

Introduction

This book is the second volume of a series of books concentrating on training reading skills. Each article is accompanied by six essential questions to help readers understand the article. These questions are within the framework of the following categories:

♦ **Main Idea** ♦ Readers will have to ask themselves, “What point is the writer trying to make?” By asking this question, they will be aware of looking for an answer during the reading process.

♦ **Subject Matter** ♦ The subject matter question can help readers focus on the articles they are reading. After reading the first few lines of the article, readers should ask themselves, “What is the subject matter of this article?” They will start concentrating instantly.

♦ **Supporting Details** ♦ The article is made up of details that support the main idea. Supporting details come in various forms, such as examples, explanations, descriptions, definitions, comparisons, contrasts, and metaphors.

♦ **Inference** ♦ Inference questions ask the readers to find the inferences and assumptions made in the article. The main goal of the question is to train readers’ abilities of critical and logical thinking.

♦ **Words in Context** ♦ Words in Context are important in understanding an article. Mistaking the meanings of some Key Words or phrases can lead to a gross misunderstanding of the author’s message.

♦ **Others** ♦ Other reading skills include:

Clarifying Devices The author might use similes and metaphors to capture readers’ attention and spark their imaginations. The most widely used clarifying devices are signal words (*first, second, next, last, finally*), and transitional words or phrases (*in brief, in conclusion, above all, therefore*). Organizational patterns are also clarifying devices, including the chronological pattern, in which events are ordered by the time at which they occurred.

Text Form A text form refers to a type of writing such as fantasy, autobiography, or newspaper article. Knowing the text form can help readers achieve a better understanding of the purpose of the article and determine how to interpret the article.

Cause and Effect Cause and effect questions are concerned with why things happen (causes) and what happens as a result (effects). Understanding cause and effect relationships can guide readers to understand how one event or action caused another to occur. Words like *so, because, and as a result*, are good clues that help readers recognize a cause-and-effect relationship.

Fact or Opinion A fact is something that is true and is supported by evidence. An opinion is something you believe or feel. Being able to identify facts and opinions can help readers differentiate between what is real and what is someone’s point of view or thought, and explore their knowledge or opinions on a topic.

Writer’s Tone A writer’s tone is the attitude the writer takes on the subject he or she is writing about. It gives readers clues as to how the author feels about his or her subject. This type of question is usually described using an emotion word such as *serious, humorous, or hopeful*.

How to Use This Book

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In our reading plan, the 100 articles are divided into 16 weeks. Readers should read 6–7 articles each week. By following the plan, the readers will make steady progress in mastering English reading skills.

Week 1 Day 1

People 01

The Queen of Crime

Agatha Christie (1890–1976)

The 1920s and '30s are often said to be the "Golden Age of Detective Fiction." Among the many writers of the era, one stands above the rest: Agatha Christie. Her books have sold more than two billion copies, making her one of the best-selling authors of all time. Today, she is widely known as the "Queen of Crime."

Christie was born in 1890 in a seaside town on the south coast of England. Like many young women of her time, she was expected to marry young and start a family. In 1914, soon after the start of World War I, she married Archie Christie.

Key Words

- detective (n.) 侦探
- fiction (n.) 小说
- era (n.) 时代
- qualify (v.) 使...有资格
- refugee (n.) 难民
- psychology (n.) 心理学
- orient (n.) 东方
- luxury (n.) 奢侈
- extraordinary (a.) 非凡的
- pharmacist (n.) 药剂师
- inspire (v.) 赋予灵感
- distinctive (a.) 与众不同的
- mysteriously (adv.) 神秘地
- stake (n.) 赌注
- ally (n.) 不在同阵营的盟国
- adapt (v.) 改编
- legacy (n.) 遗产

