

Without a Dictionary

Levels

Low intermediate

Aims

Help students realize that interrupting their reading to look in a dictionary when they meet an unfamiliar word is inefficient and impairs comprehension. Enable students to discover the benefits of reading through a text. Facilitate learner autonomy and give self-confidence.

Class Time

45 minutes–1 hour

Preparation Time

5 minutes

Resources

Any appropriate short passage

Contributor

This activity helps learners realize that they are not wholly dependent on a dictionary for finding the meaning of unknown lexical items. They should discover that they could understand the gist of the reading better when their reading was not interrupted; that they could understand the meaning of many words from the context the second time they read it; that by working together with a partner or in a group, they could help each other to better understand a reading passage; and finally, that they were not dependent on a dictionary to derive meaning.

Procedure

1. Have the students
 - read through the text once, underlining the words they don't know, but not stopping to look them up
 - read through the text again checking the underlined words that they can now understand
 - compare their texts and help each other understand words that are still unknown
 - look in their dictionaries for those words they still don't understand, but feel they must know to get meaning from the text.
2. Elicit from the class what they learned about reading and vocabulary from doing this activity.

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