

Eurasian Editions ELT: Reading

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RUNNING INTO OURSELVES

*A teacher's journey of
growth and discovery*



EURASIAN
Editions

Kimiko Ochi and Jonathan Jackson

RUNNING INTO YOURSELF

A teacher's journey of growth and discovery

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EURASIAN Editions

Running into yourself

By Kimiko Ochi and Jonathan Jackson

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CONTENTS

FOR TEACHERS	5
Unit 1: Escape	6
Unit 2: Problems at work	10
Unit 3: School rules	14
Unit 4: Wall of silence	18
Unit 5: Teaching strategies	22
Unit 6: Outside the classroom	26
Unit 7: A bridge between two cultures	30
Unit 8: Enthusiastic students	34
Unit 9: Unenthusiastic students	38
Unit 10: Class war	42
Unit 11: Grammar is king	46
Unit 12: Practice	50
Unit 13: Freedom	54
Unit 14: Finding myself	58

FOR TEACHERS

Pre-reading

For a lower level group this can be done in the students' native language (L1) if this is shared between all members.

Skim reading

Make sure the students understand the three statements before they read. They should not take more than about 30 seconds to find the key words and phrases.

Reading for detail

Again, take some time working on the statements so students know what to look for. Setting a time limit will discourage them from reading everything.

Vocabulary

This section is most useful for groups with a common L1, particularly if this is shared by the teacher, or if the teacher has a good knowledge of that language. Since many words have a number of definitions, a line number is given to allow students to study each word in context.

Reading passage

Students read the passage carefully before tackling the comprehension questions.

Comprehension

Guessing the meaning of words is an important skill, so section A should be done without a dictionary.

Writing

Answers to the first question can be in complete sentences (if the teacher wants to assess students' writing ability) or in bullet points (if the focus is purely on reading).

Summary

This section alternates in focus between distinguishing the main points of the reading passage from its secondary detail and understanding its chronology.

Speaking

A speaking activity for more advanced students.

UNIT 1: ESCAPE!

Pre-reading

A. Discuss in pairs/groups/as a class.

1. Have you ever been to a foreign country?
2. Have you ever thought about getting away from your home?
3. Have you met someone who really annoyed you?

B. Read the unit title and the sub-headings in the reading passage. What do you think you are going to read about? (The writer is called Kate.)

Skim reading

Skim the reading passage. Answer *True* (T) or *False* (F). Kate writes about:

1. working in Japan. T/F
2. why she left the UK. T/F
3. Fukuoka. T/F

Reading for detail

Search for information relating to these statements. Answer *True* (T) or *False* (F).

1. Kate enjoyed her first job in Japan. T/F
2. Kate was happy in the UK. T/F
3. Kate disliked both her flatmates. T/F

Vocabulary

Find these words in the reading passage and, with a dictionary, write the meaning.

unlike [line 6]		despair [10]	
cultural [6]		hectic [12]	
taboo [8]		shitty [14]	
wind up [10]		flatmate [15]	
quagmire [10]		sullen [18]	
bureaucratic [10]		fastidiously [18]	

Reading passage

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Bad dreams

1

My first job in Japan was at a well-known language school. I sometimes dream of this time in my life and wake up in a cold sweat! Oh my God, that place was awful!

No experience? No problem!!

5

Unlike JET and other programmes that encourage cultural awareness in its teachers, that school liked to foster cultural ignorance. No Japanese? No idea about cultural taboos? Sign on the dotted line, you're perfect.

Escape from the UK

I wound up working for that quagmire of bureaucratic despair because I wanted to leave the UK ASAP. I'd been planning a move anyway. I had a boring job in an insurance company, a hectic personal life and wanted to have a nice rest, practise my Japanese, maybe do some martial arts. So I quit and took the first shitty job I was offered.

10

Monster flatmate

15

I lived in rural Fukuoka with two other young women. One was a darling, and we remain friends to this day. The other - let's call her Jane - was a peroxide blonde, sullen, fastidiously neat, and not particularly nice. She frequently enjoyed phases of pretending I didn't exist, not speaking to me, even a 'good morning' in return to a greeting. She told my boss I was looking for alternative work, read our flatmate's diary and went through our belongings when we were out... she was horrid. My other flatmate and I spent all of our spare time being elsewhere, since going home started to give us anxiety attacks.

20

Comprehension

A. Vocabulary in context

1. Guess the meaning of, 'wake up in a cold sweat' (line 3).
 - a. wake up from a daydream
 - b. wake up from a bad dream feeling cold and sweaty
 - c. wake up from feeling too cold
2. Guess the meaning of, 'sign on the dotted line' (line 8).
 - a. sign an agreement or contract
 - b. sign a letter
 - c. sign to prove you received a letter
3. Guess the meaning of, 'a darling' (line 16).
 - a. a boring person
 - b. a lovely person
 - c. a good-looking person

B. Answer *True* (T) or *False* (F).

1. The school helped the teachers learn about Japanese culture. T/F
2. Kate was interested in Japan. T/F
3. Kate accepted the best job she was offered. T/F
4. Jane dyed her hair. T/F

C. Understanding cause and effect

Match 1-4 with a-d using *because* or *so*.