Questions

- What is the main idea of the article?
 - The early 20th century was an important period for detective fiction.
 - Agatha Christie's life path was changed greatly by the start of World War I.
 - Hercule Poirot appears in more than 30 of Agatha Christie's novels.
 - Agatha Christie is one of the most influential crime writers of all time.
- What is the article about?
 - A famous crime.
 - A person's life and work.
 - A well-known series of books.
- Which of the following is true?
 - Agatha Christie's first novel came out when she was a child.
 - Agatha Christie worked as a nurse during World War I.
 - Agatha Christie was herself a victim of murder.
 - Agatha Christie wrote only two novels during her life.
- What can we guess from the article?
 - Many of Christie's books involve murders by poisoning.
 - Christie quickly grew to hate her creation Hercule Poirot.
 - Poirot was the only detective that Christie ever created.
 - Few non-readers will have heard of *Murder on the Orient Express*.
- What does *twist* in the third paragraph most likely mean?
 - A lively dance.
 - An unusual shape.
 - An unexpected event.
- How does the writer create interest in the first paragraph?
 - With an impressive statistic.
 - With a funny observation.
 - With a difficult question.
 - With an interesting comparison.

Week 6 Day 6

Sports 36

For the Love of the Beautiful Game

Team Argentina after winning the 2022 World Cup Final

France and Uruguay have both won twice. England and Spain have each captured the title once.

Key Words

- freedom (n.) 自由
- association (n.) 协会
- estimate (n.) 估计
- end up (v.) 最后...以...告终
- thrilling (a.) 激动人心的
- tropical (a.) 热带的
- association (n.) 协会
- involve (v.) 涉及
- knockout (n.) 加时赛
- clash (n.) 激烈交锋
- tie (n.) 打平
- tournament (n.) 锦标赛
- federation (n.) 联盟
- compete (v.) 竞争
- kick-off (n.) 开球

Questions

- Which sentence is closest to the main point?
 - There are three secrets to winning a World Cup.
 - The World Cup is a famous football tournament.
 - FIFA organizes the World Cup tournament.
 - Brazil has won the most World Cup titles.
- What does this article describe?
 - A culture.
 - An organization.
 - A competition.
 - A history.
- According to the article, which of the following sentences is NOT true?
 - France has won the World Cup twice.
 - Germany has won the World Cup twice.
 - The World Cup was not held in 1942 and 1946.
 - The World Cup was first organized in 1930.
 - The first World Cup tournament was in 1930.
- What can we infer from the third paragraph?
 - People prefer long soccer matches.
 - The World Cup takes three years to finish.
 - It is very hard to get into the World Cup finals.
 - It costs a lot of money to become World Champion.
- What does *big deal* mean, like in the second paragraph?
 - Something that happens quite suddenly.
 - Something that is cheap and easy to find.
 - Something that makes people happy.
 - Something that is very important.
- What is the effect of there being so many teams in the early World Cup tournaments?
 - The tournaments are very long.
 - The tournaments are considered to be easy.
 - The tournaments are considered to be easy.

The articles are written about various kinds of topics: culture, mystery, business, people, arts & literature, and more. Readers will learn English as they explore their world.

Week 14 Day 3



82 The Other "Racket" Sport

Over seven **percent**¹ of Americans play it, though it is much younger than most other popular sports. In fact, it has become one of the fastest-growing sports in the world, and its **popularity**² is still growing. With a silly name like "pickleball," however, this sport clearly doesn't take itself too seriously.

Pickleball's story started with three bored fathers back in 1965. They wanted to play **badminton**³ with their kids, but they didn't have the right **equipment**⁴. Instead, they played with ping-pong **paddles**⁵ and a plastic ball. It was difficult for the kids at first, so the men tried lowering the net. After that, everyone started to **have a blast**⁶. In fact, it was so fun that they kept on playing it year after year. **Eventually**⁷ they created official rules and a special **court**⁸ for their **homemade**⁹ family activity.

How do you play pickleball? Well, the court is smaller than a tennis court, and players use solid paddles to hit a plastic ball over a low net. Games are played in either singles or doubles. Only the serving side can score points. If the other side wins a rally, it earns the right to **serve**¹⁰. The first side to reach 11 points—and lead by at least two—wins.

