

Preface: To the Instructor

We all know that many students entering college today do not have the reading skills needed to do effective work in their courses. A related problem, apparent even in class discussions, is that students often lack the skills required to think in a clear and logical way.

The purpose of *Ten Steps to Building College Reading Skills, Fourth Edition*, is to develop effective reading and clear thinking. To do so, **Part I** presents a sequence of reading skills that are widely recognized as essential for sound comprehension:

- Knowing how to use the dictionary
- Understanding vocabulary in context
- Recognizing main ideas
- Identifying supporting details
- Locating main ideas in different parts of a passage
- Understanding relationships that involve addition and time
- Understanding relationships that involve examples, comparison and/or contrast, and cause and effect
- Making inferences
- Determining implied main ideas
- Evaluating arguments

In every chapter in Part I, the key aspects of a skill are explained and illustrated clearly and simply. Explanations are accompanied by a series of practices, and each chapter ends with four review tests. The last review test consists of a reading selection so that students can apply the skill just learned to real-world reading materials, including newspaper and magazine articles and textbook selections. Together, the ten chapters provide students with the skills needed for a solid understanding of reading materials.

Following each chapter in Part I are **at least six mastery tests for the skill in question**. The tests progress in difficulty, giving students the additional practice and challenge they may need to learn a skill. While designed for quick grading, the tests also require students to think carefully before answering each question.

Part II is made up of ten additional readings that will improve both reading and thinking skills. Each reading is followed by *Vocabulary Questions* and *Reading Comprehension Questions* so that students can practice all of the skills presented in Part I. In addition, an *Outlining, Mapping, or Summarizing* activity after each reading helps students think carefully about the basic content and organization of a selection. *Discussion Questions* then afford instructors one more opportunity to engage students in a variety of reading and thinking skills and to deepen their understanding of a selection.

Part III consists of a section on active reading followed by fifteen combined-skills tests. The tests provide a review of the skills in Part I and help prepare students for the standardized reading exam that is often a requirement at the end of a semester.

Finally, the **Appendixes** contain a series of three short textbook selections that instructors can use to give students practice in taking notes, writing assignments for all twenty readings in the text, and a limited answer key.

Important Features of the Book

- **Focus on the basics.** The book seeks to explain, in an extremely clear, step-by-step way, the essential elements of each skill. Many examples are provided to ensure that students understand each point. In general, the focus is on teaching the skills—not just on explaining them and not just on testing them.
- **Frequent practice and feedback.** Because it is largely through abundant practice and careful feedback that progress is made, this book includes numerous activities. Students can get immediate feedback on the practice exercises in Part I by turning to the limited answer key at the back of the book. The answers to the review and mastery tests in Part I, the reading questions in Part II, and the combined-skills tests in Part III are in the *Instructor's Manual*.

The limited answer key increases the active role that students take in their own learning. They are likely to use the answer key in an honest and positive way if they know they will be tested on the many activities and selections for which answers are not provided. (Answers not in the book can be easily copied from the *Instructor's Edition* or the *Instructor's Manual* and passed out at the teacher's discretion.)

- **High interest level.** Dull and unvaried readings and exercises work against learning. Students need to experience genuine interest and enjoyment in what they read. Teachers as well should be able to take pleasure in the selections, for their own good feeling about them can carry over favorably into class work. The readings in the book, then, have been chosen not only for the appropriateness of their reading level but also for their compelling content. They should engage teachers and students alike.
- **Ease of use.** The logical sequence in each chapter—from explanation to example to practice to review test to mastery test—helps make the skills easy to teach. The book’s organization into distinct parts also makes for ease of use. Within a single class, for instance, teachers can work on a new skill in Part I, review other skills with one or more mastery tests, and provide variety by having students read one of the selections in Part II. The limited answer key at the back of the text also makes for versatility: it means that the teacher can assign some chapters for self-teaching. Finally, the mastery tests—each on its own tear-out page—and the combined-skills tests make it a simple matter for teachers to test and evaluate student progress.
- **Integration of skills.** Students do more than learn the skills individually in Part I. They also learn to apply the skills together through the reading selections in Parts I and II and the material on active reading in Part III. They become effective readers and thinkers by means of a good deal of practice in applying a combination of skills.
- **Online exercises.** As they complete each of the ten chapters, students are invited to go online to the Townsend Press website to work on two additional practice exercises for each skill—exercises that reinforce the skill taught in the chapter.
- **Thinking activities.** Thinking activities—in the form of outlining, mapping, and summarizing—are a distinctive feature of the book. While educators agree that such organizational abilities are important, these skills are all too seldom taught. From a practical standpoint, it is almost impossible for a teacher to respond in detail to entire collections of class outlines or maps. This book then, presents activities that truly involve students in outlining, mapping, and summarizing—in other words, that truly make students *think*—and yet enable a teacher to give feedback. Again, it is through continued practice *and* feedback on challenging material that a student becomes a more effective reader and thinker.

In addition, the final chapter in Part One, “The Basics of Argument,” provides extensive explanation and practice in the concepts of point and support that are central to critical thinking.

