THE EFFECT OF READING PREFERENCE ON READING
COMPREHENSION OF LOW SOCIOECONOMIC
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

By

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Allen, Lina Lusk, *The Effect of Reading Preference on Reading Comprehension of Low Socioeconomic High School Students*. Doctor of Education (Secondary Education), May, 1979, 101 pp., 3 tables, bibliography, 56 titles.

The problem of this study was to examine the effect of reading preference on reading comprehension of low socioeconomic high school students. Subjects were 61 participants in the Upward Bound program at a major southwestern university; they represented urban high schools with high proportions of students of low socioeconomic status. Subjects completed cloze procedure reading passages in four categories: high preference independent level, high preference frustration level, non-expressed preference independent level, and non-expressed preference frustration level.

It was hypothesized that, first, there would be no significant difference in reading comprehension scores associated with two levels of reading preference; second, there would be no significant difference in reading comprehension scores associated with two levels of reading difficulty; and, third, there would be no significant interaction of the two factors of reading preference and reading difficulty.
Related literature was reviewed in these areas: the schema theory of prose comprehension (including the psycholinguistic view of reading), reading preference as an affective influence on reading comprehension, and the student of low socioeconomic status.

Procedures involved surveying students' reading preferences using a list of 16 reading topics identified by subjects in informal discussions of what high school students like to read. Four prereading cloze test passages were then completed by each subject in two test sessions. The researcher-constructed test passages were individualized for each subject according to reading preference as expressed in the preference survey and reading level as determined by a standardized reading test. Non-expressed preference passages were adapted from encyclopedia entries in the style of textbook prose. Reading passage levels were measured by a well-known readability formula.

Mean scores were computed for each of the four test categories; differences were examined in a two-way analysis of variance. Highly significant differences led to the rejection of the first two hypotheses; the third hypothesis was not rejected.
The procedures of the study demonstrated that subjects did comprehend high preference materials significantly better than they comprehended non-expressed preference materials. Also, their comprehension of independent level materials was significantly better than that of frustration level materials, validating both the readability formula and the researcher's adherence to it in writing the materials. Further, there was no significant difference in the effect of high preference at subjects' independent and frustration levels. It was concluded that preference could be a potent factor in increasing reading comprehension with materials assessed as easy or difficult by conventional measures.

Based on these results, it was recommended (1) that reading ability assessments include measuring performance with high preference materials, (2) that instructional personnel ascertain and utilize student preferences as foundations for reading instruction, (3) that reading material not be withheld from students on the basis of difficulty, (4) that high preference reading materials be used in reading instruction by secondary reading and content area teachers, and (5) that school patrons be made aware of the value of free preference reading in reading skill development.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem

The problem of this study was to examine the effect, if any, of reading preference on reading comprehension of low socioeconomic high school students. For this study, "effect on" was operationally defined as "relationship between." The reading achievement of this group has been the focus of much criticism of educational practice and its effects. This study sought to determine if the preference factor would enable low socioeconomic high school readers to comprehend material of a higher level of difficulty than would otherwise be expected. Teachers have traditionally seemed to understand and use reading preference to motivate students and coax them into increasingly difficult materials (22, 33). When such efforts are successful, the reader is thought to be involved with an expanded variety of verbal stimuli and a wider range of experiences. As these are assimilated, it is thought that the reader's mental structure becomes more developed and differentiated and more capable of productive response to further verbal stimuli. Even as the reader's
level of verbal functioning is increased, the capacity for additional increase is enlarged. These phenomena, although observed and utilized by perceptive teachers, have not been extensively tested in empirical studies with high school students of low socioeconomic status. The experiential and linguistic patterns of such students often vary from those on which traditional teaching materials are based. These students would thus seem to be prime benefactors of studies of the relationship between their reading preferences and their reading comprehension.

The purposes of this study were (a) to ascertain whether high preference reading content was better comprehended than was reading content for which no preference was expressed by high school students of low socioeconomic status and (b) to determine if the high preference factor had the same or a different effect on reading comprehension of such students at the independent and frustration reading levels.

Synthesis of Related Literature

Several concerns contributed to the development of this investigation of the effect of reading preference on reading comprehension of high school students of low socioeconomic status. The schema theory of prose comprehension suggests that prior knowledge and experience
patterned in the brain of the reader influence the specific meaning that can be derived from written language. This concept of reading comprehension is seen in the psycholinguistic view of reading, which submits that what is taken to the page determines what can be taken from the page. A part of that which the reader takes to the page is affective in nature; as such, it would seem to influence the reader's attempts to reach the limits of comprehension ability. Further, the schematic structure often evidenced in persons of low socioeconomic status reflects both experiential and linguistic patterns that can affect and often limit comprehension of traditional instructional materials. These concerns will be discussed topically.

**Schema Theory of Prose Comprehension**

The schema theory of prose comprehension proposes that prior knowledge, in the form of cognitive patterns, influences the nature and amount of meaning one can derive from written language. This concept, described by Kant two centuries ago, has recently come into focus in research and theoretical effort in cognitive science as it relates to neurology, psychology, and education. Other terms expressing the schema idea are plan, network, latticework, and frame (12, 25, 31). According to this theory, the reader brings to the page a network of
accumulated psychological variables which interact with written text to create meaning for the reader. Rystrom (pp. 195-196) explained the process as a "matrixing event between the reader and the text ... a transformational process by means of which readers develop a new matrix in their heads," one that encompasses both the old and the new. The resultant pattern thus becomes a restructured and extended network with an enlarged capacity for further reading comprehension. This complex interaction of information in the reader's brain with information on the page is frequently cited in professional literature on reading (8, 17, 23, 28, 40).

Anderson and colleagues (1) described a study supporting the schema theory in which 30 physical education students and 30 music education students read two passages with possible alternative interpretations. Multiple-choice and free-recall tests showed strong relationships to subjects' backgrounds, leading the researchers to state that "the principal determinant of the knowledge a person can acquire from reading is the knowledge s/he already possesses" (p. 378). They identified interests and belief systems as variables affecting schemata by which comprehension is attempted.
Wittrock (41) proposed a "generative model of reading comprehension" based on at least two processes, (1) the recollection of distinctive memories of events and (2) the semantic or abstract processing of memories. In this generative model, reading with comprehension "involves the retrieval of distinctive memories, from which meaning is generated by semantic processes" (p. 112). Sentences of the text are seen as cues initiating semantic processes which are used to retrieve stored memories of distinctive earlier experiences. It is from these retrieved memories that the reader generates meaning from the text. Wittrock's model, tested and supported in several experiments, depicts the interaction of information on the page with information in the reader's brain proposed by schema theory. Neurological processes in cognition are the central concern of one volume in which Wittrock reviewed numerous studies in neurology, psychology, and education (40). He saw in these studies an emphasis on the importance of individual students' previous learning and cognitive strategies in teaching and learning and the value of teaching that builds upon that learning and those strategies. Wittrock stated that the basic implication for teaching, based on his review of research, is the need for teachers to "understand and to facilitate the constructive processes of the learner" (p. 101).
This same two-factor interaction has been described as consisting of two senses of context, (a) the conceptual framework of the knower and (b) the existential situation (29). Existing knowledge is viewed as being utilized in and required for acquiring new knowledge. This two-factor interaction is also defined as a "top-down imposition of schemata (the rationalist part) as well as a bottom-up thrust of data (the empiricist part)" (2, p. 417).

One application of the schema theory of prose comprehension is seen in the psycholinguistic view of the reading process, which holds that reading involves visual information from the page and non-visual information from the brain of the reader (32), that only a part of the information necessary for reading comes from the printed page (8). In effect, the reader has a certain orientation or "set" which sensitizes him to written language and determines the nature of the comprehension to be derived therefrom. "The kinds and number of meanings we get through reading depend upon the kinds and number of meanings we take to it" (16, p. 18).

In the foregoing descriptions of learning and reading comprehension, the low socioeconomic student may be seen as taking to the page a schematic pattern which is quite different from that of more affluent students. This
schematic pattern may not interact as readily with traditional curriculum content that is geared to the experiences and language of middle class students. If it is incumbent on teachers to "understand and facilitate the constructive processes of their students" (40, p. 101), special efforts seem to be required to promote reading comprehension in low socioeconomic students through engaging the experiential and linguistic frameworks they bring to the printed page.

