

Graded News Texts in the EFL Classroom: Vocabulary Accessibility and Pedagogical Applications



Scan for References
& Contact Information

Rick Romanko, Wayo Women's University



Introduction

As English increasingly functions beyond the traditional classroom in many EFL contexts, the demand for accessible, authentic materials that support real-world language engagement has grown.

TESOL educators have long incorporated news texts and news stories into EFL and ESL classrooms. Research has highlighted their potential to support a wide range of language skills and learning outcomes, while also emphasizing the importance of careful material selection (Bell, 2003; Farmer, 2008). News-based instruction can promote language development, vocabulary growth, critical thinking, and learner engagement (Brinton & Gaskill, 1978; Correia, 2006; Bahrani & Tam, 2011; Tafida & Dalhatu, 2014; Moglen, 2014). However, authentic news texts can also present significant lexical challenges, particularly for EFL learners who may not yet have sufficient vocabulary knowledge for independent comprehension.

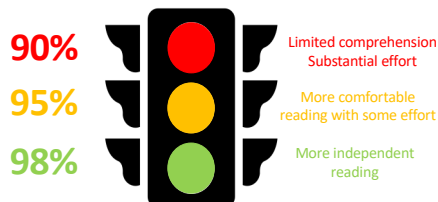
Research on the Use of News in EFL/ESL Education

Improve Listening Comprehension	Enhance Reading Skills	Facilitate Speaking Proficiency	Vocabulary Development	Increase Critical Thinking Skills	Teach Grammar	Challenges of Using News
Brinton & Gaskill, 1978 (TV & Radio)	Correia, 2006 (Newspapers)	Bahrani, 2011 (TV & Radio)	Blatchford, 1973 (Newspapers)	Moglen, 2014 (TV, Radio, & Newspapers)	Özkan, 2015 (Newspaper & Magazines)	Bell, 2003 (TV) Farmer, 2008 (News articles)
Poon, 1992 (TV)	Tuncer, 2019 (Newspapers)	Bahrani & Tam, 2011 (TV & Radio)	Brinton & Gaskill, 1978 (TV & Radio)	Ilijina & Prikule, 2016 (Newspaper)	Barkova, 2011 (Newspapers)	
Baker, 1996 (TV & Radio)					Amelia & Muth'im, 2021 (Newspapers)	

Text Coverage and Reading Comprehension

Research suggests that approximately 95% lexical coverage supports comfortable reading with some effort, while approximately 98% coverage is generally considered desirable for independent, largely unassisted reading (Laufer, 1989; Hu & Nation, 2000; Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010).

Vocabulary Coverage Reading Goals



Vocabulary Demands of News Texts

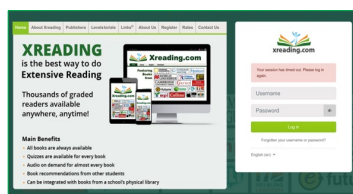
Author/Year	Corpus	95% Coverage	98% Coverage
Nation (2006)	Newspaper articles 400,000 Tokens	4,000 WF+PNMW	9,000 WF+PNMW
Ha (2022)	NOW corpus 12 billion words from online newspapers and magazines	4,000 WF+PNMW	7,000 WF+PNMW

Note. WF = Word Families; PNMW = Proper Nouns and Marginal Words.

These vocabulary demands may challenge many EFL learners. Despite greater access to digital news, limited vocabulary and background knowledge can hinder comprehension. Careful material selection is therefore essential.

Xreading and Xreading News

Xreading News is a weekly graded news publication on the extensive reading platform Xreading. By adapting current news stories to different proficiency levels, it enables learners to engage with real-world topics while reducing the linguistic demands of authentic news texts.