What started as a **casual**¹¹ family activity is now a serious sport. Major League Pickleball has grown into a **genuine**¹² **professional**¹³ league, backed by major companies and sports investors. The sport has also gone global, with courts popping up in India, Canada, Vietnam, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere. What's more, the AO Pickleball Slam is now an official part of the Australian Open, one of tennis's biggest events.

▲ Pickleball has become increasingly popular since its humble beginnings.



Another **remarkable**¹⁴ thing about pickleball is its generational **diversity**¹⁵. Just as when it began in 1965, it remains a sport for all ages. It is very popular among elderly people because of its small court and relaxed pace. At the same time, it is also a hit with young people. The average age of a pickleball player is 35, and that number keeps dropping. What started as a backyard game for three families has become an international sport for practically everyone. If the **figures**¹⁶ are anything to go by, pickleball's best days are still ahead of it.

Key Words

percent (n.) 百分之…… popularity (n.) 人气；流行 badminton (n.) 羽毛球
 equipment (n.) 装备；用具 paddle (n.) 桌球拍；槌 (v.) 用桨划
 have a blast 玩得尽兴 eventually (adv.) 最终 court (n.) (网球等的) 球网；法院；法庭
 homemade (a.) 自制的；家做的 serve (v.) (网球等运动的) 发球
 casual (a.) 非正式的；随性的 genuine (a.) 真正的 professional (a.) 职业的；专业的
 remarkable (a.) 值得注意的；非凡的；卓越的 diversity (n.) 多样性；差异
 figure (n.) 数字；身材

Questions

- Which sentence is closest to the main point of this article? ▲Main Idea
 - Pickleball was invented by badminton players in 1965.
 - Pickleball has its own professional league in the United States.
 - Pickleball came from nowhere and is now popular worldwide.
 - Pickleball can be played by people of all ages.
- What is this article mainly about? ▲Subject Matter
 - A silly name.
 - Celebrities.
 - Three fathers.
 - A new sport.
- Which of the following is NOT true about pickleball? ▲Supporting Details
 - It has a very fast pace.
 - It has a lowered net.
 - It is played with a plastic ball.
 - It is played on a small court.
- Which of the following is probably true about pickleball? ▲Making Inferences
 - It is expensive to play.
 - It is popular with retired people.
 - It has complicated rules.
 - It is usually played at night.
- What does **have a blast** mean in the article? ▲Words in Context
 - To invent something new.
 - To be bad at something.
 - To enjoy something.
 - To be in danger.
- How does the writer create interest in the first paragraph? ▲Clarifying Devices
 - Surprising facts.
 - A personal story.
 - Precise arguments.
 - A funny story.

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Each article is followed by six essential questions to help readers understand the content.

Week 14 Day 3

Different Species in the Great Barrier Reef

▼ shark



▼ jellyfish



▼ dugong



▼ sea turtle



▼ humpback whale



Week 7 Day 1

07 A Golden Pearl on the Mountain's Edge

Located at the summit of Mt. Kyauktogyi, the Kyauktogyi Pagoda is one of Myanmar's most jaw-dropping religious sites. What makes it special, though, isn't the pagoda itself but rather what it stands on: the hunkle stone mace, tall and slender...

Week 12 Day 5

Business UNIVERSAL SUPPLY CHAIN PROCESS FLOW



Week 16 Day 1

Science Hidden Family Histories

Genetic genealogy could help you find your long-lost relatives. Have you ever wondered if you had long-lost relatives in some far-off country? Maybe they look like you or talk like you. Maybe they have the same laugh. A technology called genetic genealogy could help you find them.

Genetic genealogy combines DNA testing with traditional research. The word "genetic" refers to DNA. DNA testing can show if two people are related. You send a DNA sample to a company. The company compares your DNA with DNA from millions of other people. If your DNA matches someone else's DNA, you might have the same ancestors. The word "genealogy" means studying family history.