Reading Preference as an Affective Influence on Reading Comprehension

The element of preference is recognized as a positive influence on reading comprehension (6, 14, 22, 26). The notion of preference falls within the broader concept of interest (15, 20, 38); preference and interest both contribute to the affective network that is seen as a propelling force in cognitive ability and development (4, 9). In this same sense, Powell (30, p. 128) has described a "floating" independent reading level that can be projected by affective influence into the usual frustration zone. Athey, in a 1970 treatise on studies using the substrata reading model, suggested that the 25 per cent of variance in reading not accounted for thereby was "almost certainly contributed by affective factors"
The interaction of affective variables was seen by Athey as producing changes in the variables and in the overall reading performance.

Studies of the effect of preference on reading comprehension are not numerous, but they are consistent in finding a positive relationship between the two. Although they are titled in terms of "interest" or "interests," preference or choice is in several instances the basis for selection of test passages. In 1962, Stanchfield, examining the relationship between reading interests and reading achievement of boys in the fourth, sixth, and eighth grades, determined interests in personal interviews about subjects' preferences and interests in reading topics. She concluded that high interest was associated with superior reading comprehension (34). A later Stanchfield study (35) involved the use of first grade reading materials designed around preferred topics selected by experimental subjects from an informal list. Although uncontrolled variables may have confounded the results, highly significant findings favored the materials on preferred topics.

Estes and Vaughan (10) also examined the relationship between interests and comprehension in reading. Their fourth grade subjects selected from six topics the one each would most like to read about and the one each would
least like to read about. After reading their high and low preference passages, subjects were tested for comprehension; differences in high and low preference topic scores were significant at the .001 level. Vaughan's 1974 dissertation (36), testing the effect of interest on reading comprehension across ability levels and across grade levels four, six, eight, and eleven, employed an interest measure containing descriptions of seven passages which subjects ranked in order of preference. Each subject read his high interest choice and low interest choice, and comprehension was measured by the cloze procedure. The interest effect, which varied only slightly across grade levels, was significantly different among all ability groups and was inversely related to ability. It was Vaughan's dissertation that led to the initiation of the present study; in a telephone interview he suggested the inclusion of independent and frustration levels in the present research design (37).

When Asher, Hymel, and Wigfield (3) investigated children's comprehension of reading material of either high or low interest, interest was assessed by showing subjects slides of various objects and asking them to rank each according to whether they liked it and would like to find out more about it. The positive effect of interest was significant
at the .05 level. A later study examined the effect of interest on reading comprehension of seventh graders who scored a year or more below grade placement on a standardized reading achievement test (5). A selection of high interest passages had been made on the basis of research on adolescent reading interests. Difficulty level was two to four grade levels above the mean reading level of the subjects. In individual interviews, the subjects read titles and abstracts of the test stories and selected the one they would most like to read and the one they would least like to read. At later sessions subjects read the stories they had selected and completed cloze tests based on the stories. Highly significant results favored the preferred passages.

The Student of Low Socioeconomic Status

A low socioeconomic background seems to generate a conceptual development that does not fit the expectations of traditional school curricula. Experiential and linguistic differences often observed in this socioeconomic stratum are thought to lead to the development of learning styles that do not complement traditional curricula orientation and that thus limit the chances for academic success with such materials (18, 19, 27). That such differences do exist is hardly disputed, but acknowledgement
of these differences is not a matter of negative value judgment. For example, in specific regard to educational testing of black youths, Gay and Abrahams referred to blacks' cultural conditioning which they said differs fundamentally from that of mainstream America (13). One underlying emphasis in sociolinguistic literature is that linguistic and experiential differences do not imply inferiority or verbal deprivation (21). These differences, however, do seem to yield certain valuable resources, such as practical knowledge, realistic life experiences, self-reliance, strong in-group feelings, and an appreciation of the value of education (24).

A number of writers have called for educational provision for low socioeconomic persons that is integrative and not alienating, that builds on strengths that such students bring to the learning situation (7, 24, 11). Specifically, there is need to extend the students' control of their language, to give them command of all levels of that language as are required by circumstances (39). The factors within the low socioeconomic context that impede functioning in the larger society may be amenable to the employment of schema theory with special consideration for the preference factor in reading. Materials that utilize and maximize internal resources may serve to
develop and extend schemata in low socioeconomic students to provide for appropriate and productive response to learning opportunities.

Summary

To summarize, literature was reviewed in three areas relating to the effect of reading preference on reading comprehension in low socioeconomic high school students: the schema theory of prose comprehension, including the psycholinguistic view of reading; reading preference as an affective influence on reading comprehension; and the student of low socioeconomic status. It was found that readers bring to the printed page patterns of prior knowledge and experience, including affective variables. These patterns heavily influence reading comprehension as they interact with printed text to generate meaning. In the case of low socioeconomic high school students, experiential and linguistic differences may produce patterns that do not readily and appropriately interact with traditional middle-class oriented curriculum content.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested.

1. There will be no significant difference between the means of reading comprehension scores at the high
preference level and the non-expressed preference level.

2. There will be no significant difference between the means of reading comprehension scores at the independent and frustration reading levels.

3. There will be no significant interaction between reading preference level and reading ability level.

Limitations

Reading preference is a complex affective phenomenon which arises from many interacting forces. Along with prior knowledge and experience, other factors such as writing style and perception of success or failure in reading a passage may attract or repel a reader. Identification and analysis of factors contributing to reading preference was beyond the scope of this study. The central concern of this study was to determine if subjects could comprehend high-preference reading material better than they could comprehend reading material for which no preference was expressed.
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CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were all available (61) students in Project Upward Bound at a major southwestern urban university who had completed the ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade by June of 1978. Project Upward Bound is a nationwide federal program designed to generate the skills and motivation necessary for success in post-secondary education. Funded by the United States Office of Education, it serves high school students with low income backgrounds and inadequate academic preparation (5). Most of the subjects were from high schools with proportionately large numbers of low socioeconomic students. All subjects met rigid federal eligibility regulations for admission to the program, including legal documentation of family income. Forty-five per cent of the subjects read two or more years below actual school grade placement as assessed by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test. Subjects' independent reading levels ranged from grade four to grade ten; their frustration reading levels ranged from grade seven to grade fourteen. Subjects were evenly divided between sexes; ethnic make-up,
by official federal designation, was 50 per cent black, 36 per cent Hispanic, and 14 per cent white.

Materials

The instruments used in this study are described below.

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Houghton Mifflin Company, had been routinely administered to assess reading ability and progress in Upward Bound students at the university. Scores for Form A, given the last half of 1977 or the first half of 1978, were on file and available for use in the study.

Reading preferences were assessed by a survey containing 16 items which had been suggested by the subjects in informal discussions answering the question, "What do high school students like to read?" The items were consistent with those in recently published surveys of teenage reading preferences (3, 7). Appendix A is a copy of the survey form. Non-expressed preference passages were adapted for each reading level required. They were based on encyclopedia entries in the style of textbook prose.

To measure comprehension of high preference and non-expressed preference materials at the independent and frustration levels, four pre-reading cloze test passages were constructed for each subject according to individual
reading preferences and reading ability levels. These test passages constitute Appendixes B and C. In the passages used for testing, deleted words were replaced with uniform one-inch blanks. It will be noted that only those categories and reading levels required by the subjects in this study are included; the only complete grade level sequence is in the non-expressed preference category, and only nine preference categories are included. Content validity was assessed independently by four English teachers of low socioeconomic high school students. Content validity was further confirmed by private questioning of each subject on completion of the four test passages.

The first and last sentences of each passage were left intact. Only nouns and verbs were deleted, excluding auxiliary verbs and proper nouns, for a total of 20 deletions for each 175-250 word passage. At least three words were left between deletions. Where these restrictions permitted choices, an effort was made to distribute deletions evenly throughout each passage. Lexical deletions were chosen over every nth word deletions because they have been described as testing prior and specific knowledge and every nth word deletions as testing general linguistic ability or intelligence (8, 14, 16).
validity of the cloze test procedure is well supported in reading literature (1). Deletion of twenty nouns and verbs in passages of this brevity results in a remaining context that has a high proportion of structure words, the high frequency words that provide meaning reference for nouns and verbs. Nouns and verbs often are of relatively low frequency.

The Dale-Chall Readability Formula was used to determine readability levels of the test passages (4). The brevity of the passages precluded the use of sample segments; the Dale-Chall Formula was applied to every word in every passage. In scoring the completed passages, the exact word was required for each deletion. However, in an effort to be culture-fair, number and tense variations were accepted as correct (12).

