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**An Evaluation of the Reading Texts & Exercises  
in SB & WB of *English for Palestine* -  
*Grade 9***

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# *Dedication*

*This thesis is dedicated:*

**To the soul of my father who sacrificed everything in his life for me,  
my brothers and sisters so that we may have a better future,**

**To the soul of my niece, Sara, who died four months ago.**

**To the one who stayed up nights so I could sleep comfortably; to the  
one who suffered a lot to give me the chance to prove and improve  
myself, to the one who nurtured in me the love for learning.**

**To my Mother!**

**To the great martyrs and prisoners, the symbol of sacrifice,**

**To my brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces who have been  
supporting and encouraging me,**

**To all with warm regards.**

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## Abstract

This study aimed at evaluating the reading texts and exercises in studentbook (SB) and workbook (WB) of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* in order to find out to what extent the reading texts and exercises in SB and WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* match the suggested criteria. It also aimed at identifying the areas of weaknesses in these reading texts and exercises.

To fulfill the aims of the study, the researcher followed the descriptive analytical approach. She used two tools to collect the needed data: a content analysis card and a structured interview. Benefiting from the (previous studies, related literature, books and institutions' publications), the researcher built her criteria of evaluation which constitute the content analysis card. The analysis card was shown to twelve experts for benefiting from their comments in regard to any potential modifications, additions and deletions to achieve validity. Reliability was examined through the help of two colleague researchers who volunteered to analyze the reading texts and exercises. Then the researcher interviewed fifteen 9<sup>th</sup> grade English language teachers in order to find out their views about the reading texts and exercises in order to validate or refute the findings the researcher obtained through the analysis card.

The results of the analysis show the following conclusions:

1. The reading texts in the textbook employed a wide variety of topics as well as values and good manners. On the other hand, no authentic reading texts are found in this textbook and extensive reading is not included. Four reading texts are found to be related to the Palestinian culture and reality and they are the most interesting to students.
2. Regarding the text vocabulary, in all the reading texts, colours are used to highlight new vocabulary and the number of new vocabulary is suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders.
3. Almost all the visuals accompanying the reading texts are relevant, attractive, colourful and clear to the 9<sup>th</sup> graders.
4. Concerning the text layout, all the reading texts have sufficient margins on sides and spaces between lines and are divided into paragraphs.
5. With respect to the reading exercises in SB & WB, all the instructions are clear, a great variety in questions is found within each reading text but throughout the textbook, the same types of questions are repeated. By contrast, there was no employment of exercises that require students to infer the author's attitude, distinguish between fact and opinion, recognize pronoun references, find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts, relate the text to their personal experience and to work out answers in pairs and groups. These skills are neglected in both the SB & WB.
6. Most of the results obtained from the interviews supported all the results obtained from the content analysis card.

Based on the study findings, the researcher recommended modifying the reading exercises by preparing an enrichment material that cover all the neglected skills. Also, it is recommended to conduct other studies similar to this study or in other skills like writing, speaking or listening in other textbooks of *English for Palestine Series*.

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# **Chapter I**

## **Study Statement and Background**

**1.1 Introduction**

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

**1.3 Research Questions**

**1.4 Purpose of the Study**

**1.5 Significance of the Study**

**1.6 Definitions of the study Terms**

**1.7 Limitations of the Study**

**1.8 List of Abbreviations**

**Summary**

# **Chapter I**

## **Study Statement and Background**

This chapter introduces an introduction to the research problem, the purpose of this study, the significance of the study, the main questions of the study, the definitions of terms, the limitations and the list of abbreviations used in the study.

### **1.1 Introduction**

Nations all over the world are striving through different means to improve their educational programs. In an attempt to achieve this purpose, they continuously introduce and evaluate their educational curriculum, syllabuses, and textbooks. The evaluation process covers different fields of the curriculum; mostly the content represented by the textbook. Although the textbook is not the only tool for the teaching and learning process, it is still of a significant impact for achieving the language learning objectives. Since teachers find it difficult to develop their own classroom materials, have limited time and lie under external pressure that restricts their ability, it gives more emphasis on the use and utility of the textbook to compensate the loss of authentic materials (Ansary, and Babaii, 2002: 1, 2). However, the textbook must keep pace with the world developments and the recent changes of this age which certifies acceleration of inventions.

Evaluation of textbooks can be conducted using checklists of criteria through the analytical research. Analysis and evaluation provide useful data to teachers, supervisors and other educational departments with concrete evidence regarding strong and weak points of the evaluative books (Riffe, et al. 1998).

Concerning the Palestinian curriculum, although a great effort has been exerted to develop the first English language Palestinian curriculum, several complaints about the worth and value of its different aspects have been expressed, specially that it has been implemented before trying it out. This was followed by several efforts that sought to evaluate and make judgments about the effectiveness of the curriculum. Having implemented the first English language Palestinian curriculum as trial editions, evaluation can only be done by considering the text books.

To improve the education programme which UNRWA serves to Palestine refugees in Gaza Field, his Excellency the Director of UNRWA operations, Mr. John Ging, took many measures such as stopping the automatic up-grading of students, reducing the number of students in classes and reforming the curricula. He gave his instructions to a group of school supervisors to reform the curriculums of the four main subjects, i.e. Arabic, Maths, Science and English scientifically and systematically. He asked the school supervisors to form consultant groups and conduct workshops for expert teachers to cite the problematic areas, state why they are problematic, provide evidence that they are problematic and finally propose solutions for these problems. In fact, the leader of the consultant group in this project was Dr. Nazmi Al-Masri, the supervisor of the current study and the researcher is one of the teachers who participated in this project (ETG, 2009:3).

