in the text. Write the words in the blanks below.

1. Brown sweet fruit of a palm tree (Paragraph 1):_____
2. The warmest season of the year (Paragraph 2):_____

3. To put things into a case, boxes, ect, for storing (Paragraph 2): _____
4. Important (Paragraph 4) :_____
5. Very useful (Paragraph 4) :_____

Structure (20x2=40)

1. Mahdi met Jumana in the shopping center and asked her some questions. **Read Jumana's answers and write Mahdi's questions.**

1. ----------?
I'm leaving **tomorrow morning.**

2. ----------?
I'm flying **to Australia**.

3. ----------?
It's very expensive. It costs **about BD 450**.

4. ----------?
No, I have **never been there before**.

5. ----------?
Three to four weeks.

2.Put the verbs into the correct form in the following sentences.

a. I ----------(**go**) to the cinema on Thursdays.
b. These flowers ----------(**be**) beautiful.
c. He ----------(**run**) faster than his sister.
d. Sara---------- (make) all her own clothes.
e. Farmers ---------(**grow**) crops.

3. Put **'s** or **'** in each blank.

a. This is Mona---- flat.
b. My parents---- friend lives in Kuwait.
c. The teachers---- questions were difficult.
d. The Empire State Building is one of the world---- tallest building.
e. I used to watch children---- programmes on TV.

4. Fill in each blank with the correct form of one of the adjectives below. Add **than** or **the** where necessary.

easy	difficult

1. All of my school subjects are difficult, but Maths is ---------- subject of all.
2. The questions in this test are ---------- the exercises in Unit Three.

5. Change these sentences to reported speech.

a. "Ali likes watching television." Jamil said.
Jamil said ----------

b. " Can you carry the luggage?" Susan asked me.
Susan asked me ----------

Vocabulary (10x1.5=15)

Choose the correct word from the box below to fill in the blanks of the following sentences.

1. A pearl ---------- buys and sells pearls in large amounts.
2. The football ---------- were highly excited.
3. It's a ---------- that women get married in long white dresses.
4. Back ---------- was cured with hot nails.
5. Did you have a ---------- ache?
6. The ----------are too expensive.
7. Following the national news we have the ---------- news and weather.
8. Mona ---------- stamps and coins.
9. She went to the ---------- to sell what she had made.
10. The Manama basketball team were world ---------- in 1997.

tradition - collects - head - goods - merchant - fans - pain - market - champions - local

Writing (25)

1. Complete the following dialogue using suitable words.

Ahmed: Rashid and I are going to Al Areen. Would you like to come with us, Bader?

Bader: Yes, ---------- thanks.
----------?

Ahmed: After lunch.

Bader: ----------go?

Ahmed: We'll go in Rashid's new car.

Bader: What can I bring with me?

Ahmed: ----------

Bader: But tell me, Ahmed, is Rashid a careful driver?

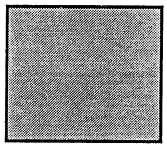
Ahmed: Yes, ----------

2. Sabah is on holiday. Help her **write a postcard** to her friend Noor.

Tell Noor:

- where Sabah is
- how long she has been there
- what she saw
- what she will see
- when she will come back

Dear Noor,



Al Bustan Hotel
Salala,
Oman.

Yours,
Sabah

MRS. FATIMA EID

POST-TEST

ENGLISH COURSE

2. Read the instructions carefully before you answer the questions.

3. Check your answers before you hand in your paper.

NAME:----------

CLASS:----------(GROUP 1-CONTROL)

MARKS: QUESTION 1----------
QUESTION 2----------
QUESTION 3----------
QUESTION 4----------

TOTAL: ----------

Reading

Giant trees

The giant trees of North America are the largest known living things. They may live for several thousand years. Some of them are very famous and have been named after people.

There are three kinds of giant tree. One is the redwood, which grows wild only near the coast of California. The tallest redwood trees are over 110 meters high. Their bases are over 7 meters across. Their leaves are like flattened needles and they have small, round cones. The bark, which is thick and soft, is a red-brown colour. It protects the tree from heat and fire. If trees are burnt, they will quickly sprout new leaves.