An Xreading News Issue

Vol. 5, Issue 14
July 12, 2026

Xreading News

World News
Drone Strikes Cause Gas Shortage in Russia
by Mark Furr

World News
Vietnam Tries to Stop Sales of Fake Designer Goods
by Alexander Bodnar

World News
Delhi's First All-Women Police Station
by Catriona Chalmers

World News
Vietnam Tries to Stop Sales of Fake Designer Goods
By Alexander Bodnar

This month, the Vietnamese government started to be much tougher on people selling fake designer goods. Vietnam is famous for selling these goods. Vietnam was already trying to stop it, but now it is being tougher.

If police find someone selling fake goods, they must pay a fine. The number of police checks also increased. One reason is that the

Vocabulary Profile of Xreading News Stories

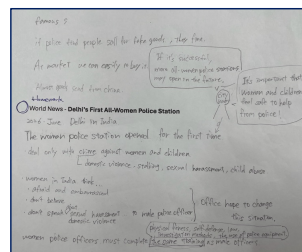
Volume Issues (Year)	Total coverage	1K	2K	3K	Proper nouns	Out-of-list	Total Tokens (words)
Vol. 1, 29 (2022)	95.23%	81.26%	6.67%	2.31%	4.99%	4.78%	54,188
Vol. 2, 30 (2023)	95.13%	81.88%	6.59%	2.24%	4.42%	4.88%	64,495
Vol. 3, 29 (2024)	95.17%	80.46%	7.43%	2.55%	4.73%	4.83%	62,939
Vol. 4, 29 (2025)	95.02%	80.36%	6.96%	2.64%	5.06%	4.97%	64,018
Vol. 5, (2026)	95.81%	80.21%	7.56%	2.95%	5.09%	4.19%	33,937
Vol. 1-5, 132 (2022-26)	95.22%	80.89%	7.00%	2.50%	4.83%	4.79%	279,577

Note. Vocabulary profiling was conducted using AntWordProfiler (Anthony, 2026) and BNC/COCA word-family lists.

Eight-Step Lesson Sequence: News Story Reading, Discussion, and Reflection

- Group Students**
Put students in groups (e.g., class of 25 students - 5 groups of 5).
- Schema Building Activity**
Do a schema building activity (e.g., predict from headlines).
- Assign News Stories**
Give each group one story (use as many stories as you have groups).
- Read and Discuss**
Students read their news stories and work collaboratively to confirm understanding and make notes on key points.
- Mix Groups**
Mix groups so that there is one student from each of the original five groups in each of the new five groups.
- Share and Listen**
Students retell their news story from their notes, and others listen, ask questions, and make notes.
- Read and Reflect Outside of Class**
Outside of class, students read all of the news stories from the Xreading News Issue.
- Write a Reaction Journal**
Students write a reaction journal (share them with each other in the next class).

This example lesson consists of eight steps organized into three phases. Steps 1-4 comprise Phase 1: Preparation and Initial Reading. Steps 5-6 comprise Phase 2: Jigsaw Exchange and Discussion. Steps 7-8 comprise Phase 3: Post-Class Consolidation and Reflection.



A student's notes from Step 4 during the initial reading and collaborative discussion of their assigned news story.



Two small groups of students working collaboratively to read and discuss their assigned news stories.

I learned a lot from various news topics. It was a little long at 2000 words, but there were only five articles, so I was able to read it easily. The news about the first Jewish female president was interesting. Reading X-Reading News is a good opportunity to study English and learn about the world, so I would like to read it again. I thought if there was anything written about animals I want to read it. (Ari)

I learned about many different news stories from this book. Some of them were new to me, so I learned a lot. I think it is important and interesting to know what is happening in the world. The story about the pilot was the most shocking. He was an experienced and kind pilot, but he suddenly jumped out of the plane and left the student alone. I was very glad that the student came back safely. (Yuki)

I chose Xreading News because it had many short news stories, so I thought it would be easier to read than a long book. Some articles were interesting, and some were a little difficult, but I could still understand the main idea. I liked learning about news from different countries. I think this book is helpful for practicing English, so I would recommend it. (Runa)

Students' Reaction Journals from Step 8