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---------|---|---|
| 1 | Kate wanted to move to Japan | because | a | it was so awful. |
| | | so | | |
| 2 | Kate still has nightmares about her first job in Japan | because | b | she didn't spend much time at home. |
| | | so | | |
| 3 | Kate disliked Jane | because | c | she took the first job she was offered. |
| | | so | | |
| 4 | Kate disliked Jane | because | d | she was unfriendly, devious and nosy. |
| | | so | | |

Writing _____

1. Why did Kate want to move to a foreign country?

.....
.....
.....

2. *Your opinion:* Why do most language schools encourage cultural awareness in their teachers?

.....
.....
.....

Summary _____

Put the sentences in the correct order to make a summary of the reading passage.

- (1) Kate started teaching English at a language school after she moved to Japan.
- () This woman, Jane, sometimes completely ignored her.
- () She will never forget how awful that job was.
- () She read her flatmate’s diary and looked through their belongings while they were out.
- () Kate lived with two young women in Fukuoka, one of whom was horrible; that was another terrible experience.
- () The school seemed to prefer teachers who knew nothing about Japan.
- (7) Kate and her other flatmate spent their spare time being elsewhere trying to keep out of Jane’s way.

Speaking: role play _____

Give some advice to a friend who has an annoying flatmate.

UNIT 2: PROBLEMS AT WORK

Pre-reading

A. Discuss in pairs/groups/as a class.

1. Have you ever worked?
2. If so, where? / What kind of jobs have you had?
3. Have you had any unpleasant experiences at work?

B. Read the unit title and the sub-headings in the reading passage. What do you think you are going to read about?

Skim reading

Skim the reading passage. Answer *True* (T) or *False* (F). Kate writes about:

1. other teachers at the language school. T/F
2. students at the language school. T/F
3. the school's attitude to money and education. T/F

Reading for detail

Search for information relating to these statements. Answer *True* (T) or *False* (F).

1. Kate respected the company. T/F
2. The company cared about its students. T/F
3. Some students were unhappy at the school. T/F

Vocabulary

Find these words in the reading passage and, with a dictionary, write the meaning.

recall [3]		intimidate [14]	
uncomfortable [4]		discuss [15]	
available [6]		split [16]	
aggressive [10]		remove [17]	
awkward [12]		frightening [19]	
stuff [13]		atmosphere [20]	

Reading passage

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Money - 1; Education - 0

1

The job itself was even worse. In all seriousness, that company was ethically bankrupt. I recall a particular instance where I was called in to teach a trial lesson to a little girl, because she was uncomfortable around male teachers. I knew, and the company knew, that I was not usually available to teach at that branch. I knew, and the company knew, that the teachers who were available were all men. But nobody told the child's mother that, because they wanted her to sign up.

5

Money - 2; Education - 0

I remember another instance when a very big, very aggressive young man - another student - was in a class with a very small teenage girl. (Keep in mind that the classrooms were tiny; it was awkward being in there with more than one student, yet four people were regularly stuffed in there together.) He was rude and angry, and she was obviously intimidated by him. I told her I would discuss having her put in a different class (which was a fruitless discussion as it turned out, because the school had no interest in splitting the class or in removing the young man, as either course of action would result in lost income, and that was untenable, never mind that a young girl was supposed to be trying to study in such an unpleasant - and probably frightening - atmosphere).

10

15

20

Comprehension

A. Vocabulary in context

1. Guess the meaning of, 'ethically bankrupt' (lines 2 and 3).
 - a. illegal
 - b. corrupt
 - c. short of money
2. Guess the meaning of, 'sign up' (line 8).
 - a. nod your head as a blessing
 - b. commit to a period of education or training
 - c. sign that you agree with something
3. Kate uses, 'never mind' (line 18), to show that the school thinks:
 - a. lost income is more important than the girl trying to study.
 - b. the girl trying to study is more important than lost income.
 - c. lost income and the girl trying to study are equally important.

B. Answer *Yes* or *No*.

1. Did Kate respect the school where she worked? *Yes/No*
2. Did Kate tell the little girl's mother she usually worked at another branch?
Yes/No
3. Were the classrooms big enough for four people? *Yes/No*
4. Did Kate try to help the teenage girl? *Yes/No*

C. Understanding cause and effect

Match 1-4 with a-d using *because* or *so*.

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---------|---|--|
| 1 | The little girl preferred female teachers | because | a | they didn't tell her there were only male teachers at that branch. |
| 2 | The school wanted the girl's mother to sign up | because | b | the school asked Kate to give her a trial lesson. |
| 3 | The teenage girl was uncomfortable | because | c | the school did nothing. |
| 4 | Splitting the class would have meant lost income | because | d | of a scary male student in her class. |

Writing

1. What did Kate tell the teenage girl?

.....
.....

2. *Your opinion:* Why is the atmosphere in a class important?

