

Module 3: Receptive Skills

Overall mark (delete the inapplicable)	Met
<i>CPs should:</i>	
Summarise the materials they used for a receptive skills lesson, based on the questions above	Met
Say how and why you adapted, or did not adapt the materials for their lesson	Met
Evaluate how successful the lesson was from the teacher's and students' point of view	Met
Use written language that is clear, accurate and appropriate to the task	Met
<p>Tutor comments:</p> <p>Thank you for this assignment, Joel. I think you've managed to take onboard a number of key concepts from this week's material, and this has all informed the way you have approached teaching this written text.</p> <p>The text itself is very interesting – it is rare to see an ungraded, authentic text being used in this way, especially given how long that text is. It is also a little unusual to see that the vocabulary is given so much attention before the students are asked questions about the text itself. I wonder what it is like to teach according to the expectations of the coursebook writers – if the students need to know the vocabulary to be able to answer the reading subskills questions, are they still able to apply reading strategies to cover the gaps in their knowledge? If the vocabulary practice takes too long, will the students still even remember the content of the reading when they get to the relevant questions? It's really tricky, and I think that you have shown plenty of evidence here as to how you would approach it with care and sensitivity yourself.</p> <p>As for the task, I think that you have met all of the conditions for a pass. It sounds like you have spent some time adapting the tasks for this lesson, but not the material itself – though I think this is relatively clear in what you describe.</p> <p>Overall - PASS</p>	

The reading was an excerpt from *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott (Q: *Skills for Success: Reading and Writing 4*, Unit 3, Reading 2, pages 72 - 78). I can identify it as an authentic text because the textbook clearly identifies it as an excerpt from a book.

The main purpose of the lesson is receptive skills development. However the text will be later exploited in a subsequent writing lesson. The textbook is set up so that the writing task at the end of the unit is in the same genre as the reading. The text is also exploited for vocabulary building. Each reading in this textbook has twelve vocabulary words highlighted. These words are selected with the goal of building vocabulary knowledge rather than on their importance to understanding the text.

The brief introduction to the text at the bottom of page 72 helps to guide student understanding of what to expect. In addition, the reading fits into the larger theme of the unit, childhood influences, and discussion on this same topic was done in the previous lessons. There is also a lead-in question specific to this reading, all of which serves to activate students' schemata.

The genre is memoir. This is stated on page 72, but students are not explicitly made aware of the genre's features in today's lesson. (It is the subsequent lesson that will examine the features.)

There are multiple tasks accompanying the reading. The students do not have the stamina to complete all the tasks, and so the teacher has to adapt by selecting.

For the pre-reading tasks, in the textbook the preview task is first, then a lead-in (called "Quick Write") and then the vocabulary. I switched the order. I did the lead-in first, because the introduction to the general topic should proceed previewing the specific text. I omitted the vocabulary task, because it was too much vocabulary to deal with in a pre-teach, and it would have derailed any interest generated by the lead-in. Then, because the preview task dealt with global understanding of the whole text, I used it as a gist task instead.

In my lesson, the lead-in was successful because it generated a lot of student ideas, and the gist question was successful because it was easy for students to do and gave them confidence.

As for the reading tasks, I omitted exercise A because it was too general and did not provide guidance for the students. I skipped exercises B and C because the vocabulary work should only come after the general meaning of the text had been dealt with. I used activity D because it was a good way to test students' general understanding of the text, and activity E because it required detailed comprehension of the text. Then I did the vocabulary at the end.

The students easily completed exercise D, which they liked because it gave them confidence, but they struggled with Exercise E. This discouraged them, but I was able to guide them to the correct answers with nudging questions. I thought this was successful because by struggling a little, and then finding the answer in the end with scaffolding from the teacher, the students were able to increase their ability to read for detailed comprehension.

READING 2 | Bird by Bird



You are going to read an excerpt from author Anne Lamott's memoir, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. In it, she looks back at her childhood and the influence that her father had on her. Use the excerpt to gather information and ideas for your Unit Assignment.

PREVIEW THE READING


A. **PREVIEW** Skim the excerpt. Check (✓) the correct statement.

- ☐ Anne Lamott decided to become a writer because of her father.
- ☐ Despite her family's wishes, Anne Lamott decided to become a writer.

B. **QUICK WRITE** Who influenced you most as a child? Write for 5–10 minutes in response. Be sure to use this section for your Unit Assignment.