Procedure

A randomized block complete two-factorial research design was employed to determine the effect of reading preference on reading comprehension in the subjects; the two factors were reading preference and reading ability. In this design, by definition, all possible treatment combinations are studied (6, 11). All subjects were administered repeated measures of post-test-only pre-reading cloze comprehension in two testing sessions.
One-half of the subjects, selected at random, were tested first on high preference materials at both the independent and frustration levels, and the other half were tested first on non-expressed preference materials at both levels. The order was reversed for the second administration. This was done to control for a possible order effect. To control for a possible learning effect from independent level content, the frustration level component preceded the independent level component at each preference level. After the second testing session, subjects indicated which day's passages they preferred; scores of the passages so designated were analyzed in the high preference categories. At that time, subjects were asked if they viewed the high preference passages as representing their respective designated categories. Four subjects did not, and their scores were discarded. In addition, two students made scores too low to be considered as representing appropriate reading levels, and their scores were discarded. After disqualifying these subjects, 55 subjects remained to be used in statistical analysis.

Samuels (15) advocated the use of repeated-measures experiments because they eliminate the possibility of one group being significantly different from the other group(s).
He added that repeated-measures experiments require fewer subjects than do single-measure experiments because they are more sensitive to differences in treatments.

Differentiating Features

The design of this investigation contains certain elements that differentiate it from prior research. First, subjects were limited to students of verified low socioeconomic status rather than to students of a geographical area of residents presumed to be entirely of that status. Second, subjects were limited to high school grades instead of a wider range of school grades. Third, comparisons were based on specific individually graded readability levels instead of group levels. Fourth, cloze comprehension test passages were individualized to accommodate each subject's expressed reading preference and measured reading grade level, whereas other studies used forced-choice preferences and group reading levels.

Definition of Terms

The following terms require definition in the context of this study.

1. **Low socioeconomic status** is that which met income limitations set for 1977 or 1978 by the United States
Commissioner of Education for eligibility for Project Upward Bound.

2. **High preference** designates subjects' top choices from a list of 16 reading categories identified by them in informal discussions of the question, "What do high school students like to read?" See Appendixes A and B.

3. **Non-expressed preference** designates reading content outside the scope of items identified by subjects in informal discussions of the question, "What do high school students like to read?" The passages used for the non-expressed preference category were adapted from encyclopedia entries in the style of textbook prose. See Appendix C.

4. **Frustration reading level** is that grade equivalent derived from total reading scores on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (2, 9, 10). The frustration level is that level at which a reader cannot function effectively, usually considered to be below 50 per cent on conventional (not cloze) comprehension tests (9, 13).

5. **Independent reading level** is that level of reading difficulty at which a person can read fluently with a high level of comprehension, usually considered to be about 50 per cent correct on cloze procedure activities. To assure an independent reading level, materials for
independent level passages were three to four grades below
the designated frustration levels.

6. Cloze procedure is a technique for measurement
of reading comprehension which systematically deletes
words in a prose selection and evaluates the success a
reader has in accurately supplying the deleted words (1).
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CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The problem of this study was to examine the effect of reading preference on reading comprehension of low socioeconomic high school students; this effect was examined at the independent and frustration reading levels of the 61 subjects who completed cloze procedure reading passages in four categories: high preference independent level, high preference frustration level, non-expressed preference independent level, and non-expressed preference frustration level. An analysis of the results showed a highly significant positive relationship between high preference reading passages and increased reading comprehension scores. There was no difference in this relationship at the independent and frustration reading levels.

Statistical Treatment

A mean score was computed for each of the categories, high preference independent level, high preference frustration level, non-expressed preference independent level, and non-expressed preference frustration level. The obtained mean scores are reported in Table I.
TABLE I
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR READING COMPREHENSION SCORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
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<tr>
<td>High preference, independent</td>
<td>11.47</td>
<td>2.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>High preference, frustration</td>
<td>9.33</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-expressed preference, independent</td>
<td>8.93</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-expressed preference, frustration</td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean scores are seen to proceed, in descending order, from high preference independent, the highest mean score, to non-expressed preference frustration, the lowest mean score. The two higher mean scores are in the high preference categories, and the two lower mean scores are in the non-expressed preference categories. The lower of the two high preference mean scores is higher than the higher of the two non-expressed preference mean scores. The small difference in the two middle values would seem to confirm Powell's suggestion that the independent reading level can be projected by affective influence into the usual frustration zone (1).

Table II contains the marginal means on which the statistical treatment was based.
TABLE II

MARGINAL MEANS: READING COMPREHENSION SCORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Marginal Mean</th>
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<tr>
<td>Independent (A)</td>
<td>10.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration (A)</td>
<td>7.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Preference (B)</td>
<td>10.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-expressed Preference (B)</td>
<td>7.75</td>
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</table>

A two-way analysis of variance tested the significance of differences in the marginal means. The results of this analysis are reported in Table III.

TABLE III

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: READING COMPREHENSION SCORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
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<th>p</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading level (A)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>384.91</td>
<td>56.432</td>
<td>0.00001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference level (B)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>277.31</td>
<td>40.657</td>
<td>0.00001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction (AxB)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>0.77683</td>
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</table>

Three null hypotheses were tested; they were to be rejected at the .05 level of significance.
Hypothesis I

The first hypothesis stated that there would be no significant difference between the means of reading comprehension scores at the high preference level and at the non-expressed preference level. The mean comprehension score for high preference passages was 10.40; the mean comprehension score for non-expressed preference passages was 7.75. The difference between these means was greater than 2.64, favoring the high preference passages, and was statistically significant beyond the .001 level. Thus, the first hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis II

The second hypothesis stated that there would be no significant difference between the means of reading comprehension scores at the frustration and independent reading levels. The mean comprehension score for independent level passages was 10.20; the mean comprehension score for frustration level passages was 7.95. The difference between these means was greater than 2.24, favoring the independent level passages, and was statistically significant beyond the .001 level. The second hypothesis was therefore rejected.
Hypothesis III

The third hypothesis stated that there would be no significant interaction between reading preference level and reading ability level. Statistical treatment yielded no indication of significant interaction; thus, the third hypothesis was not rejected.

Summary of Results

In summary, the first and second hypotheses were rejected, and the third hypothesis was not rejected. A highly significant positive relationship was found between the factors of high preference and increased reading comprehension scores, and this relationship did not differ at the independent and frustration reading levels.
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CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

In this study reading comprehension scores of low socioeconomic high school students were examined for differences based on two factors, reading preference and reading difficulty. It was hypothesized that, first, there would be no significant difference in the scores associated with two levels of reading preference; second, there would be no significant difference in scores associated with two levels of reading difficulty; and, third, there would be no significant interaction of the two factors of reading preference and reading difficulty. Results did not support the first two hypotheses; highly significant differences were found when scores were compared on the basis of high preference and non-expressed preference, and highly significant differences were found when scores were compared on the basis of independent and frustration levels of reading difficulty. The third hypothesis, regarding interaction, was not rejected, inasmuch as no significant interaction was found between the factors of reading preference level and reading difficulty level.
Hypothesis I

The major finding of this investigation was the highly significant positive relationship between reading preference and reading comprehension, as expressed in differences leading to the rejection of the first hypothesis. The significantly higher scores on high preference materials in the study indicated that subjects could detect more deleted nouns and verbs in the high preference materials.

Because it is generally acknowledged that one learns to read by reading and that reading practice is a prime requisite for developing reading fluency, high preference reading would seem to be an efficient means of achieving automaticity in the comprehension of the structure words (see Chapter II, p. 22) that are basic to all reading comprehension. These structure words are common to all types of reading, including traditional curriculum materials that students must comprehend for academic success. They are not polysyllabic specialized words but instead are the words that provide meaning reference for specialized words. For example, these two sentences are identical except for the prepositions:

The mandate arrived for the authorities.

The mandate arrived from the authorities.
Confusing the two prepositions results in meanings the reverse of those intended. Reversal of meaning results also from omission of the word "not," a common error in reading. Although structure words often are confusing and difficult for readers, they are the words that many secondary content area teachers appear least inclined or prepared to teach. If students have not achieved automatic recognition and comprehension of the high frequency structure words, traditional vocabulary instruction in content areas leaves them disoriented and incapable of mastering concepts represented by the vocabularies of the various disciplines.

High preference reading has the added advantage of using the reader's already existing mental network to interact with the reading material to generate meaning for the reader. The meaning thus generated has the further advantage of coming to the reader through longer words and longer and possibly more complex sentences than the reader could be expected to assimilate from non-preference materials. Continued expanding experience with print can make a reader more and more aware of conventions and consistencies of the printed page, adding to and modifying the internal schematic structure
to permit appropriate response to increasingly varied and complex verbal stimuli (1, 2). This, in effect, can constitute a propelling effect for the student whose schematic structure differs from those for which traditional curricula materials are designed, a personal point of reference as a basis for reading comprehension.

