

News & Announcements

Spring Workshops

Smart Tutor Referrals is presenting three great workshops for students this spring:

- ▶ **Study Skills for Academic Success**
2.5 hours
Learn the skills and how to apply them.
- ▶ **Essay Writing**
2.5 hours
Learn to structure writing.
- ▶ **Provincial Exam Prep**
2.5 hours
If you know how to prepare for and write exams, your confidence and results will improve!

For dates, times, rates or more information on workshops, visit us online, contact us via telephone, or register directly through Pearkes or Juan de Fuca Recreation Centres.

Astronomy Day at the Royal BC Museum

Date: May 6, 2006

Time: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Price: Free!

*Location: Royal BC Museum,
675 Belleville St. Victoria*

Contact: (250) 356-7226

Lectures on the asteroid, current topics in astronomy and telescope mirror-grinding demonstrations, displays of telescopes and real space meteorites, telescope views of sunspot activity and a variety of children's programs.

Visitors also have the opportunity to talk to professional astronomers about the meaning of the universe, and to learn how amateur astronomers can observe space with regular binoculars and telescopes.

Secrets to 2nd Language Fluency - Reading

by Maureen Bouey

Maureen Bouey has been an ESL teacher for a number of years. She is also co-author of an ESL textbook with Dahlia Miller of Smart Tutor Referrals.

"What is reading but silent conversation?"

Walter Savage Landor

READ. Read often. Read a LOT!!!!

I know, I know! Some of you don't like reading – even in your first language. I admit, if you like to read, you will have a bit of an "edge", but, even if you don't really like reading, I promise to show you why this skill is so valuable to becoming fluent in your second language. And maybe, together, we can find a way for you to like it!

In this lesson I will show you:

- ▶ how reading can help you become a more fluent second language speaker, and
- ▶ how to find reading material you can enjoy.

First though, let's look at a couple of 'whys'. Here are two questions for you to consider:

1. Why is reading such a valuable skill?
2. Why do you need to read to improve your second language skill?

Let me try to answer these questions for you.

Reading and writing are linked. Reading is written information going in; writing is written information going out. Even if you don't like writing, you'll probably want to be able to write well in your second language, for tests, for business, or even for communicating by email or mail. Perhaps you're a song writer and

would like to write songs in your second language. If so, then read.

THROUGH READING, YOU WILL IMPROVE YOUR WRITING.

What other benefits can you get from reading? Probably one of the biggest advantages is that you can broaden your vocabulary. You can learn brand new words and, at the same time, gain a deeper understanding of words you have heard or seen before. You see, what you are doing is learning/reviewing words "in context". And this is so important!

When you learn a new word "in isolation", you don't get a clear understanding of how to use that word. And yet, learning words in isolation is the way most students learn new vocabulary! For example, here is the word "shout" and here is its definition: "to speak very loudly - either because someone is a long way off, or because you are angry." So, you've learned the definition of the word "shout", but can you use it?

Another way of learning the meaning of a new vocabulary word (the way ALL native speakers of their own languages learn) is to understand new words from context. For instance: if you read a story and there is the sentence, "He shouted so loudly, it hurt her ears;" and then you read another story with a sentence that says, "Don't shout so loud – you'll wake the baby!"... well, you're going to begin to have a pretty good idea of what "shout" means, aren't you? You can understand and learn the meaning of new words from the context (from what's around the words). This is the most natural, and very best way to learn new vocabulary.

About Us

Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents of students through:

*Superior private tutoring
matched specifically to
each student's needs.*

*Stimulating workshops
building skills in a practical
and creative way.*

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through individualized support, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. Each is carefully screened and selected to match individual students' needs.

We help students to achieve.

For more information, and free study tips, visit us on-line at:

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

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So, READING IS A GREAT WAY TO BUILD VOCABULARY.

Which brings me to this important point: DO NOT use your dictionary when you are reading (at least not at first). Use it later if you still don't understand the word from the context. You see, if you stop to use your dictionary, it breaks the natural rhythm of your reading.

A third reason why you should read is because IT INCREASES YOUR EXPOSURE to your second language in general. In other words, you will understand more about the culture through reading, and if you do, you will understand the language more, including idioms, etc.

Here are some great tips on HOW TO READ:

- ▶ Read WITHOUT a dictionary.
- ▶ When reading, practice either guessing at the meanings of unknown words or ignoring them.
- ▶ Don't worry about every little detail. Keep reading even if it seems a little bit hard (but not too hard). Try to get the overall meaning.
- ▶ Read quickly. By maintaining a natural rhythm and flow, you will learn to "infer", or guess meanings.
- ▶ Read aloud – to children, to friends, or just to yourself. (This will improve your pronunciation as well.)
- ▶ If a book is just too boring - or too hard - stop reading and find another book.
- ▶ Read without stress – get a cup of tea or coffee and relax.
- ▶ Read frequently – ten or fifteen minutes every day is better than an hour once a week.

Here are some tips on WHAT TO READ:

- ▶ Well, the short answer is: read anything and everything!
- ▶ Choose something based on your ability – for instance, if you are at a

pre-intermediate level, don't try reading a long, difficult novel.

- ▶ Read for information.
- ▶ Read for pleasure – science fiction, mysteries, romances, etc.
- ▶ Read about topics that interest you.
- ▶ Read books, magazines, newspapers, journals, the Internet, letters, emails, bus schedules, travel brochures, textbooks, novels, cookbooks, you name it!

And here's a great way TO PRACTICE BOTH YOUR LISTENING AND YOUR READING:

- ▶ Read books that have audios (tapes or CDs) with them. With audio books, you're practising both of your receptive skills (listening and reading) at once. You can do this anywhere, and it's very, very helpful.

It's a fact: the more you read, the sooner you will begin to easily recognize more and more words. When this starts to happen, the speed of your reading will increase. Best of all, you will grow increasingly more comfortable with your second language. There have been several scientific studies done that show when students read a lot they become more confident, and thus improve their overall ability with their second language.

Why not keep a reading log (a record of what you've read)? It will surprise and encourage you when you look back on it.

These are just some ideas – the important thing if you want to improve your reading, vocabulary and general ability with your second language, you must read OFTEN and read CONSISTENTLY. 10 minutes every day is better than 1 hour a week.

There is no better time to begin something than the present moment. In other words, right now!

"Reading gives us someplace to go when we have to stay where we are."

Mason Cooley