

Reconstruction

If you want to increase your English accuracy and if you want correction of every mistake you make, reconstruction is a good exercise. With this exercise, you can 1) review lexicals you already know, 2) exercise your sentence construction skill, 3) gradually improve your usage of articles and prepositions, and you can 4) exercise the mental process of turning ideas into speech. You accomplish this by reading a short, easy passage, writing down key words from it, reconstructing the passage looking only at the key words, and then comparing your reconstruction with the original text.

Spend 10 or 15 minutes a day or every other day. Do this exercise regularly, over a long period. Write your reconstructions in a journal.

1. (Review a previous reconstruction. Do step 11.)
2. New reconstruction: Find a *short* and *easy* passage of two or three sentences, from any text (reading or script) that you wish.
3. Study the passage thoroughly (but do not memorize it, because you want to exercise your sentence construction skill). Be sure to understand the general message and the individual elements of the message. Then *carefully* note the structural nature of words and their phrases.
4. On another sheet of paper, write down "key words"—words which will help you to remember the content—from the passage. Take out grammar markers (prepositions, tense, number, etc.). This is not a content-memorizing exercise, so it is important to *write down enough key words to help you remember the content easily* and allow you to concentrate on the language. (Punctuation marks will be useful in helping you remember the relationship between the individual elements.)
5. Read the passage once more, just to refresh your memory. (But try not to memorize entire sentences.)
6. Use the key words to reconstruct the passage. Try to write the original passage exactly.
7. Compare your reconstruction with the original passage. Circle (don't correct) mistakes. Study the nature of each mistake. (Sometimes what you produced, though different from the language in the original passage, will not be wrong. Go with the original passage anyway.)
8. Review the marked reconstruction, mentally correcting the marked mistakes. Refer to the original passage if you need to. Add hints to the key words list if you need to.
9. Use the same or more helpful key words to make another reconstruction of the passage again.
10. Now, if you reconstruct it *orally* once, what you learned will stay much longer in your memory.
11. Review this reconstruction before you do a new reconstruction. Read the passage again (to review the content), look at your key words, and then reconstruct the passage orally.

Here's an example

Step 2. Find a *short* and *easy* passage of two or three sentences, from any text (reading or script) that you wish.

(This passage is the first three sentences in Unit 1, "Text 4," in *AKL: Advanced*, Longman.)

The man behind the desk is Robert Russo. Bob is the director of the morning and evening news programs at WNYN-TV. He directs the shows, but other people report the news.

Step 3. Study the passage thoroughly (but do not memorize it, because you want to exercise your sentence construction skill). Be sure to understand the general message and the individual elements of the message. Then *carefully* note the structural nature of words and their phrases.

The man behind the desk is Robert Russo. Bob is the director of the morning and evening news programs at WNYN-TV. He directs the shows, but other people report the news.

Step 4. On another sheet of paper, write down "key words"—words which will help you to remember the content—from the passage. Take out grammar markers (prepositions, tense, number, etc.). This is not a content-memorizing exercise, so it is important to *write down enough key words to help you remember the content easily* and allow you to concentrate on the language. (Punctuation marks will be useful in helping you remember the relationship between the individual elements.)

man desk Robert Russo.
B direct m / n news program WNYN-TV.
direct show, people news.

Step 5. Read the passage once more, just to refresh your memory. (But try not to memorize entire sentences.)

Step 6. Use the key words to reconstruct the passage. Try to write the original passage exactly.

Man behind a desk is Robert Russo. Bob direct morning and evening news program in WNYN-TV. Bob directs the shows, and any other people reports news.

Step 7. Compare your reconstruction with the original passage. Circle (don't correct) mistakes. Study the nature of each mistake. (Sometimes what you produced, though different from the language in the original passage, will not be wrong. Go with the original passage anyway.)

The man behind the desk is Robert Russo. Bob is the director of the morning and evening news programs at WNYN-TV. He directs the shows, but other people report the news.

Man behind a desk is Robert Russo. Bob direct morning and evening news program in WNYN-TV. Bob directs the shows, and any other people reports news.

Step 8. Review the marked reconstruction, mentally correcting the marked mistakes. Refer to the original passage if you need to. Add hints to the key words list if you need to.

Step 9. Use the same or more helpful key words to make another reconstruction of the passage again. ("More helpful" key words are underlined here.)

man desk Robert Russo.

B is direct m / n news program WNYN-TV.

He direct show, but people news.

The man behind a desk is Robert Russo. Bob is director of the morning and evening news programs at WNYN-TV. He directs the shows, but other people report the news.

Step 10. Now, if you reconstruct it *orally* once, you will remember what you learned much longer.

man desk Robert Russo.

B is direct m / n news program WNYN-TV.

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