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Bountiful pictures that provide additional information related to the articles will enhance readers' pleasure in reading.

Week 1



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Day 2 Business

**02 Affordable, Convenient,
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Day 3 Culture

03 The Dark Side of the City of Light 14

Day 4 Culture

04 Don't Wear That—Wear This! 16

Day 5 Environment

05 Lock It Up and Throw Away the Key 18

Day 6 People

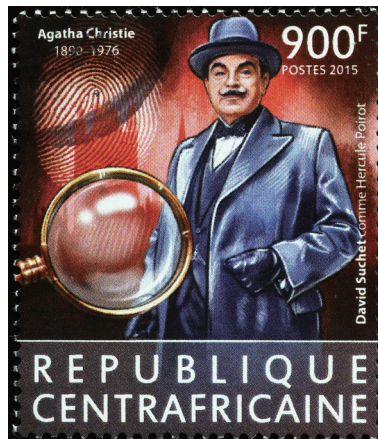
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The Queen of Crime

- 1 The 1920s and '30s are often said to be the "Golden Age of **Detective**¹ **Fiction**²." Among the many writers of the **era**³, one stands above the rest: Agatha Christie. Her books have sold more than two billion copies, making her one of the best-selling authors of all time. Today, she is widely known as the "Queen of Crime."
- 2 Christie was born in 1890 in a seaside town on the south coast of England. Like many young women of her time, she was expected to marry young and start a family. In 1914, soon after the start of World War I, she married Archibald Christie. However, the war delayed their plans. Her husband went off to fight, while she took up work as a nurse. By 1917, she had **qualified**⁴ as a **pharmacist**⁵, gaining detailed knowledge of medicines and poisons. She would later make good use of this information in her novels.
- 3 During the war years, Christie created her first great detective, Hercule Poirot, **inspired**⁶ by the Belgian **refugees**⁷ she saw in her town. Her first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920), introduces Poirot as a Belgian refugee with a **distinctive**⁸ **moustache**⁹ and a passion for **psychology**¹⁰. When an old woman is **mysteriously**¹¹ poisoned, it is up to Poirot to solve the crime! With its unique detective and many surprise **twists**, the novel was a success. More works soon followed, with Poirot eventually appearing in more than 30 novels and many short stories.
- 4 Of all of these, the most famous is probably *Murder on the Orient*¹² *Express*. In it, a man is found **stabbed**¹³ to death on a **luxury**¹⁴ train. Yet, all twelve suspects have solid **alibis**¹⁵. Who could have done it? Even those who have never read the book may know the story. It has been **adapted**¹⁶ into films, TV shows, video games, and



Agatha Christie



▲ Hercule Poirot featured on a postage stamp



▲ The novel *Murder on the Orient Express* was later made into a film.

- 5 Unlike many of the characters in her novels, Christie died peacefully in 1976, leaving behind an **extraordinary**¹⁷ **legacy**¹⁸. Indeed, her amazing mysteries continue to shape detective fiction to this day.

Key Words

- ① **detective** (n.) 偵探；警探 ② **fiction** (n.) 小說；虛構的事 ③ **era** (n.) 時代；年代；紀元
 ④ **qualify** (v.) (使) 具有資格；有權 ⑤ **pharmacist** (n.) 藥劑師 ⑥ **inspire** (v.) 賦予靈感；激勵
 ⑦ **refugee** (n.) 難民；流亡者 ⑧ **distinctive** (a.) 與眾不同的 ⑨ **moustache** (n.) 八字鬚
 ⑩ **psychology** (n.) 心理(學) ⑪ **mysteriously** (adv.) 神秘地
 ⑫ **orient** (n.) 【搭配the】東方 (v.) 使朝向；適應 ⑬ **stab** (v.) 刺；戳；扎
 ⑭ **luxury** (n.) 奢侈(品)；豪華 ⑮ **alibi** (n.) 不在犯罪現場的證明；藉口 ⑯ **adapt** (v.) 改編；適應；調整
 ⑰ **extraordinary** (a.) 非凡的；驚人的 ⑱ **legacy** (n.) 遺留物；遺產

