

Using the Newspaper as an Educational Tool

Looking for materials to spice up tutoring? National or local newspapers provide interesting materials such as articles, photos and advertisements related to topics ranging from news, health, money, work, education, immigration and more.

Consider appropriate level of materials:

When using the newspaper with your learner use activities that are at an appropriate level as not to discourage the learner. If reading full articles is too challenging then use photos from articles or advertisements to practice vocabulary or basic discussion. Reading titles and captions alone may be challenging enough for your learner.

An easy guideline to ensure appropriate level of materials is that the instructional level for reading is 5-10 word calling errors per 100 words of text (90-95% accuracy or better) with at least 80% comprehension on simple recall questions about the story. Reading at this level during tutoring is where the best progress is made. The frustration reading level is when word errors are over 10 per 100 words of text and comprehension is below 70% accuracy.

Online Resources:

The Times in Plain English: This free website which brings you important news from America's best sources of information. The writing is in clear, readable English. Among the publications stories come from The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Wall Street Journal and other popular newspapers. This resource may be reproduced and distributed at will. www.thetimesinplainenglish.com/wp/

ProLiteracy Education Network Online Course: If you are interested in more information about how to use the newspaper during lessons a short online course entitled "*Using the Newspaper in Adult Literacy and ESL Instruction*" is available at the *ProLiteracy Education Network*. The course description states the following "Research has shown that authentic teaching materials are an effective way to engage adult learners' interest. Adults learn best when they are involved in selecting or creating their own teaching materials. Newspapers are a convenient and inexpensive tool to accomplish both these objectives. Newspapers help adult students develop skills in reading comprehension, writing, critical thinking, grammar, vocabulary, and civics." Specific activities shared in the online course include 5W chart for comprehension, caption writing, Language Experience Approach, dialogue practice for speaking and more. To access the course go to www.proliteracyednet.org. Click on *online courses* and choose "*Using the Newspaper in Adult Literacy and ESL Instruction.*"