Another type of giant tree is called the big tree or Wellingtonia. It is also known by its Indian name, Sequoia. It is found wild only in California, but it grows further away from the sea. The trunk becomes thinner toward the top, but can be as much as 10 meters across at the bottom. The leaves are small and narrow and grow close to the branch. The cones are big and egg-shaped. This tree is sometimes planted in parks and gardens in other states and countries.

The third giant tree, the Douglas fir, can grow to a height of 95 meters. It grows over large areas of western North America, but it is often planted in other countries for its useful timber. The bark is thick and often has deep grooves in it. American Indians are supposed to have used the bark to heal wounds. In North America, young Douglas firs are the most popular Christmas trees. The leaves are short, with dark green needles growing all around the twigs.

Now answer these questions: (10x2=20)

1. Put a tick (✓) next to the statements which are correct. (Note: you can tick more than one statement)

The text says that:

( ) a. The giant trees grow in South America.
( ) b. Wellingtonia is also known as Sequoia.
( ) c. The leaves can protect the tree from heat and fire.
( ) d. There are more than two kinds of giant tree which live in America.
( ) e. American Indians use redwood bark to heal wounds.

2. Match the definitions with the correct words in the text. Write the words in the blanks below. Look at number 1 as an example.

1. Very large. (paragraph 1) ----------
2. Favoured and well-liked by many people. (paragraph 4) ----------
3. The strong outer covering of a tree. (paragraph 2) ----------

4. A large area of land thickly covered with trees and bushes. (paragraph 2)----------
5. An armlike part or division of a tree. (paragraph 3)----------

Structure (20x2=40)

1. Mike met Janet in the shopping center and asked her some questions. **Read Janet's answers and write Mike's questions.**

1. ----------?
I'm leaving **tomorrow morning.**

2. ----------?
I'm flying **to Australia**.

3. ----------?
It's very expensive. It costs **about BD 450**.

4. ----------?
No, I have **never been there before**.

5. ----------?

Three to four weeks.

5. Change these sentences to reported speech.

a. "Tom likes watching television." John said.
John said ----------

b. " Can you carry the luggage?" Susan asked me.
Susan asked me ----------

Vocabulary (10x1.5=15)

Choose the correct word from the box below to fill in the blanks of the following sentences.

1. Can you jump over to the opposite ----------?
2. How often does Mary go to ----------?
3. All kinds of strange ---------- about Janet are going around.
4. He ---------- that he couldn't find a job anywhere.
5. The country has been at ---------- with its neighbour for two years.
6. The old man cannot walk without a ----------.
7. That house is built of gray ----------.
8. I live on the third ---------- of a block of flats.
9. The ---------- was heard a mile away.
10. People often have to fight for their ----------.

war - liberty - explosion - complained - bank - church - storey - stick - stones -rumours

Writing (25)

1. Complete the following dialogue using suitable words.

Andrew: Mike and I are going to Safari Park. Would you like to come with us, Bob?

Bob: Yes, ---------- thanks.
----------?

Andrew: After lunch.

Bob: ----------go?

Andrew: We'll go in Mike's new car.

Bob: What can I bring with me?

Andrew: ----------

Bob: But tell me, Andrew, is Mike a careful driver?

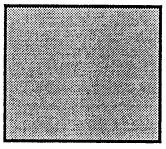
Andrew: Yes, ----------

2. Sandra is on holiday. Help her **write a postcard** to her friend Cathy.

Tell Cathy:

- where Sandra is
- how long she has been there
- what she saw
- what she will see
- when she will come back

Dear Cathy,



Sheraton Hotel
New York,
U.S.A.

