

READER'S GUIDE

This guide is designed to enrich your reading of the articles in this issue. You may choose to read them on your own, taking notes or jotting down answers to the discussion questions below. Or you may use the guide to explore the articles with colleagues.

For example, many teachers discuss *Forum* at regularly scheduled meetings with department colleagues and members of teachers' groups, or in teacher-training courses and workshops. Often, teachers choose an article for their group to read before the meeting or class, then discuss that article when they meet. Teachers have found it helpful to take notes on articles or write a response to an article and bring that response to share in a discussion group. Another idea is for teachers to try a selected activity or technique described in one of the articles, then report back to the group on their experiences and discuss positives, negatives, and possible adaptations for their teaching context.

Reading Up-Close and Personal: Connection-Making and the Classic American Short Story (Pages 2–11)

Pre-Reading

1. What meaning do you get from the phrase “reading up-close and personal”?
 2. When you teach reading, how do you help your students understand the text(s)? What techniques do you use?
 3. What connections do you make when you read? Are you aware of any?
 4. What does “the classic American short story” make you think of? Do any titles, authors, or characteristics come to mind?
- could be “connected” to this O. Henry story. Would this kind of connection-making help your students better appreciate and understand what they are reading? Try the techniques described in the article. What are your students’ reactions and responses to them?

Post-Reading

1. What do you think about the authors’ choice of “Transients in Arcadia” as an anchor story for the article? What would your students think of it?
2. The article gives numerous examples of other texts—including many songs—that
3. Were you familiar with William Sydney Porter’s life story before reading the article? Why do you think the authors felt it was important to include that information? Does it affect your reaction to “Transients in Arcadia”?
4. In the “Text-to-World Connections” section, the authors suggest asking students to think of a “social message or takeaway from the narrative.” What message or takeaway do you get from the story? What takeaway do you get from the article?

Embracing Inclusive Language in the Classroom: Activities for English Teachers to Cultivate Gender-Neutral Communication (Pages 12–19)

Pre-Reading

1. What does “inclusive language” mean to you?
2. Can you think of any examples of gender-neutral communication?
3. Why might an English teacher want to include activities related to inclusive language and gender-neutral communication in lessons?
4. The author suggests several benefits for students who are aware of—and who practice using—inclusive language. What are some ways that your students can benefit?

Post-Reading

1. Do you think you practice gender-neutral communication—in and/or out of the classroom?
2. You may have learned that a sentence such as *The student finished their test* is ungrammatical because “student” is singular, and “their” has traditionally been considered a plural pronoun. If so, how do you feel when you see this sentence, and others like it, presented as grammatically correct?
3. Take the quiz in Figure 2 and complete the exercise in Figure 3. How did you do? Are you familiar with all the vocabulary items? Will you ask your students to try this quiz and this exercise?
5. Read a text or a handout that you have used in your teaching. Can you find examples of language that is not gender-neutral? Will you change the handout, or change your teaching of the text, the next time you use it in class?
6. Try some of the activities proposed in the article with your students. How do they react? Does the topic of inclusive language seem relevant to them? Does including content on gender-neutral language in lessons make learning English easier—or more difficult? Or does it have no affect on the difficulty of learning English?

Improving English Proficiency in Professional and Vocational Training (Pages 20–27)

Pre-Reading

1. What do you think should be the goals of English language teachers who do professional and vocational training?
2. What are some differences between teaching English language to career professionals and teaching English language to learners who have yet to choose or start a career?
3. What does “English proficiency” mean to you?
3. Under “Needs Assessment,” the article presents three stages of language training, based on a police context. Can you adapt these stages to a different professional context? Can you adapt them to a nonprofessional English-learning context?

Post-Reading

1. The author refers to teaching experience with students in careers related to law and to law enforcement. What other professions can the principles described in this article be applied to?
2. In the section called “Grammar,” the author writes that “grammar correction and uncontextualized grammar instruction do little to improve English proficiency or workplace competence.” Do you understand why the author makes this statement, and do you agree?
4. The author notes that in law enforcement, proficient report writing “is important because it can keep people from being wrongly jailed or falsely accused, prevent mistranslations in court, and prevent interpretative editing by senior officers.” Can you—or your students—give similarly specific reasons why proficient writing is important for professionals in other fields (such as medicine, computer science, and business)?