C. **VOCABULARY** Check (✓) the words you know. Use a dictionary to define any new or unknown words. Then discuss how the words will relate to the unit with a partner.

capture (v.)	impassioned (adj.)	refuge (n.)
creative (adj.)	motivate (v.)	resentful (adj.)
episode (n.)	profound (adj.)	significance (n.)
exaggerate (v.)	rely on (phr. v.)	suspect (v.)

 Oxford 3000™ words

ONLINE

D. Go online to listen and practice your pronunciation.

WORK WITH THE READING

A. Read the excerpt and gather information about the important lessons we learn as children.

BIRD BY BIRD

1 Every morning, no matter how late he had been up, my father rose at 5:30, went to his study, wrote for a couple of hours, made us all breakfast, read the paper with my mother, and then went back to work for the rest of the morning. Many years passed before I realized that he did this by choice, for a living, and that he was not unemployed or mentally ill. I wanted him to have a regular job where he put on a necktie and went off somewhere with the other fathers and sat in a little office. . . . But the idea of spending entire days in someone else's office doing someone else's work did not suit my father's soul. I think it would have killed him. He did end up dying rather early, in his mid-fifties, but at least he had lived on his own terms.



- 2 So I grew up around this man who sat at his desk in the study all day and wrote books and articles about the places and people he had seen and known. He read a lot of poetry. Sometimes he traveled. He could go anyplace he wanted with a sense of purpose. One of the gifts of being a writer is that it gives you an excuse to do things, to go places and explore. Another is that writing **motivates** you to look closely at life, at life as it lurches by¹ and tramps around².
- 3 Writing taught my father to pay attention; my father in turn taught other people to pay attention and then to write down their thoughts and observations. His students were the prisoners at San Quentin³ who took part in the creative-writing program. But he taught me, too, mostly by example. He taught the prisoners and me to put a little bit down on paper every day, and to read all the great books we could get our hands on. He taught us to read poetry. He taught us to be bold and original and to let ourselves make mistakes. . . . But while he helped the prisoners and me to discover that we had a lot of feelings and observations and memories and dreams and opinions we wanted to share, we all ended up just the tiniest bit **resentful** when we found the one fly in the ointment⁴: that at some point we had to actually sit down and write.
- 4 I believe writing was easier for me than for the prisoners because I was still a child. But I always found it hard. I started writing when I was seven or eight. I was very shy and strange-looking, loved reading above everything else, weighed about forty pounds at the time, and was so tense that I walked around with my shoulders up to my ears. I saw a video once of a celebration I went to in the first grade, with all these cute little boys and girls playing together like puppies, and all of a sudden I scuttled across the screen like Prufrock's crab⁵. I was very clearly the one who was going to grow up to . . . keep dozens and dozens of cats. Instead, I got funny. I walked in a strange way: I think I was trying to plug my ears with my shoulders, but they wouldn't quite reach. So first I got funny and then I started to write, although I did not always write funny things.
- 5 I started writing a lot in high school: journals, **impassioned** antiwar pieces, parodies of the writers I loved. And I began to notice something important. The other kids always wanted me to tell them stories of what had happened, even—or especially—when they had been there. Blowups⁶

¹ lurches by: makes a sudden, unsteady movement forward or sideways

² tramps around: travels or wanders on foot

³ San Quentin: a state prison in California

⁴ fly in the ointment: something that spoils the enjoyment

⁵ Prufrock's crab: a shy, timid character that appears in a well-known poem by T. S. Eliot

⁶ blowups: a fight or conflict

in the classroom or on the school yard, scenes involving their parents that we had witnessed—I could make the story happen. I could make it vivid and funny, and even **exaggerate** some of it so that the event became almost mythical, and the people involved seemed larger, and there was a sense of larger **significance**, of meaning.

- 6 I'm sure my father was the person **on** whom his friends **relied** to tell their stories, in school and college. I know for sure that he was later, in the town where he was raising his children. He could take major events or small **episodes** from daily life and shade or exaggerate things in such a way as to **capture** their shape and substance, capture what life felt like in the society in which he and his friends lived and worked. . . . People looked to him to put into words what was going on.
- 7 I **suspect** that he was a child who thought differently than his peers, who may have had serious conversations with grown-ups, who as a young person, like me, accepted being alone quite a lot. I think that this sort of person often becomes either a writer or a career criminal. Throughout my childhood I believed that what I thought about was different from what other kids thought about. It was not necessarily more **profound**, but there was a struggle going on inside me to find some sort of **creative** or spiritual or aesthetic way of seeing the world and organizing it in my head. I read more than other kids; I luxuriated in books. Books were my **refuge**. I sat in corners with my little finger hooked over my bottom lip, reading, in a **trance**⁷, lost in the places and time to which books took me. And there was a moment during my junior year in high school when I began to believe that I could do what other writers were doing. I came to believe that I might be able to put a pencil in my hand and make something special happen.
- 8 Then I wrote some terrible, terrible stories.