Yours,
Sandra

Appendix C

List of second year students' background information

Students' Background Information

CONTROL GROUP

SR.	Student Name	Age	Socio-economic level	Family Educatinal Level	Place of Living	Father's Occupation	Mother's occupation	Nationality	Place of Birth
1	Esra' Naffea Qazwan	14	Middle	Secondary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
2	Asma Yousif AlSayed	14	Middle	Secondary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
3	Ameena Salman	14	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Operator	Housewife	Bahraini	Salmaniya
4	Ameera Jawad	14	Middle	University	Isa Town	Teacher	Teacher	Bahraini	Isa Town
5	Eman Kalil	13	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Police Officer	Housewife	Bahraini	Riffaa'
6	Buthaina Jassim	14	Middle	University	Isa Town	Doctor	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
7	Duaa' Murtaza	14	Middle	Secondary	Isa Town	Police Officer	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
8	Dalal Saqer	14	Middle	Primary	Isa Town	Custodian	Housewife	Bahraini	Muharraq
9	Rabab Jassim	15	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Muharraq
10	Zahra A. Hussein	13	High	University	Isa Town	Businessman	Teacher	Bahraini	Manama
11	Zahra A. Kareem	17	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Jidhafs
12	Zainab Ebrahim	14	Lower	Uneducated	Isa Town	Custodian	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
13	Zainab Abdulla	14	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Operator	Housewife	Bahraini	Riffaa'
14	Sara Mohammed	14	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Policeman	Housewife	Bahraini	Riffaa'
15	Sameera A. Rasool	14	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Salmaniya
16	Shaikha Hassan	14	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Car Trainer	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
17	Shaikha Mohammed	14	Lower	Intermediate	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Muharraq
18	Shaima Isa	14	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Policeman	Housewife	Bahraini	Muharraq
19	Aisha Ebrahim	14	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Salmaniya
20	Alia A Rahman	14	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Police Officer	Housewife	Bahraini	Riffaa'
21	Fatima Ahmed	14	Middle	University	Isa Town	Manager	Housewife	Bahraini	Sehla
22	Fatima A. Hussein	14	Lower	Intermediate	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
23	Fatima A Ali	14	High	University	Isa Town	Businessman	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
24	Fatima Mirza	14	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
25	Fatima Hilal	14	Lower	Primary	Jid Ali	Operator	Housewife	Bahraini	Sitra
26	Fawzia Mohammed	14	Lower	Intermediate	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Salmaniya
27	Qumasha Tarar	14	Lower	Intermediate	Isa Town	Labour	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
28	Laila Hasan Ali	14	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Taxi Driver	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
29	Mariam Omran	14	Lower	Intermediate	Isa Town	Molder	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
30	Masooma Mohammed	14	Middle	Intermediate	Isa Town	Technician	Housewife	Bahraini	Salmaniya
32	Noora Mohammed	14	Middle	Secondary	Isa Town	Soldier Officer	Housewife	Bahraini	Muharraq
33	Noof Mohammed	14	Middle	University	Isa Town	Bank Clerk	Bank Clerk	Bahraini	Manama
34	Haifa Jassim	14	Middle	University	Isa Town	Businessman	Housewife	Bahraini	Salmaniya
35	Wala Mohammed	14	Lower	Intermediate	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