Hypothesis II

The rejection of the second hypothesis was a logical outcome, assuming the validity of the readability formula used in writing the test passages. This hypothesis was included in order to test all possible effects in the two-way analysis of variance. The highly significant difference in scores favoring the independent level materials over the frustration level materials can be interpreted as both an affirmation of the validity of the readability formula used and as evidence of strict adherence to the formula in writing the test passages.

Hypothesis III

The third hypothesis was not rejected because there was no statistically significant evidence of interaction between reading preference and reading level. Examination of this relationship was suggested by Vaughan's 1974 (3)
conclusion that the comprehension of poor readers was significantly more affected by the degree of their interest in what they read—interest being expressed by choice or preference of reading passage—than was that of good readers. It was inferred, on the basis of Vaughan's conclusion, that some interaction might be expected between the high preference level and the frustration level of reading ability; that is, preference might be expected to exert the same degree of positive effect on any reader attempting to read materials assessed as too difficult for independent comprehension as it exerted on readers labeled as "poor" when they attempted to read relatively difficult materials. Because virtually every mature reader is "good" at some kinds of reading and "poor" at some others, a reading ability designation is relative, at least partially a function of characteristics of the reading material attempted. The present investigation did not differentiate good and poor readers as did the Vaughan study, but instead compared the means of subjects' comprehension scores at what could be considered a "good" expectancy level with those at what could be considered a "poor" expectancy level. This was done to determine if the high preference factor had the same or a different effect on reading comprehension of the subjects at the independent
and frustration levels, a basic question of the study. The different levels of preference were thus examined within subjects as well as among subjects, according to the intent of the study. On the other hand, each subject in Vaughan's study was tested at a group level commensurate with the subjects' school grade, allowing for analysis among subjects but not within subjects, as was the intent of that study.

Conclusions

Statistical treatment in this study yielded a significant difference in reading comprehension scores associated with high preference and non-expressed preference materials. Statistical treatment did not yield a significant difference in this effect at the independent and frustration reading levels. These results led to the conclusion that preference can be a potent factor in increasing reading comprehension whether the reader is involved with reading materials that are easy or difficult according to conventional readability measures. This study, by design, did not address the matter of subjects' reading ability relative to their school grade placement. Further research might consider degree of reading preference, readability level, and classification of subjects as good and poor readers in a three-way analysis of variance with special
attention to the possibility of interaction to determine if subjects' reading ability classification affects the degree to which preference influences comprehension at the frustration and independent levels of difficulty.

Limitations

Generalizability of these results may be somewhat restricted because subjects, although not required to meet academic requirements for admission to Upward Bound, could be expected to possess stronger academic and achievement motivation than would the general low socioeconomic high school population, by virtue of subjects' voluntary participation in the program. Despite this limitation, the highly significant results associating high preference reading materials with increased reading comprehension seem to warrant consideration of applications to educational practice in both testing and teaching.

Recommendations

Testing

Testing is the area most directly affected by the favorable influence of reading preference on reading comprehension and is the primary one noted by others who have investigated the relationship. These recommendations may be considered in assessing reading ability:
reflect the potential benefits of the finding in the many aspects of teaching.

1. The importance of free-preference reading should not be discounted for the secondary school years, particularly for low socioeconomic students.

2. All instructional personnel could seek to "plug in" to the schematic network of knowledge and experience every student brings to learning situations. To do this, teachers could use prepared written surveys to ascertain student preferences, chart student preferences as they are expressed verbally and nonverbally, and utilize their preferences as foundations on which to build reading development.

3. Reading material of any level, no matter how seemingly inappropriate, should not be withheld on the basis of difficulty from any student who wants to read it.

4. Secondary reading teachers could provide both materials and time for free-preference reading, considering this a valid activity for reinforcing reading skills taught through other methods and for developing reading fluency.

5. Secondary content area teachers could incorporate in their teaching and encourage appropriate free-preference reading whenever it is possible to do so.
6. Teacher expectations could be based more on student preferences and other personal variables than on limited indicators of student potential.

7. School patrons could be made aware of the value of free-preference reading as a productive instructional technique which reinforces and gives meaning to reading skill development.

Summary

In summary, it was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in reading comprehension scores of low socioeconomic high school students with regard to two levels of reading preference; there would be no significant difference in these scores associated with two levels of reading difficulty; and there would be no significant interaction of the two factors of reading preference and reading difficulty as reflected by the reading comprehension scores. The procedures of the study demonstrated that subjects did comprehend high preference materials significantly better than they comprehended non-expressed preference materials. Also, their comprehension of independent level materials was significantly better than that of frustration level materials, validating both the readability formula used and the researcher's
adherence to it in writing these materials. Further, there was no significant difference in the effect of high preference at subjects' independent and frustration levels.

This study demonstrated the positive effect that reading preference can have on the reading comprehension of low socioeconomic high school students and pointed to the effectiveness of the use of high preference reading materials in the school population represented by the research subjects.


APPENDIX A

Reading Preference Survey
PLEASE TELL THE KINDS OF READING YOU LIKE MOST TO DO.

MARK 3 ITEMS — PUT "1" BY YOUR FIRST CHOICE.

PUT "2" BY YOUR SECOND CHOICE.

PUT "3" BY YOUR THIRD CHOICE.

_____ ADVENTURE
_____ CAREERS
_____ CRIME
_____ CURRENT NEWS
_____ DETECTIVE STORIES
_____ ETHNIC HISTORY
_____ FUNNY STORIES
_____ LOVE STORIES
_____ MYSTERY
_____ SCIENCE FICTION
_____ SPORTS
_____ STORIES THAT TEACH A LESSON OR MORAL
_____ SUPERNATURAL
_____ TEEN-AGE PROBLEMS
_____ TEEN-AGE SUCCESS
_____ TRUE TRAGEDIES

DATE _______________       NAME _______________
APPENDIX B

High Preference Test Passages
CRIME, Below Grade 4

A Dallas policeman, Robert Luis Moreno, answered his last call today.

He had [stopped] a speeding car. The (driver) was David Lee Tucker. Moreno had called for other officers to back him up. When they [arrived], they found Moreno dying on the ground in a (pool) of blood. He had been shot three times in the (head).

Tucker then began to [shoot] at the other officers. A woman passenger [was] with him. She put up her (hands) and gave herself up. Tucker escaped into some nearby woods. He [hid] there for almost twelve (hours).

Police put dogs out to [pick] up his trail. They looked for him throughout the (night). He was found unarmed, but a Russian rifle was [found] hidden in his (car).

Tucker gave up willingly and was [arrested] and put in (jail). He was charged with (murder). He is now being held in the Dallas city jail.

Moreno [was] thirty years old and had been a policeman for ten (years). He was married and [had] three sons. He was buried today in Dallas.

[ ] verbs
( ) nouns
CRIME, Grade 7-8

A fire thought to have been started by an arsonist raged through a dwelling in southwest Arlington last night, injuring four young children.

Their mother, Maria Franco, [escaped] without injury and was able to [rescue] her children before the two-story frame (house) was almost totally destroyed.

The fire apparently [started] in a downstairs room and spread quickly to the second (floor) where Mrs. Franco and her children [were] asleep in two separate bedrooms.

The (children), who were only slightly burned as their (mother) led them out to safety, are being [treated] in Memorial Hospital. They [are] expected to be released within the next few (days).

Several other houses were damaged by (smoke), but the fire itself did not [spread] beyond the Franco home.

Firemen said they [found] an empty gasoline can near the back of the (house), leading them to think the fire was [set] on purpose.

Police are investigating a (report) from an unidentified source that some suspicious (persons) were observed running from the Franco (house) immediately before the first alarm was [sounded].

Mrs. Franco's husband was at work in the Collin Street Bakery when he heard news of the fire.
Almost two hundred thousand Moslem refugees have left Burma in the past five weeks.

Whole villages of Moslems have [gone] from Burma into nearby Bangladesh. They have been able to [take] only a few (possessions).

The Moslems are seeking (safety) from the Buddhist Burmese government, which they [say] is guilty of cruel and brutal (treatment). The reasons for such treatment [seem] to be financial. The Moslems have always had more money than the Buddhists in Burma. The Buddhists [say] that the Moslems are illegal (aliens), even though Burma has [been] their home for generations.

Bangladesh is a very poor (country). The annual income for each person there [is] only about eighty (dollars). The Bangladesh government has built refugee (camps) for the Burmese Moslems. Food [is] a major problem because Bangladesh does not even have (enough) for its own people.