⁷ **trance**: a condition in which you don't notice what is going on around you

B. VOCABULARY Complete the sentences with the vocabulary from Reading 2.

capture (v.)	exaggerate (v.)	profound (adj.)	resentful (adj.)
creative (adj.)	impassioned (adj.)	rely on (phr. v.)	significance (n.)
episode (n.)	motivate (v.)	refuge (n.)	suspect (v.)

- Studying a new language can _____ a person to travel.
- My friends _____ their stories so much it's hard to know which parts are true.



3. My brother speaks Italian very well, so whenever we go to Italy,
I _____ him to translate.
4. The writer used descriptive words to _____ the mood of the place.
5. Many of the things my parents told me as a child seemed unimportant at
the time, but I now realize the _____ of their words.
6. My aunt is a great storyteller. She can describe a simple
_____ from the past in a really exciting way.
7. As the storm got worse, they had to find _____.
8. I _____ that my friends are planning to surprise me,
but I'm not really sure.
9. Marcos was furious about the article in the newspaper, and he
wrote a(n) _____ letter in response.
10. Ben should study geography. He's always interested in having
_____ discussions about the environment.
11. I have a hard time coming up with ideas. I wish I were more _____.
12. Ivan was _____ because he wasn't allowed to play in
the soccer game.



ONLINE

C. Go online for more practice with the vocabulary.

**D. Each of these sentences gives the main idea of a paragraph in the reading.
Write the correct paragraph number (1–7) next to each sentence.**

- ____ a. Her father taught his students how to write: for instance, to write a little every day, to read great books, and not to be afraid of making mistakes.
- ____ b. Writing gave her father a reason to explore things and motivated him to look at life closely.
- ____ c. In high school, she discovered that her classmates really liked stories about things that had happened when they were there.
- ____ d. Because she had a different way of thinking about things, she started to believe that she could be a writer.

- ___ e. Her father had made the choice to work at home and be a writer.
- ___ f. Because she was nervous and shy, she learned to be funny and started writing.
- ___ g. Her father wrote about major events and small episodes from daily life in a way that expressed the atmosphere or feeling of the place and time.

E. Answer the questions about Anne Lamott. Write the paragraph number where you found the information for your answer.

1. What do you think Lamott means by "life as it lurches by and tramps around"?
2. How does she describe herself as a child?
3. What is her purpose in describing herself as a child?
4. Why did the other kids in high school want her to tell them stories of what happened even when they were there?
5. Why does she call books her refuge?

F. Anne Lamott writes about both her father and herself as storytellers. Find a sentence in the reading that describes how each of them told stories. Write the paragraph number and highlight the sentence.

Anne Lamott: Paragraph ____ Her father: Paragraph ____

G. Find these sentences in the excerpt. What can you infer from each sentence? Circle the best answer. Then explain your answer to a partner.

1. **Paragraph 1:** "I wanted him to have a regular job where he put on a necktie and went off somewhere with the other fathers and sat in a little office."
 - a. The author wanted her father to spend more time out of the house.
 - b. The author wanted her father to have a more "normal" job.
2. **Paragraph 2:** "Sometimes he traveled. He could go anyplace he wanted with a sense of purpose."
 - a. When he traveled, he was thinking about how he could write about it.
 - b. Because he worked at home, his schedule allowed him time to travel a lot.
3. **Paragraph 3:** "... we all ended up just the tiniest bit resentful when we found the one fly in the ointment: that at some point we had to actually sit down and write."
 - a. The author thinks her father gave them too many writing assignments.
 - b. The author thinks writing down your ideas is difficult.



4. **Paragraph 7:** "I suspect that he was a child who thought differently than his peers, who may have had serious conversations with grown-ups, who as a young person, like me, accepted being alone quite a lot."
- The author thinks that she and her father were very similar as children.
 - The author thinks her father should have been more outgoing as a child.



WRITE WHAT YOU THINK

A. Discuss the questions in a group. Look back at your Quick Write on page 73 as you think about what you learned.

- Think about a profession you are familiar with or interested in.
What qualities does a person in that profession have or need to have?
- Think about a person who influenced you as a child or teenager.
How did that person affect who you are today?

B. Before you watch the video, discuss the questions in a group.

- Have you ever wanted to quit doing an activity you originally liked?
What did you do?
- Should children be allowed to quit doing after-school activities, like playing on a soccer team or ice skating? Why or why not?