

Abax - Review

British Council Network News - January 2003

Practical Readings 1

All in all a book with some potential, especially with careful teacher guidance and intervention



Potentially useful for both self-study and classroom use. Practical Readings aims to practice and improve the various reading skills at an 'elementary to low-intermediate level'.

Each unit presents a different text and related tasks, beginning with a warmer and going on to various reading tasks, a language focus and an extension task. The warmers are often well thought out and get learners on-topic, occasionally acting as a prediction task as well. The units are well laid-out and easy to follow (although some graphics seem slightly dated). Extension tasks often give the opportunity for speaking, based on a clear context and achievable task.

The initial obstacle to successfully reading the tests and completing the tasks seems to be the lack of pre-taught vocabulary. Learners might run into difficulty based on new or difficult lexis in the texts. Skimming and scanning tasks are sometimes just slightly off the mark and can be carried out without properly confronting the text. However, the authors state 'by the time you have done all the exercises, you should understand much more of each reading' and this is most likely the case as there are often three tasks, and detailed tasks are usually strong.

Elizabeth Beck
Student Resource Centre and Multimedia Centre