Questions

1. What is the main idea of the article? ♦Main Idea♦
 A The early 20th century was an important period for detective fiction.
 B Agatha Christie's life path was changed greatly by the start of World War I.
 C Hercule Poirot appears in more than 30 of Agatha Christie's novels.
 D Agatha Christie is one of the most influential crime writers of all time.
2. What is the article about? ♦Subject Matter♦
 A A famous crime. B A terrible world event.
 C A person's life and work. D A well-known series of books.
3. Which of the following is true? ♦Supporting Details♦
 A Agatha Christie's first novel came out when she was a child.
 B Agatha Christie worked as a nurse during World War I.
 C Agatha Christie was herself a victim of murder.
 D Agatha Christie wrote only two novels during her life.
4. What can we guess from the article? ♦Making Inferences♦
 A Many of Christie's books involve murders by poisoning.
 B Christie quickly grew to hate her creation Hercule Poirot.
 C Poirot was the only detective that Christie ever created.
 D Few non-readers will have heard of *Murder on the Orient Express*.
5. What does **twist** in the third paragraph most likely mean? ♦Words in Context♦
 A A lively dance. B A bend in a road.
 C An unusual shape. D An unexpected event.
6. How does the writer create interest in the first paragraph? ♦Clarifying Devices♦
 A With an impressive statistic. B With a difficult question.
 C With a funny observation. D With an interesting comparison.

02



Affordable, Convenient, and . . . Dangerous?

1 Tina is on the hunt for a new phone. Her friend has just bought an expensive new model. Tina wants the same one. Nevertheless, the price feels **out of reach**¹. She searches online, hoping to find a better deal. One site catches her attention. Beneath the price of the phone, a message reads: "Buy Now, Pay Later—**split**² the cost into six easy payments!" Suddenly, the phone seems affordable. She only has to pay one-sixth of the price now. The rest can be dealt with later. Without a second thought, she hits the "Buy" button.

2 Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) is a payment **option**³ that allows consumers to buy items immediately by making only a small **initial**⁴ payment. What **sets** BNPL **apart**⁵ from other lending plans is its **accessibility**⁶. **Approval**⁷ usually takes only seconds and often requires no formal credit check. This makes it perfect for online shopping, where speed and **convenience**⁸ really matter.

3 For many, BNPL can be a **lifesaver**⁹, allowing them to make **essential**¹⁰ purchases without having to rely on high-interest credit cards. If used sensibly, it can also make luxury items affordable to ordinary people. Businesses benefit, too. BNPL encourages people to buy things they might otherwise avoid due to high prices. Still, it also has risks. If BNPL becomes a habit, it can be difficult

to **keep track of**¹¹ one's spending. Due payments can **stack up**, quickly becoming more than one can afford to repay. Though BNPL lenders **typically**¹² charge no interest, they do charge steep late fees. What's more,

Your Cart Total:

How would you like to pay?

+ Add a gift card



Credit Card



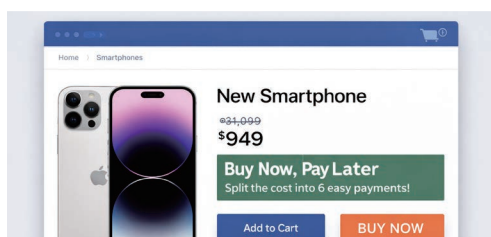
Debit Card



Buy now, pay later

As low as \$37.50/month for 12 months

▲ BNPL lets people buy items with a small upfront payment.



failing to pay on time can seriously harm your credit score. This can make it harder to get a bank loan should you want to, say, buy a house or start a business in the future.