The (governments) of the two countries have [begun] diplomatic talks. Moslems in Bangladesh, however, do not expect to be [allowed] to return to their home (land). At this point, they seem to be people without a country.
United States officials, after discovering electronic spy equipment in a chimney of their Moscow embassy, are assessing the damage it did to American security.

The equipment was [discovered] during a daily security search when a (wire) leading from the equipment was [traced] to a nearby (building) in which a Soviet agent was [found] listening to signals from the American (embassy). The agent fled when he was [discovered].

The equipment has been [kept] up by Soviet workers who [entered] the American embassy through a (tunnel) from an apartment (building), then climbed up the chimney.

The chimney [is] in a seldom used room, but [is] next to the (office) of Ambassador Malcolm Toon.

The (discovery) of the equipment [raised] a number of questions about the security of the (building). Extra guards have been stationed on the roof of the (building) and within the tunnel to [keep] Soviets from gaining further secret (information).

As American officials assess the amount of damage done by the equipment, they are trying to determine measures to take to prevent similar operations.
Almost two hundred thousand Moslem refugees have fled predominantly Buddhist Burma into poverty-stricken Bangladesh in the past five weeks, shouldering their meager possessions and telling the same tale of brutality and terror at the hands of the Burmese.

Entire villages have fled the rugged Arakan (region) of northwestern Burma where they have lived for generations, abandoning almost (all) of their possessions to seek refuge from a Burmese (government) that regards them as illegal aliens.

Although (some) of the refugees are convinced that they are the victims of religious (persecution), the more widely held opinion is that the persecution can be explained in economic (terms)—underprivileged and resentful Buddhists using the (power) of government to take over land and (businesses) owned by the more affluent Moslems.

As diplomatic talks began this week, Moslems were not optimistic over the (possibility) that they would be allowed to return to their native (land).

The already severely overpopulated Bangladesh, with a per capita annual income of only eighty dollars, has moved efficiently to organize camps and provide essentials for the refugees' survival.
A little old widow was dying. She [knew] she could never leave her (bed).

She sent for her friend. She [told] her that she was going to die.

She asked her (friend) to do her a favor. "When I [die]," she said, "I want you to [have] them bury me in my new black (dress)."

"I will be happy to [do] that for you," her friend said.

"But there is one more (thing)," the dying widow said. "I want you to [cut] the back out of the (dress). There is enough cloth for you to [make] yourself a dress."

"Why, that is silly," her (friend) said. "I'll do nothing of the (kind). When you die you will meet your poor husband in (heaven). You will walk by the angels. What will they think about your (dress) with no back? You do not [want] them to see you dressed like that."

"Well," [said] the dying widow, "I don't [think] it will matter. The (angels) won't be looking at me. They will be looking at Pa. I buried him in his long red underwear."
A group of passengers boarded a huge airplane at Kennedy Airport in New York City, never dreaming where they would end up that day.

When the door to the airplane closed, a voice spoke to them from an overhead speaker.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is a historic day, one that will long be remembered in aviation history, for, in the long and exciting history of aviation, no airplane has ever taken off without a flight crew.

"You may have noticed that there was no smiling stewardess to greet you and show you to your seat. There is no pilot.

"For this, indeed, is an unmanned airplane, and you, ladies and gentlemen, are the very first to know the thrill of unmanned flight in commercial aviation.

"This example of progress was designed entirely for your safety.

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for flying with us; this has been a recorded message.

"And now as your plane approaches the runway for take-off, we want to assure you that absolutely nothing can go wrong. . . . go wrong. . . . go wrong. . . . go wrong. . . ."
My mother-in-law is an untiring gossip who satisfies her nosiness with endless hours of watching television soap operas and absolutely delights in reciting the day's escapades when my father-in-law arrives from work each day.

On one particular (day) when he cautiously [asked], "What's new?" she [began] a prolonged and involved description of that day's events on her favorite (show).

Just before the county hog-calling (contest), Donny and Marie [had] a lovers' quarrel, and she [left] him for a punk rock (star) who threw live snakes out into the (audience).

Marie was completely enchanted until his enormous boa (constrictor) wrapped around her neck and [choked] her senseless.

Meanwhile, Donny [was] so broken-hearted that he [went] to see the belly (dancer) at the local night club, but he [forgot] that his old calico cat [had] a habit of sleeping under the hood of the (car). When he started the motor, the cat's (tail) flew out one (way) and the cat [flew] out another.

With all this calamity, my father-in-law interrupted to ask the name of the show, and without blinking an eye, my mother-in-law replied, "Life Can Be Beautiful."
I'll never forget my sixteenth birthday.

I entered a radio station "Make-a-Wish" contest. I wished for a (date) with David Lawrence for my birthday party.

The walls in my (room) were covered with his pictures. The floor [was] covered with his record (albums).

I told Art about my wish. It [made] him mad, but he knew I [thought] of him only as a brother. He just wasn't like David Lawrence.

I couldn't believe the (voice) on the phone. It said I would [get] my wish.

I didn't have any (time) at all for Art the next few weeks.

The big night [arrived], but it wasn't what I expected. David had no (time) for me or my friends. He [was] busy talking to people from the (newspaper). We didn't really matter.

After thirty minutes, he whispered to me and [left]. He told me to watch him on Johnny Carson!

Someone from the radio station asked me how it was to have a (friend) like Art Marshall. I asked him how he knew Art. He answered, "Art [won]. His wish was for you to get your wish."
I ran all the (way) to Art's house. I [asked] him to be my date for the (rest) of my party.

Art kissed me for a long time. I knew I'd never again think of him as a brother.
I'll remember my sixteenth birthday forever.

I entered a radio station "Make-a-Wish" (contest). I wished for a date with David Lawrence for my sixteenth birthday party.

I was madly in love with him. The walls in my room were absolutely covered with his posters, and the floor was covered with his record albums.

I told Art about my wish, but it made him jealous, although he knew I thought of him as a brother. He just wasn't romantic like David Lawrence.

I couldn't believe the voice on the telephone that said I would have my wish.

There was so much to do I simply had no time for Art the next few weeks.

The long-awaited night arrived, but it was hardly what I expected. David had no time for me or my friends. He was busy talking to television and newspaper reporters, and we didn't matter.

After thirty minutes, he whispered to me and left. He actually told me to watch him on Johnny Carson!

Someone from the radio station asked me how it was to have a friend like Art Marshall. I was shocked and asked how he knew Art. "Art won the contest; his wish was for you to get your wish," he answered.
I ran all the way to Art's (house) to ask him to [be] my date for the rest of the party.

Art kissed me for a long time; I knew I'd never again think of him as a brother.
LOVE, Grade 7-8

I wanted Rob to ask me for a date, but he wouldn't say much to me other than "Hi" in chemistry class.

Then one (day) I missed chemistry class, and he [called]. He continued to call, and when he finally [asked] me to go out, I naturally said I would.

We had a fantastic (time). He was unlike other guys. He wasn't trying to [impress] me, but I realized I was trying to impress him.

When he [brought] me home, I wanted Rob to put his (arm) around me or kiss me, but he simply [said], "I'll see you tomorrow."

The next day Rob called at his usual (time), but I just wasn't in a (mood) to talk to him and I told him I was [doing] homework, although I wasn't actually doing anything.

I began to avoid him wherever I [could], and when he called, I told my (mother) to tell him I wasn't home.

He began to give me a weird creepy (feeling), and I was relieved when he eventually [quit] calling.

Anyway, by then Jim was in my (life)—super, handsome, popular Jim.

Well, that's all, except for one (thing): I'm Rob, and I [wrote] this. Janie pretended to [like] me, but when
I took her out, what happened? I guess (people) are like that--fickle.

Why did I write this--just to show that guys have feelings, too; we can hurt; we can cry--and that's my story.
LOVE, Grade 9-10

I really wanted Rob to ask me for a date, although he totally ignored me except for a slight occasional scholarly grin in chemistry lab.

After what seemed like forever, he [called], but simply to ask about our chemistry mid-semester (exam); then, after several more (calls), he asked me to go out, and you can [imagine] how I answered!

Our (date) was absolutely fantastic because Rob didn't continually try to [impress] me; in fact, I realized that I was the one who [tried] to impress him.

Back at my (house), I wanted Rob to put his (arm) around me or kiss me, but he merely [said], "I'll see you," and left.

When Rob [called] again, I wasn't in a (mood) to talk to him, so I said I was [doing] homework when I actually wasn't.

He continued to call, but he gave me a weird creepy (feeling), so I made false excuses for not talking.

I was relieved when he eventually [quit] calling, and anyway, by then Jim was in my (life)—super, handsome, popular Jim.