- **Supplementary materials.** The three helpful supplements listed below are available at no charge to instructors using the text. Any or all can be obtained quickly by calling Townsend Press (1-800-772-6410), by sending a fax to 1-800-225-8894, or by e-mailing Customer Service at <townsendcs@aol.com>.
 - 1 An *Instructor's Edition*—chances are that you are holding it in your hand—is identical to the student book except that it also provides hints for teachers (see the front of the book), answers to all the practices and tests, and comments on most answers. *No other book on the market has such detailed and helpful annotations.*
 - 2 A combined *Instructor's Manual and Test Bank* includes suggestions for teaching the course, a model syllabus, and readability levels for the text and the reading selections. The test bank contains **four** additional mastery tests for each of the ten skills and **four** additional combined-skills tests—all on letter-sized sheets so they can be copied easily for use with students.
 - 3 *Computer software* (in Windows and Macintosh formats) provides **two** additional mastery tests—beyond the **two** online exercises for every skill—for each of the ten skill chapters in the book. The software, which can be downloaded from the Townsend Press website, contains a number of user- and instructor-friendly features: brief explanations of answers, a sound option, frequent mention of the user's first name, a running score, and a record-keeping score file.
- **One of a sequence of books.** There are four books in the Townsend Press reading series. *Groundwork for College Reading*, the first book in the series, is suited for ESL students and basic adult learners. The second book, *Ten Steps to Building College Reading Skills*, is often the choice for a first college reading course. The third book, *Ten Steps to Improving College Reading Skills*, is an intermediate text appropriate for the core developmental reading course offered at most colleges. *Ten Steps to Advancing College Reading Skills* is a higher developmental text than the *Improving* book. It can be used as the core text for a more advanced class, as a sequel to the intermediate book, or as a second-semester alternative to it.


A companion set of vocabulary books, listed on the copyright page, has been designed to go with the *Ten Steps* books. Recommended to accompany this book is *Building Vocabulary Skills* (300 words and word parts) or *Building Vocabulary Skills, Short Version* (200 words).

Together, the books and all their supplements form a sequence that should be ideal for any college reading program.

To summarize, *Ten Steps to Building College Reading Skills, Fourth Edition*, provides ten key reading skills to help developmental college students become independent readers and thinkers. Through an appealing collection of readings and a carefully designed series of activities and tests, students receive extensive guided practice in the skills. The result is an integrated approach to learning that will, by the end of a course, produce better readers and stronger thinkers.

Changes in the Fourth Edition

Teacher suggestions and class use of the text have led to a number of major changes in the book:

- **Greater visual appeal.** The fourth edition uses illustrations, cartoons, posters, ads, and photographs to provide practice in or reinforcement of comprehension skills. The materials are not just visual window dressing; they serve a meaningful pedagogical purpose. In addition, more color, as well as boxes, rules, and screens, is used to highlight material. The book is more visually friendly without becoming visually cluttered.
- **Answers and annotations in a separate color.** Annotations are now included for almost all of the answer options (both correct and incorrect) that are part of the practices and tests. The many comments have been carefully checked for their clarity and usefulness. In addition, comments and answers are now set off in a separate dark red color for ease of use and instant reference by instructors.
- **New introductory chapter.** The new first chapter of the book, “Getting Off to a Strong Start,” discusses 1) one’s attitude about learning, 2) key study skills, and 3) the value of regular reading. While the focus of the book is reading skills, all of the information in this chapter is important for students.
- **Promotion of the reading habit.** More prominently featured in the book is a motivational essay titled “One Reader’s Story” that may inspire students to develop the reading habit as well as to do their best in facing the challenges and difficulties of their lives. Also included as a reading incentive for students is an offer of free paperback books.
- **Online exercises for each of the ten chapters in the book.** These are signaled at the end of each chapter with the following icon: . Students can go to the Townsend Press website (www.townsendpress.com) to do two additional practice exercises for each skill. Each exercise consists of ten items, and as students answer the items, they are provided with both a running score and explanations of each answer. The exercises, in other words, teach as well as offer practice, and they should serve as an excellent supplement to the activities and tests in each chapter of the book.

- **New teaching features within the chapters.** Three new features—Study Hints and Tips, “Check Your Understanding” exercises, and Chapter Reviews—make the book even easier to use. In addition, a new format for practice and test questions makes them even simpler to grade. If you were happy before with the notably clear format of the book, you’ll be even more pleased with the Fourth Edition.
- **A completely revised chapter on main ideas.** No skill is more important to good comprehension, so a great deal of time and class testing went into developing a fresh approach to teaching main ideas. The result is a chapter that, in an exceptionally clear, step-by-step way, shows students three specific ways to locate main ideas. This central skill will now be even more accessible to students.
- **Other changes in chapters.** The book now begins with a chapter on dictionary use. The chapter on “Clear Thinking” in previous editions has been revised and now appears as Chapter 10, “The Basics of Argument.”

The chapter on “Implied Main Ideas” has been revised and relocated; it now follows the chapter on “Inferences” because its focus is, in fact, on *inferring* main ideas. In my teaching experience, students are better able to deal with this more advanced skill after they have completed the chapter on inference skills. Some instructors may wish to teach “Implied Main Ideas” after “Locations of Main Ideas” and, of course, are welcome to do so. But I have found that students benefit by “taking a break” from main ideas as well as by spending time on the “Relationships” and “Inferences” chapters.
- **Many new models and practice materials and two new readings.** For example, two new mastery tests have been added that test students on the transitions and patterns of organization in “Relationships I” and “Relationships II.” The popular combined-skills tests in the previous edition have been expanded now to fifteen passages. Two new readings include a delightful and timeless short story (“The Storyteller,” by Saki) and a famous writer’s moving account of her changing relationship with her mother.

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John Langan