.....
.....
.....

Summary

Choose the best summary of the reading passage.

- a. The school always put money above the welfare of students. Kate was asked to teach a trial lesson to a little girl who wanted a female teacher. The school did not tell the girl’s mother that female teachers were usually unavailable at that branch. Another case was a teenage girl who felt unhappy being in a class with a scary male student. Although Kate tried to help, the school refused to do anything, as splitting the class would have meant lost income.

- b. Some of Kate’s students had problems. One was a little girl who was uncomfortable with male teachers, so Kate was asked to give her a trial lesson. Another was a teenage girl who was afraid of a scary male student in her class. The small classroom made this worse. Kate told the girl she would ask the school to put her in a different class or remove the young man but the school did nothing to help.

Speaking: role play

Make a complaint to your manager about your poor working conditions: working hours, salary and holidays.

UNIT 3: SCHOOL RULES

Pre-reading

A. Discuss in pairs/groups/as a class.

1. Have you ever broken any school rules?
2. If so, which?
3. Do you regret it?

B. Read the unit title and the sub-headings in the reading passage. What do you think you are going to read about?

Skim reading

Skim the reading passage. Answer *True* (T) or *False* (F). Kate writes about:

1. student complaints. T/F
2. the school's policy on staff meeting students outside class. T/F
3. her unhappiness with her job. T/F

Reading for detail

Search for information relating to these statements. Answer *True* (T) or *False* (F).

1. The school encouraged teachers to support their students privately. T/F
2. The school lied to teachers about students complaining. T/F
3. Kate signed up for 5 months' work. T/F

Vocabulary

Find these words in the reading passage and, with a dictionary, write the meaning.

fraternise [2]		transgression [8]	
report [3]		caution [11]	
approach [5]		concede [13]	
keen [7]		reputable [18]	
poach [7]		urban [18]	
pounce [8]		fold [18]	

Reading passage

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Staff–student relationships

1

Staff were not supposed to fraternise with students outside of class. We were supposed to report any instances of students inviting us out, and if it was heard that staff may have invited students anywhere, they were pulled aside and told that students had 'complained' that they were approached by staff. Of course, there were no such complaints, but the company was extremely keen to avoid students being poached by staff for private lessons, and they pounced on any perceived transgressions.

5

Student complaints?

Naturally, Jane liked to tell my boss that I spent time with students outside of class (I did, but that's beside the point) and I was subsequently cautioned that there had been 'complaints' about me from students. When I pressed for details there were none forthcoming, and my boss eventually conceded that there may have been some misunderstanding...

10

Itchy feet

15

I stayed there for five months, but the conditions and the pay were poor, and I had no respect for the company. I started to look for work in a more reputable company, and in a more urban area. The company folded later that year.

Comprehension

A. Vocabulary in context

1. Kate uses, 'beside the point' (line 11), to show:
 - a. her meeting students is not important at all.
 - b. her meeting students is less important than the school lying.
 - c. her meeting students is the main point of the sentence.
2. Guess the meaning of, 'press for details' (lines 12 and 13).
 - a. try hard to persuade someone to give you detailed information
 - b. write a detailed letter to the press.
 - c. press a button (e.g. in a museum) to listen to detailed information
3. Guess the meaning of, 'have no respect for' (line 17).
 - a. dislike
 - b. have no regard for because of some moral failure
 - c. lose contact with

B. Answer Yes or No.

- a. Did students complain about teachers inviting them out? *Yes/No*
- b. Did Kate meet her students socially? *Yes/No*
- c. Did Kate think the conditions at the school were good? *Yes/No*
- d. Did Kate enjoy living in the countryside? *Yes/No*

C. Understanding cause and effect

Match 1-4 with a-d using *because* or *so*.

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------|---|--|
| 1 | The school didn't want staff and students meeting outside of class | because
so | a | she had no respect for the company where she was working and the pay was poor. |
| 2 | The school heard from Jane that Kate socialised with students | because
so | b | they warned her that students had complained about her. |
| 3 | The school could not name any of the students they said had complained | because
so | c | they were worried about staff teaching students privately. |
| 4 | Kate started to look for a new job | because
so | d | Kate knew they were lying. |

Writing _____

1. What were the five reasons Kate gave for looking for a new job?

.....
.....
.....

2. *Your opinion:* Was Kate wrong to meet students socially?

.....
.....
.....

Summary _____

Put the sentences in the correct order to make a summary of the reading passage.

- (1) There were strict rules about the relationship between teachers and students at Kate’s school.
- () After five months, Kate thought it was time to find a better job in a big city.
- () Teachers were also supposed to inform the school if students invited their teachers anywhere.
- () Teachers were not allowed to meet students socially outside of class because the school did not want them to give students private lessons.
- () When Kate was told that students had complained about her inviting them out, she guessed that Jane had informed on her.
- (6) The school eventually went out of business.

Speaking: role play _____

Your friend wants to go drinking after the school athletic meeting, but it is against school rules. Talk with him/her.