Well, that's (all), except for one (thing): I'm Rob, and I wrote this. Janie [pretended] to like me, but when
I [took] her out, what happened? I guess people are like that--fickle--so why did I write this?--just to show that guys have feelings; we can hurt; we can cry--and that's my story.
Tom and Bernie were very good friends. In fact, they were closer than (brothers). They had worked together on my (farm) for years. But something [happened] that changed them into (enemies).

They found some old silver (coins), and right away they [began] to fight. I heard screams from the barn. I ran out. Tom and Bernie were fighting. They both [wanted] to keep the (coins).

I pulled them apart and [sent] them home. Then I tried to decide what had [caused] them to fight.

Bernie's old felt hat was in the (dirt). I picked it up. In it were hidden the coins.

I [started] to count them. There were thirty (coins). I counted them again and again.

Suddenly I wanted to [do] something evil, to steal or to kill.

Was it the (coins) that made me feel that (way)? Had the coins [changed] Tom and Bernie? Did they [cause] them to fight?

I [looked] at the thirty mysterious (coins). Then I remembered that Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, the coins in my hand!
MYSTERY, Grade 7-8

A headless human body had washed ashore on a lonely beach in Spain and was being guarded through the night by Policeman Lechuga.

Lechuga [slept] briefly, waking abruptly to find that the (body) had disappeared. He [said] to himself, "I'll lose my job; I'll be [known] as the man who cannot even [guard] a dead body."

He [looked] out and saw a (man) alone on the beach. Immediately he [killed] him, cutting off the (head) and burying it in the (sand).

But Lechuga did not realize that the killing had been [seen]. When it was [reported] to the police, Lechuga was [arrested], and a search was [begun] for the first body and its (head).

The search ended with the (discovery) of the first (body) in a seaside (house) in which lived Santana, a suspect in the first (murder).

Gradually the gruesome (mystery) was solved. Santana, the murderer, had stolen the headless body and was looking for firewood to burn it when he himself was killed to be a substitute body for that of his own victim.
A headless human corpse had washed ashore on a lonely beach in Spain and was being guarded through the night by Policeman Lechuga.

Lechuga [slept] briefly, waking abruptly to find that the (corpse) had disappeared. Frightened, he [said] to himself, "I'll [lose] my job; I'll be [known] as the man who cannot even [guard] a headless corpse."

He saw a solitary (man) walking on the beach, quickly [killed] him, and cut off and [buried] the head in the (sand).

But Lechuga had not [realized] that the killing had been [seen], and when it was reported to the (police), he was arrested, and a search was [begun] for the first (corpse) and its head.

The (search) ended with the discovery of the first (corpse) in the seaside (house) in which lived Santana, a (suspect) in the first murder.

Gradually the puzzling (mystery) was solved. Santana, the murderer, had stolen the headless corpse and was looking for firewood to burn it when he himself was killed to be a substitute corpse for that of his own victim.
Tom and Bernie were devoted life-long friends, closer than brothers, until the mysterious coin incident transformed them into violent raging enemies.

They had [worked] faithfully on my (farm) almost since their childhood (days). Out in the field one (day) they accidentally came upon some tarnished silver (coins) and immediately began a fight that [left] Bernie bloody and almost breathless while Tom furiously and relentlessly [continued] to pound on him.

When I [was] able to restore (peace), I began to search for a (clue) as to what could have so drastically [affected] such a close friendship.

I happened to [pick] up Bernie's old felt (hat) and found it to [be] surprisingly heavy; it contained the fateful (coins), coins which bore the faintly recognizable (image) of Cesar.

Suddenly--could it be the (influence) of the coins?--I [felt] an urgent desire to [do] something evil, to steal or to [kill].

Restraining myself, I counted and repeatedly counted the mysterious coins while a revelation gradually occurred to me: Jesus was betrayed by Judas for thirty pieces of silver, those ancient coins I now held in my hand!
Tom and Bernie were devoted life-long friends, closer even than brothers, until the mysterious coin incident transformed them into violent raging enemies.

They had [worked] faithfully on my (farm) almost since their childhood (days). Out in the (field) one day they accidentally [came] upon some tarnished silver (coins) and immediately began a (fight) that left Bernie bloody and almost breathless as Tom [continued] to pound on him--furiously, relentlessly, mercilessly.

Once (peace) was restored, as I [began] searching for a (clue) as to what could have so drastically [affected] such an intimate relationship, I just [happened] to pick up Bernie's old felt hat and [found] it surprisingly heavy; it contained the fateful (coins), coins which bore the faintly recognizable image of Cesar.

Gradually--could it [be] the influence of the coins?--I [was] aware of an urgent, irresistible (desire) to commit an evil (deed), to steal or to [kill].

Restraining myself, I counted and repeatedly counted the ancient coins while a revelation penetrated my consciousness: Jesus was betrayed by Judas for thirty pieces of silver, unquestionably those very coins I now held in my hand.
A hunter was out in the forest looking for some rabbits. A hungry wolf [attacked] him, biting him on his leg. The hunter fought back. With his knife, he [was] able to cut off the wolf's (foot). The wolf ran away deep into the forest.

The hunter [put] the wolf's foot into his (bag). He limped toward the nearest (house) to get help.

The owner of the house [took] care of the bleeding leg. The (hunter) told him what had happened. The owner wanted to [see] the wolf's foot. He [put] his hand into the bag. But in it he [found] the soft and beautiful (hand) of a woman! He was surprised to [see] that on one of the fingers [was] a diamond ring that belonged to his (wife).

He quickly ran into the bedroom to [see] about his sick (wife). She had a very strange (look) about her. Her sleeve was empty! Her (hand) was missing!

The poor man had never known that his wife was actually a werewolf.
As a hunter stalked through the forest looking for game, he was attacked by a vicious wolf.

Before he [knew] what was happening, the wolf had [bitten] him on the (leg). The hunter fought back, managing to [cut] off the wolf's foot. As the (wolf) ran away deep into the forest, the hunter [put] the severed foot in his (bag) and made his way toward the nearest (house).

The owner of the house [took] care of the hunter's bleeding leg, while he heard his (tale) of woe. Out of curiosity, the owner asked to [see] the wolf's foot.

Reaching into the hunter's bag, he [pulled] out--not the foot of a (wolf), but the graceful (hand) of a woman! To his horror, he recognized a diamond (ring) on one of the fingers. It [belonged] to his wife!

Running quickly into the (bedroom), he found his bedfast wife. She [had] a very strange look about her. Her sleeve [was] empty! Her (hand) was missing!

The sorrowful man had never even known that his beloved wife was a werewolf.
Every eight hundred years earth civilization had faced a terrible force from outer space that had almost completely destroyed its society. The pattern [was] unmistakably clear, and the dreaded (time) was coming once again. Could anything be [done] to prevent the destruction this (time)?

Jim had very carefully [studied] the few records left from the last such (society). Those people had tried to [prepare] themselves. They knew that even though some earlier (people) had been able to [survive], their minds were [destroyed], and with them (all) that had been learned since the last great (destruction).

Every eight hundred (years) earth civilization was [turned] back to the Stone Age, and no one knew why.

As president, Jim [was] determined that his (society) would somehow survive. The people had [spent] year after year studying and preparing their (minds) so that no (force) would be able to [destroy] them.

As Jim and his leaders looked bravely out into the still night, the stars began to vibrate, merging into a giant roaring ball of flame—the force had arrived!
Every eight hundred years earth civilization had faced a terrible force from outer space that had almost completely destroyed its society, and the dreaded time was approaching once again.

The pattern [was] unmistakably clear. Could anything be [done] to prevent the (destruction) this time?

Jim, as (president), determined that his (society) would survive, had very carefully [studied] all of the (records) that remained from the last (society). He knew that, although some earlier people had [been] able to survive, their minds were [destroyed] and with them all of the (knowledge) and wisdom that had been [acquired] since the last great (destruction).

Every eight hundred (years) earth civilization had been [turned] back to the Stone Age, and it must not be [allowed] to happen again. Jim's people had [spent] year after year studying and preparing their (minds) so that no (force) would be able to [destroy] them.

As Jim and his leaders looked out into the still night, the stars began to vibrate, merging into a giant roaring ball of flame--the dreaded force had come!
SCIENCE FICTION, Grade 13-14

A hunter, stalking through a dense forest, was attacked by a voracious wolf whose teeth left bloody impressions on his leg.

Undaunted, the hunter [struck] back at the beast, his (knife) severing one foot and injuring another, leaving him dazed and crippled, struggling back into the depths of the (forest).

Depositing the wolf's (foot) in his bag, the wounded hunter [sought] refuge in a farmhouse beyond the (edge) of the forest in which [lived] a hospitable man and his ailing (wife).