- 4 So while BNPL can be useful, it must be used carefully. Before clicking "Buy," people like Tina should pause and think about their situation. It may look like a sweet deal, but debt is still debt. It should never be taken on lightly.

Key Words

- 1 out of reach 遙不可及 2 split (v.) 分攤；使分裂 (n.) 裂縫；分歧 3 option (n.) 選擇 (權)
4 initial (a.) 開始的，最初的 5 set . . . apart 使……與眾不同 6 accessibility (n.) 可及性；易達到
7 approval (n.) 贊同；批准 8 convenience (n.) 方便；便利設施 9 lifesaver (n.) 救星；救生員
10 essential (a.) 本質的；必要的 (n.) 【常複數】必需品 11 keep track of 追蹤
12 typically (adv.) 典型地；一般地

Questions

1. What is the main idea of the article? ♦Main Idea♦
A BNPL lets people buy goods they normally couldn't afford.
B BNPL can be a useful financial tool, but it also comes with risks.
C The approval process for BNPL is usually fast and trouble free.
D BNPL is one of several lending plans available to buyers.
2. What is the article about? ♦Subject Matter♦
A A way to borrow money. B The risks of getting into debt.
C How to manage your spending. D Online shopping habits.
3. Which of the following is true about BNPL? ♦Supporting Details♦
A When buying with BNPL, you don't have to put any money down initially.
B BNPL lenders often charge high interest on their loans.
C BNPL lenders typically do not charge late fees if you fail to pay on time.
D Being late with your BNPL payment can harm your credit score.
4. What can we guess about Tina from the article? ♦Making Inferences♦
A She understands all the long-term financial risks of BNPL.
B She has plenty of money in her savings account.
C She makes buying decisions without thinking carefully.
D She will likely not be able to repay her BNPL loan.
5. What does **stack up** in the third paragraph most likely mean? ... ♦Words in Context♦
A Disappear over time. B Increase in amount.
C Organize neatly. D Be delayed.
6. What is the writer's tone at the end of the article? ♦Writer's Tone♦
A Cautious. B Playful.
C Respectful.



The Dark Side of the City of Light

1 When most people picture Paris, they imagine the Eiffel Tower lit up at night. They think of luxury shops, charming cafés, and world-class art museums. Beneath its busy streets, however, lies a shadow world: a network of tunnels where the bones of more than six million Parisians rest in cold silence. Would you dare to visit the Paris **Catacombs**¹?

2 In the 13th century, stone for new buildings was supplied by mines south of the city. Over time, the mines were **abandoned**² as the city **expanded**³ above them. By the 18th century, the mining tunnels had become dangerously **unstable**⁴. At the same time, Paris was facing another problem above ground. A growing population meant that the city's **cemeteries**⁵ were rapidly running out of space. Bodies were piling up, and the **stink**⁶ was **unbearable**⁷. It soon became clear, though, that one problem could help solve the other. First, fix the tunnels. Then, move in the dead.

3 Since opening to the public in the 19th century, the Catacombs have become a strange source of interest for visitors to the City of Light. Today, more than half a million people **descend**⁸ into them each year. The entrance, a small green building, sits near a busy traffic circle in the south of the city. If you didn't know what it was, you might mistake it for a worker's **shed**⁹. But step through the little green door and you'll find yourself facing 130 stone steps leading deep underground. After walking through a long tunnel, you **eventually**¹⁰ reach a doorway bearing a chilling message: "Stop! This is the **Empire**¹¹ of the Dead." This warning marks the entrance to the **burial**¹² chambers. Beyond this point, you are no longer in an empty tunnel. You are entering a tomb.

4 Entering is not for the faint of heart. The walls on either side are packed tightly with bones and **skulls**¹³, staring at you **grimly**¹⁴ with their hollow eyes. Even the bravest visitor can't help but **feel a chill down their spine**. However,



▲ Paris Catacombs Entrance
(cc by Campola)

The Dark Side of the City of Light