SR.	Student Name	Age	Socio-economic level	Family Educatinal Level	Place of Living	Father's Occupation	Mother's occupation	Nationality	Place of Birth
1	Thanwa Sultan	16	Lower	Intermediate	Isa Town	Custom's Officer	Housewife	Bahraini	Muharraq
2	Hissa Abdula	14	High	Secondary	Isa Town	Undersecretary	Clerk	Bahraini	
3	Thikra Ali	16	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Muharraq
4	Sakina A.Majeed	14	High	University	Isa Town	Manager	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
5	Shaikha A. Aziz	14	Lower	Intermediate	Isa Town	Cashier	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
6	Shaikha Mufeez	14	Middle	University	Isa Town	Educt. Specialist	Teacher	Bahraini	Manama
7	Aisha Mohammed	16	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
8	Aqeela Abdulla	15	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	
9	Qazia Khlifa	15	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Soldier Supervisor	Housewife	Bahraini	Riffaa
10	Faten Abbas	14	Middle	Secondary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Jidhafs
11	Fatima Khalil	14	Lower	Intermediate	Isa Town	Soldier	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
12	Fatima Shareef	14	Lower	Intermediate	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
13	Mariam A. Hussein	14	Lower	Intermediate	Isa Town	Supervisor	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
14	Fatima Ali Ebrahim	14	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
15	Fatima Mohammed	14	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
16	Farzana Mohammed	14	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
17	Fatima Awad	14	Lower	Uneducated	Isa Town	Retired	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
18	Mariam Tawfeeq	14	High	University	Isa Town	Assistant Manager	Teacher	Bahraini	Manama
19	Mariam Hasan Salman	14	Lower	Primary	Jid Ali	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
20	Mariam Hasan Abdulla	16	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Muharraq
21	Mariam Haider	14	High	Secondary	Isa Town	Manager	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
22	Manar Ali	14	High	University	Isa Town	Manager	Clerk	Bahraini	Manama
23	Muneera Hamad	15	Lower	Primary	Aali	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
24	Meaad Mansoor	14	Middel	Secondary	Isa Town	Businessman	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
25	Nadia Ali	14	Lower	Primary	Jid Ali	Labourer	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
26	Najla Abdula	14	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Muharraq
27	Nada Ahmed	14	Middle	College	Isa Town	Technician	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
28	Naeema Ali	15	Lower	Uneducated	Isa Town	Carpenter	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
29	Shaikha Yaqoub	14	Lower	Primary	Isa Town	Operator	Housewife	Bahraini	Muharraq
30	Noora Mohammed	14	High	University	Isa Town	Cargo Supervisor	Police Officer	Bahraini	Manama
31	Huda Haider	14	Middle	University	Isa Town	Clerk	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
32	Haia Sultan	14	Lower	Secondary	Isa Town	Police Officer	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama
33	Wala Jassim	14	Middle	University	Isa Town	Manager	Housewife	Bahraini	Jidhafs
34	Yusra Mahdi	13	Lower	Secondary	Aali	Mechanic	Housewife	Bahraini	Manama

Appendix D

General raw data of the results of the pre-test and post-test

	CONTROL GROUP		
SR.	STUDENT NAME	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
1	Esra' Naffea Qazwan	42	84.5
2	Asma Yousif AlSayed	52.5	96
3	Ameena Salman	42	74.5
4	Ameera Jawad	21	71.5
5	Eman Kalil	0	12
6	Buthaina Jassim	29	80.5
7	Duaa' Murtaza	6.5	30
8	Dalal Saqer	3	14.5
9	Rabab Jassim	14	22
10	Zahra A. Hussein	75.5	96
11	Zahra A. Kareem	14.5	19.5
12	Zainab Ebrahim	10	34
13	Zainab Abdulla	3	30.5
14	Sara Mohammed	2	25.5
15	Sameera A. Rasool	10	13.5
16	Shaikha Hassan	18	42.5
17	Shaikha Mohammed	12	27.5
18	Shaima Isa	13	39
19	Aisha Ebrahim	13	48.5
20	Alia A Rahman	8	21
21	Fatima Ahmed	33	37.5
22	Fatima A. Hussein	8	24
23	Fatima A Ali	25	71.5
24	Fatima Mirza	21	68
25	Fatima Hilal	20	19.5
26	Fawzia Mohammed	6	39.5
27	Qumasha Tarar	9	12
28	Laila Hasan Ali	2	34
29	Mariam Omran	22	46
30	Masooma Mohammed	8	20
31	Mona Jassim	8.5	7.5
32	Noora Mohammed	8.5	25
33	Noof Mohammed	30.5	36
34	Haifa Jassim	48	81.5
35	Wala Mohammed	14	26.5
	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		
		PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
1	Thanwa Sultan	6	18
2	Hissa Abdula	4	46.5
3	Thikra Ali	5.5	20.5
4	Sakina A.Majeed	60	94
5	Shaikha A. Aziz	16	36
6	Shaikha Mufeez	60.5	100
7	Aisha Mohammed	6	33
8	Aqeela Abdulla	7	16
9	Qazia Khlifa	12	29
10	Faten Abbas	6	60
11	Fatima Khalil	8	24
12	Fatima Shareef	6.5	49.5
13	Mariam A. Hussein	38	93.5
14	Fatima Ali Ebrahim	18.5	69
15	Fatima Mohammed	17	45.5
16	Farzana Mohammed	17.5	62.5
17	Fatima Awad	11	80
18	Mariam Tawfeeq	48.5	99
19	Mariam Hasan Salman	5	47.5