As the farmer [tended] the hunter's injured leg and [heard] his tale of woe, he [became] increasingly curious to examine the (contents) of the bag. Without asking permission, he impulsively [reached] into the bag but withdrew in (horror) when he realized that it [contained] not an animal foot, but a human (hand), a feminine human hand.

Inspecting the grisly discovery, he [saw] on one slender graceful (finger) a ring which he immediately [recognized] as belonging to his (wife).

He rushed to see his bedfast wife, and her empty sleeve revealed to the sorrowful man the dreaded truth that his devoted beloved wife was actually a werewolf.
SPORTS, Below grade 4

What a lousy baseball team the Texas Rangers were! For years nobody [paid] very much attention to them. They lost almost every (game) they played, but they [lost] a lot more than games. They lost (money). People did not [go] to watch them play. The Rangers were in danger of going out of (business).

Then someone came along to [save] the Texas Rangers. It was eighteen year old David Clyde. He [was] just out of high (school). He had not even [played] in the minor leagues.

David struck out as many as six batters in a (row). Other teams could not [score] against the amazing young pitcher.

Large crowds [began] to go to Rangers games again. The whole (team) got better and better. (People) began to go even when David was not pitching.

It [was] a bright new (day) for the Rangers. They [had] many new fans going to see their (games). But it all began with an eighteen year old just out of high (school).

Almost all by himself David Clyde had saved the Texas Rangers.
What a lousy baseball team the Texas Rangers were! For years nobody [paid] very much attention to them. They lost practically every (game), but they lost more than games. They [lost] money, because people did not [go] to their games, and they were in (danger) of eventually going out of business.

Then someone [came] along to save the Rangers. That someone [was] eighteen year old David Clyde. David went straight from high (school) to the major league. He [struck] out as many as six (batters) in a row. Opposing (teams) could not score against the amazing young (pitcher).

Large crowds began to [go] to Arlington Stadium to see him. They began to [enjoy] major league baseball and to go to (games) even when David Clyde was not pitching.

The entire Ranger team [improved] as they won more and more (games), bringing a new (day) for the Rangers.

But it all [began] with an eighteen year old (pitcher). Almost single-handedly David Clyde saved the Texas Rangers and made eager baseball fans out of the people in the metroplex area.
The Dallas Cowboys had fought successfully to play in the National Football League playoffs, and now they faced the tough Los Angeles Rams. Dallas had beaten the Rams a (year) before, and the Rams were out to get revenge.

During the first (half), Los Angeles rookie quarterback Pat Haden hit fleet wide receiver Isaac Curtis on two long (passes) for touchdowns. Dallas came back with a downfield (drive) masterminded by Roger Staubach. Dallas made another touchdown when Drew Pearson grabbed a forty-yard (pass) from Staubach.

The second (half) was a rugged defensive (battle) in which the stubborn Rams kicked two field goals and kept Dallas from scoring. Late in the fourth quarter Dallas began to move. Staubach completed four (passes), driving the Cowboys deep into Rams (territory). Then the Rams fought back and broke up the next three Staubach passes.

It was fourth down and the last (chance) for Dallas to make a touchdown that would put them in the Super Bowl.

Pearson caught Staubach's pass, was immediately tackled, and missed a first down by mere inches, losing both the decisive game and a chance at the Super Bowl.
The Dallas Cowboys had fought successfully for the opportunity to compete in the National Football League playoffs, and now they faced the tough Los Angeles Rams. Dallas had [beaten] the Rams the (year) before, and the Rams [were] out to get revenge.

During the first (half), Rams rookie quarterback Pat Haden hit fleet wide receiver Isaac Curtis on two long (passes) for touchdowns. Dallas [came] back with a dramatic downfield drive masterminded by (quarterback) Roger Staubach and [made] another touchdown when sticky-fingered Drew Pearson grabbed a forty-year (pass) from Staubach.

The second half [was] a rugged defensive (battle) in which the stubborn Rams [kicked] two field goals and [kept] Dallas from scoring.

Dallas [began] to move. Staubach [completed] four passes, driving the Cowboys deep into Rams' territory. The Rams [fought] back and intercepted the next three Staubach (passes).

It was fourth (down), the critical last (chance) for Dallas to make a (touchdown) that would put them in the Super Bowl.

Pearson caught a Staubach pass, was immediately tackled, and missed the necessary first down by mere
inches, forfeiting both the decisive game and an opportunity

to compete in the Super Bowl.
None of us ever really tried to understand Addie. She just didn't seem to fit in at our (school).

For one thing, she looked different. She wore (clothes) that were gross. She didn't look like we did.

And another (thing), Addie had moved here from Chicago. She didn't [talk] like we did. It wasn't just the sound of her (words). The words themselves [were] strange. Just plain weird.

Well, we let her [know] she wasn't like us. Oh, you know, we never did say (much). We just didn't have anything to [do] with her.

Addie lived a different kind of (life) from what we did. We never really [asked] her about her family. Mr. Johnson [told] some of the other (teachers) at school that her (parents) were dead and her only family was a crazy-acting (aunt), her mother's sister. Addie [moved] in with her upstairs over an old grocery (store).

I guess it must not have [worked] out, though. Addie was gone today, and no one [knows] where.

None of us ever really tried to understand Addie.
I just didn't think they'd really do it--the divorce, I mean. I [know], my mom and (dad) always fought, and although he even left a (time) or two and said he wasn't coming back, he always [did]. And when he did, we [were] all happier together than we ever had been before.

But this (time) my mom says it's really all over and she has already [been] to see a lawyer, and my dad said last (week) that he has a (lawyer), too.

What is really so difficult right now [is] that everyone is worrying about how it's affecting my little (brothers), and no one seems to be concerned over how much I am hurting.

Somehow, I [feel] guilty about it, because since I'm the oldest (child) it seems like I could have [done] something that would have [kept] them together.

And now that Mom has gone back to (work), I have more responsibility at (home) than I ever had before. That [keeps] me from getting to do (things) with my friends, so that [makes] it all even worse.

Do you understand?
I worked through a lot of difficult problems when my mom and dad divorced, but now I've managed to create a new one, just when I thought the situation was calming down.

My (dad) remarried, and although I sometimes [feel] like a pingpong (ball) bouncing back and forth between Mom and my dad's new family, I've [gotten] along pretty well. Too well, maybe, because that's the (cause) of my latest (problem).

My dad's new (wife) has a son, Johnny, and he and I have so much in (common) that we just naturally [hit] it off from the very first.

Now, what could [be] wrong with being (friends) with Johnny? Actually, knowing him has made me a (lot) more comfortable with my dad's new (family).

But whenever I merely [mention] Johnny, Mom [gets] furious and says how thoughtless it [is] for me to be (friends) with him.

I've [tried] to figure out why it [bothers] her so, and I've just about decided that she [is] really afraid of losing me completely to Dad.

Maybe I should try to let her know how much I love her and that I won't leave her alone to go live with my dad--do you think that would help?
Jim and I had been steady friends since kindergarten, and I never did realize what a troublesome predicament we could get in just because of that.

Jim was moving away, and although I'm not usually very sentimental, I had decided to buy him a farewell present with the money I'd been saving for a (stereo).

Wandering through one (store), we saw an identification (bracelet) that Jim especially liked, but it cost sixty-seven (dollars).

Jim tried it on and replaced it on the (counter), I thought, but soon he looked nervously at the clerk across the (store) and then motioned for me to follow him.

Outside, Jim showed me the bracelet just under his (sleeve), telling me triumphantly that he had the farewell (present) and I still had my stereo money.

Well, Jim moved, but I kept feeling guilty about what we'd done, so I got up the courage to go in and tell the store manager the entire (story).

I paid for the bracelet with my stereo money, and now I don't go to sleep to the rhythm of the BeeGees, but I don't lie awake to the beat of a guilty conscience!
Death is one topic that most teenagers don't usually consider, one problem we simply tend to classify in the it-won't-happen-to-me category.

I can't [be] that nonchalant now, because the throbbing (pain) in my leg [was] more complicated than we [expected] it to be; it was the (result) of cancer. And even after they amputated my (leg), I had a strange prophetic (feeling) that I would never [recover], that the cancer is terminal.

So my senior (year) of high school has taken an unplanned (turn), and none of us can [be] sure I'll even live till graduation (day).

I know that you [are] anxious, that you [want] desperately to spare me unnecessary (pain), but the most unbearable pain for me [is] not physical. The most unbearable (pain) is in my (heart) when I have to [suffer] alone because you will not [be] truthful and straightforward with me.