20	Mariam Hasan Abdulla	8	25.5
21	Mariam Haider	44.5	95
22	Manar Ali	45	82
23	Muneera Hamad	16	21
24	Meaad Mansoor	49.5	92
25	Nadia Ali	21	43.5
26	Najla Abdula	27	63.5
27	Nada Ahmed	50.5	83
28	Naeema Ali	8	24.5
29	Shaikha Yaqoub	33	96
30	Noora Mohammed	11	43
31	Huda Haider	43	89.5
32	Haia Sultan	16	57.5
33	Wala Jassim	29	82.5
34	Yusra Mahdi	12.5	31.5

Appendix E

Raw data of the results of reading, writing,

grammar and vocabulary

SKILLS' RESULTS

Control Group

SR.	STUDENT NAME	pre-R	post-R	pre-G	post-G	pre-vocab	post-vocab	pre-W	post-W
1	Esra' Naffea Qazwan	11	12	17	38	2	10.5	12	24
2	Asma Yosif AlSayed	8	18	18	38	3	15	23.5	25
3	Ameena Salman	14	10	15	31	1	15	12	18.5
4	Ameera Jawad	4	10	14	28	1	10.5	2	23
5	Eman Khalil	0	4	0	8	0	0	0	0
6	Buthaina Jassim	7	14	14	36	1	9	7	21.5
7	Duaa' Murtaza	2	10	4	17	0	1.5	0.5	1.5
8	Dalal Saqer	2	4	1	10	0	0	0	0.5
9	Rabab Jassim	8	10	6	12	0	0	0	0
10	Zahra A. Hussein	16	16	29	40	7	15	3.5	25
11	Zahra A. Kareem	4	6	8	10	2	3	0.5	0.5
12	Zainab Ebrahim	0	10	10	17	0	6	0	1
13	Zainab Abdulla	0	4	3	23	0	1.5	0	2
14	Sara Mohammed	0	10	2	14	0	1.5	0	0
15	Sameera A. Rasool	2	2	8	8	0	1.5	0	2
16	Shaikha Hassan	6	10	11	21	1	7.5	0	4
17	Shaikha Mohammed	4	8	8	14	0	3	0	2.5
18	Shaima Isa	0	6	13	18.5	0	1.5	0	13
19	Aisha Ebrahim	5	8	7	18	0	1.4	1	21
20	Alia A Rahman	6	6	2	9	0	1.5	0	4.5
21	Fatima Ahmed	6	8	10	21	1	3	16	5.5
22	Fatima A. Hussein	6	6	2	13	0	4.5	0	0.5
23	Fatima A. Ali	12	8	10	33	0	15	3	15.5
24	Fatima Mirza	5	8	13	31	2	7.5	1	21.5
25	Fatima Hilal	3	2	9	14	0	0	8	3.5
26	Fawzia Mohammed	0	6	6	19	0	3	0	11.5
27	Qumasha Tarar	8	4	0	1	1	6	0	1
28	Laila Hasan Ali	0	8	2	17	0	1.5	0	7.5
29	Mariam Omran	10	3	11	25	1	4.5	0	13.5
30	Masooma Mohammed	2	4	6	14	0	1.5	0	0.5
31	Mona Jassim	6	0	2	6	0	1.5	0.5	0
32	Noora Mohammed	3.5	8	0	12	4	4.5	1	0.5
33	Noof Mohammed	8	6	12	17	0	6	10.5	7
34	Haifa Jassim	12	10	13	33	1	15	22	23.5
35	Wala Mohammed	6	8	8	14	0	1.5	0	3

Experimental Group

SR.	STUDENT NAME	pre-R	post-R	pre-G	post-G	pre-vocab	post-vocab	pre-W	post-W
1	Thanwa Sultan	1	6	5	9	0	3	0	0
2	Hissa Abdula	4	12	0	18	0	4.5	0	12
3	Thikra Ali	2	8	2	10	1	0	0.5	2.5
4	Sakina A. Majeed	16	18	20	38	2	13.5	22	24.5
5	Shaikha A. Aziz	2	8	13	15	0	3	1	10
6	Shaikha Mufeez	16	20	20	40	1	15	23.5	25
7	Aisha Mohammed	2	10	4	15	0	6	0	2
8	Aqeela Abdulla	4	0	2	11	1	4.5	0	0.5
9	Qazia Khlifa	4	12	8	14	0	3	0	0
10	Fatin Abbas	0	10	4	24	1	4.5	1	21.5
11	Fatima Khalil	6	10	2	10	0	3	0	1
12	Fatima Shareef	2	8	4	17	0	6	0.5	18.5
13	Maryam Sayed	4	16	14	38	2	15	18	24.5
14	Fatima Ali Ebrahim	5	14	5	30	2	3	6.5	22
15	Fatima Mohammed	2	8	15	18	0	4.5	0	5
16	Farzana Mohammed	6	12	11	22	0	9	0.5	19.5
17	Fatima Awad	6	16	5	32	0	12	0	20

18	Mariam Tawfeeq	16	20	19	39	0	15	13.5	25
19	Mariam Hasan Salman	1	6	2	20	2	3	0	18.5
20	Mariam Hasan Abdulla	4	6	3	14	1	4.5	0	1
21	Mariam Haider	6	20	17	35	1	15	20.5	25
22	Manar Ali	5	14	21	33	1	12	18	23
23	Muneera Hamad	8	10	7	11	1	0	0	0
24	Meaad Mansoor	14	14	17	38	2	15	16.5	25
25	Nadia Ali	1	6	17	21	1	4.5	2	12
26	Najla Abdulla	4	12	9	21	3	10.5	11	20
27	Nada Ahmed	10	8	15	35	4	15	21.5	25
28	Naeema Ali	4	4	4	16	0	3	0	1.5
29	Shaika Yaqoub	10	20	4	38	1	15	18	23
30	Noora Mohammed	3	4	8	23	0	7.5	0	8.5
31	Huda Haider	12	16	9	35	2	15	21	23.5
32	Haia Sultan	4	8	12	25	0	9	0	15.5
33	Wala Jassim	3	12	9	33	1	13.5	16	22
34	Yusra Mahdi	3	6	7	23	0	0	2.5	2.5

Appendix F

List of jurors' names

Jurors' Names

- Dr. Mohamed Al Mutawa' (Chairman of Department of Curriculum. College of Education. University of Bahrain).
- Dr. Hassan Marhama (Chairman of English Department. College of Arts. University of Bahrain).
- Dr. John Hillis (Assistant Professor in English Department. College of Arts. University of Bahrain).
- Dr. Charles Sarvan (Assistant Professor in English Department. College of Arts. University of Bahrain).

Appendix G

A letter for the Ministry of Education

for the research experiment (in Arabic)

22 نوفمبر 1997م

إلى السيد / محمد عباس العمادي
مدير إدارة التعليم الإعدادي والثانوي
وزارة التربية والتعليم

الموقر

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته , وبعد :

الموضوع : موافقة على تطبيق تجربة بحث لرسالة ماجستير

أنا طالبة ملتحقة ببرنامج ماجستير في اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة البحرين، وحيث أقوم في الوقت الراهن بإعداد مشروع رسالة التخرج وهو باسم :

"The Effect of Cultural Content Schemata on EFL Reading Comprehension for Second Intermediate Grade in State of Bahrain"

وبما إنني اعمل مدرسة بمدرسة أم كلثوم الإعدادية للبنات و من حيث الملائمة أود الموافقة على تطبيق تجربة الرسالة في نفس المدرسة ، وعلى حوالي 70 طالبة من صفوف الثاني إعدادي، و تحتوي المادة التجريبية على أربع وحدات فقط في اللغة الإنجليزية لكل مجموعة تجريبية ولمدة شهر و نصف فقط (1 ديسمبر 1997م إلى 15 يناير 1998م) إنشاء الله.

أتمنى أن استلم موافقتكم الكريمة لكي يتسنى لي البدء في تطبيق تجربة البحث.
واشكر لكم حسن التعاون، وجزاكم الله خيرا .

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،،،

مقدمة الطلب

الباحثة : السيدة / فاطمة حسن عيد