Please don't avoid all mention of my condition, but instead, recognize that I am aware of what is happening, laugh with me, cry with me, and strengthen me for the uncertain journey ahead.
"Help me! Oh, my God, help me!" a young man cried as he fell almost thirty floors inside an elevator shaft today.

He [reached] a speed of more than one hundred (miles) an hour. Both of his legs were [broken] in many places.

His name is Harold Brown. No one knows his (address).
He was taken to a (hospital). A nurse there [said] they do not think he [is] very badly hurt.

(Police) said Brown entered the tall (building) this morning. He ran past the guard. He said, "I [want] to see the (man) at the top. I was [sent] by God."

The (guard) tried to stop him. Then he called a policeman. When he [arrived], the man ran away from him. He ran up the (stairs). No one could [stop] him.

He jumped over a rail. He began to climb down the shaft. He [tried] to hold on, but he lost his (hold). He began to fall. He [fell] all the way from the twenty-ninth floor to the ground (floor).

Harold Brown had a very narrow escape.
TRUE TRAGEDY, Grade 5-6

Why did you leave me there to die?

Why did you just [stand] there unconcerned when they threw me to the ground and pushed a (knife) into my back?

You, old man, out walking your pedigreed (dog), why did you answer my screams with an indifferent (look)?

And you, lady in the (window), why did you hide behind your expensive curtain, completely ignoring me as if I [was] not there at all?

And when I heard your (bus) coming around the corner, and I [crawled] over to where you would stop, why, bus (driver), did you look down as if you [thought] I was a common drunk, crawling because I'd stayed at the (bar) too long? Didn't you [see] the trail of (blood) I left behind as I [crawled]?

I got weaker and weaker. I don't [remember] very much after the bus drove away. When I [woke] up, I was in a (hospital), taken there by a man who was [cleaning] the streets.

You may [think] that a street cleaner is an unimportant (person). But it was a street cleaner who saved me when everyone else left me there to die.
TRUE TRAGEDY, Grade 7-8

Why did you leave me there to die, watching unconcerned as they shoved a knife into my back, walking away as I lay there helpless?

You, old (man) out walking your expensive purebred (dog), why did you [answer] my screams with an indifferent (look)?

And you, haughty (lady) in the window, why did you [hide] behind your elegant (curtain), completely ignoring me as if I was invisible?

And when I [heard] your bus coming around the corner and I [crawled] over to where you would stop, why, bus (driver), did you look down as if you [thought] I was a common (drunk), unable to walk because I had [stayed] at the bar too long? Didn't you [see] the trail of (blood) I left behind as I [crawled]?

I got weaker and weaker, and I don't [remember] very much after the (bus) drove away until I [woke] up in a (hospital).

You may think that a street cleaner is an unimportant person, but it was a street cleaner who rescued me when everyone else left me there to die.
"Help me, oh my God, help me!" a young man cried as he plunged more than twenty-nine floors down a ventilation shaft today, reaching a speed estimated at over one hundred miles an hour before he hit the ground floor.

(Papers) found in his coat pocket [identified] him as Harold Brown, but [made] no mention of his (address) or place of (employment).

Entering the (building) this morning, the incoherent Brown ran past a security guard saying, "I [want] to see the (man) at the top; I was [sent] by God!"

When two policemen arrived, Brown [ran] frantically away from them and up a (stairway) to the thirty-second floor, [jumped] a rail into the ventilation (shaft), and began to climb down. After climbing about thirty-five feet, he [lost] his hold and fell helplessly to the ground floor.

Brown was [taken] by ambulance to a (hospital), where a nurse described his (condition) as serious, saying that he [had] multiple fractures of both (legs) but did not [have] severe internal injuries.

Harold Brown had miraculously survived a tragic experience.
APPENDIX C

Non-expressed Preference Test Passages
Iron is a very important metal. It is silver white and very hard and heavy. It can be [pounded] into thin sheets. It can be pulled into fine wire.

Iron is [used] to make many useful (things). Tools, bridges, and large ships [are] made of iron. The (frames) of tall buildings are made of (iron).

Also, all living things must [have] iron. People must have (iron) to be healthy. Most of the iron in the human body is in the (blood). Iron helps the blood to [carry] oxygen to different parts of the body. People can get the iron they [need] from food or from (medicine).

Iron is found in almost every (country) in the world. It [is] in rocks with other metals. These rocks are taken from the (earth). The iron is then [removed]. It can be used alone or mixed with other metals.

Man has [known] about iron for thousands of years. No one knows when (man) first learned to [get] iron from the (earth).

Our lives would be very different if we did not have iron.

[ ] verbs

( ) nouns
Zinc is an important blue-white metal which is very much like lead, but it is much harder. When it is dunked, zinc becomes very soft. It can then be pounded into thin sheets or pulled into fine wire.

Damp air does not rust zinc, but instead it forms on it a coat of tarnish. Because of this, zinc is often used as a protective coat for other metals.

Zinc is not ever found in a pure state. It is always found mixed with other metals. It can be found almost everywhere in the world.

Large amounts of zinc are used to coat iron and steel. It is often used to make roofs and nails, and it is widely used to make electric dry cells.

About four hundred years ago Portuguese traders began to bring zinc home from China and India. In time the people of Europe learned how to get their own zinc. They in turn brought this process to America. Today the United States produces more zinc than any other country in the world.
Lead is a soft, heavy metal that is combined with other metals to make many of the most useful objects in the world.

Lead is so soft that it can easily be cut with scissors. The freshly cut (edge) of a sheet of lead silver, but it immediately becomes dull gray on contact with (oxygen) in the air.

Lead is used to manufacture (pipes) that carry water, and it is added to paint, gasoline, and some (kinds) of glass. Lead is also used to manufacture type for printing, and some people say that it has had a more significant (effect) on the progress of (civilization) than iron or silver or gold.

People have known about lead for at least three thousand years. The water (pipes) used by the ancient Romans were made of lead.

Even though (lead) is found in many (countries) in the world, the United States is the leading lead (producer). Because the United States consumes even more lead than it produces, it must obtain some of its lead supply from other countries.
Lead is a heavy metallic element that is combined with other metals to make many of the most useful objects in the world.

(Lead) is so soft that it can easily be [cut] with scissors. The freshly cut (surface) of a piece of lead [is] silver, but it immediately darkens on contact with (oxygen) in the air.

Lead is used to [manufacture] plumbing pipes, and it is [added] to paint, gasoline, and special (kinds) of glass. Because lead is [used] to manufacture type for printing, some (people) believe that it has [had] a more significant effect on the (progress) of civilization than iron or silver or (gold).

People have [known] about lead for at least three thousand years. It is so durable that the lead plumbing (pipes) made by the ancient Romans [lasted] for nearly two thousand years.

Although (lead) is found in numerous (countries), the United States [is] the primary lead (producer) in the world. Nevertheless, because it consumes even more lead that it produces, the United States must obtain some of its lead supply from other countries.
Zinc is a silvery metallic element that is found throughout the world. It is similar to, but much harder than, lead.

When zinc is [heated], it softens and [becomes] malleable and ductile, capable of being pounded into thin (sheets) or pulled into fine wire. It [is] this malleability, combined with (resistance) to rust, that renders (zinc) useful in the (manufacture) of such diverse (products) as roofs and gutters, electric dry (cells), and even medicine.

The most significant use of zinc [is] the protection of iron (surfaces) from rusting by immersing the (iron) in melted zinc to produce what is [known] as "galvanized" iron.

(Zinc), which is always [found] in combination with other materials, was probably [known] in the Orient for many centuries before it was [brought] to Europe by Portuguese (traders) about four centuries ago. Eventually the people of Europe [discovered] how to remove zinc from its ores, and in turn they [brought] this process to America.

Today the United States is the primary producer of zinc among the countries of the world.
Zinc is a silvery lustrous metallic element that is found throughout the world.

It [is] similar to, but much harder than, lead, but at high (temperatures) it softens and [becomes] malleable and ductile, capable of being pounded into thin (sheets) or extended into fine wire. It [is] this malleability, combined with (resistance) to rust, that [renders] zinc extremely useful in the (manufacture) of numerous products of such diverse (natures) as roofs and gutters, electric dry (cells), house paint, and even (medicine).

The most significant use of zinc [is] the protection of iron (surfaces) from rusting by immersing them in heated, liquified zinc to [produce] what is known as "galvanized" (iron).

Zinc, which is always [found] in combination with other elements, was probably [known] in the Orient for (centuries) before it was [brought] to Europe by Portuguese traders about four (centuries) ago. Eventually the people of Europe discovered how to extract zinc from its ores and brought this process to America, with the result that today the United States is the primary producer of zinc in the world.
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