In April 2009, *English for Palestine-Grade 9* was the main focus of this evaluation. It was found that this course has the least problematic features when compared with other textbooks in the same series. Dissatisfactions about some of the reading texts & exercises of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* have been expressed by most 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and students. Additionally, the researcher, as a 9<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher, has observed limitations in these exercises.

The results of this project shows that some topics are irrelevant to the students' environment and culture e.g. Introducing Istanbul and Masai people of East Africa. Moreover, some topics are pure scientific e.g. Finding the way and our friends, the forest. Also, the results show that the questions related to the reading passages are mainly wh-questions. They need to be varied. These problematic features of this curriculum urges the researcher to conduct this study. (ETG,2009:4)

Al-Masri (2009) evaluated all the textbooks of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*. Whereas the focus of this study is to evaluate only one aspect of the same textbook. More specifically, this study aims to examine and evaluate the reading texts & exercises in SB and WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* as the reading skill is the main focus in this textbook. Accordingly, it is believed that this evaluative study of the reading texts & exercises is needed for questioning their effectiveness, and making suitable formative judgments.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Throughout her experience as a teacher, the researcher observed that 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers complain about this new curriculum especially that it has been implemented before piloting. They also complain about the inappropriacy of the reading texts that students find not interesting to read and exercises that do not have variety in questions. These observations are confirmed by the results of the project held by Al-Masri (2009). Thus the researcher found it necessary to conduct this evaluative study in order to find out more about the problematic points in the reading texts and exercises of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*. This study evaluates in depth the reading texts and exercises in the light of suggested criteria built by the researcher.

So the researcher found that evaluating the textbook become a must in order to identify the weaknesses and to make some improvements and innovations in the reading texts and exercises.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher addresses the following questions:

1. What are the needed criteria for evaluating the reading texts and exercises ?
2. To what extent do the reading texts & exercises in SB &WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* match the suggested criteria?
3. What are the areas of weaknesses in the reading texts & exercises in SB & WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*, in terms of the suggested criteria for the reading texts and exercises and the teachers' perspectives?

### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

1. To formulate a checklist of criteria to evaluate the reading texts and exercises.
2. To find out to what extent the reading texts & exercises in SB &WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* match the suggested criteria for the reading texts and exercises.
3. To evaluate the appropriacy and effectiveness of the reading texts & exercises in SB &WB of *English for Palestine 9* from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade English teachers' perspectives.
4. To identify the areas of weaknesses in the reading texts & exercises in SB & WB of *English for Palestine 9* in terms of the suggested criteria for the reading texts and exercises and the teachers' perspectives.



## 1.5 Significance of the Study

The present study is significant because :

1. It presents an analysis card that can be beneficial for specialists and syllabus designers on what reading skills are needed for 9<sup>th</sup> graders and what good criteria the reading texts, text vocabulary, visuals and layout should have.
2. It provides teachers and specialists with the steps of evaluating textbooks and particularly the reading texts and exercises.
3. It offers all 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers opportunity to benefit from the valuable suggestions for enriching the reading texts and exercises.
4. It seeks to motivate and encourage specialists to evaluate and develop the Palestinian syllabuses.
5. It seeks to create enthusiastic encouragement among specialists in curriculum development and evaluation in order to help in the improvement of the Palestinian syllabuses.

## 1.6 Definitions of terms

The following terms are used in the present study:

**English for Palestine-Grade 9:** It refers to the English curriculum for the ninth graders published by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education in August 2008. It includes general guidelines for the authors of the syllabus, general objectives, the methods and the teaching procedures as well as the various ways of evaluating the students' achievement.

**Evaluation:** "It is a matter of judging the fitness of something for a particular purpose". (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:96). Another definition is given by Richards et al.(1985) who states that "It is the systematic gathering of information for purposes of making decisions". The researcher adopted the definition of Brown (1989 cited in Weir and Roberts 1994:4) who defines it as "the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of the curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants' attitudes within a context of particular institutions involved".

**SB (Student Book):** It is the book that presents the new language and provides activities for practice and recycling. (ETB, 2009:5)

**WB (Work Book):** It is the book that provides students with additional practice for class and home use. (ETB, 2009:5)

## **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study are outlined in the following points :

1. The evaluative study will be limited to the reading texts & exercises of *English for Palestine 9*.
2. The total population of the study will be all UNRWA English language teachers of 9<sup>th</sup> grade in Rafah City only .
3. The study will take place in the scholastic year ( 2009/ 2010).

## 1.8 List of abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Equivalent</b>
<b>1. CB</b>	Course book
<b>2. CLT</b>	Communicative language Teaching
<b>3. EFL</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>4. ELC</b>	English Language Curriculum
<b>5. ESL</b>	English as a Second language
<b>6. ESP</b>	English for specific Purposes
<b>7. ETB</b>	English for Palestine Teacher's Book
<b>8. ETG</b>	English for Palestine Teacher's Guide
<b>9. FL</b>	Foreign Language
<b>10. LRF</b>	Language Reading Framework
<b>11. NCTQ</b>	National Council of Teacher Quality
<b>12. QCERD</b>	Qattan Centre for Educational Research and Development
<b>13. SB</b>	Student's Book
<b>14. TB</b>	Teacher's Book
<b>15. TEFL</b>	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
<b>16. TG</b>	The Teacher's Guide
<b>17. WB</b>	Work Book

## Summary

This chapter provides a relevant introduction to the research problem. It also introduces the study statement of problem, the purpose, the significance of the study, the questions of the study, the definitions of terms, the limitations and the list of abbreviations used in the study.

# **Chapter II**

## **Review of Related Literature**

**Introduction**

**Section I: Theoretical Framework**

**Section II: Previous Studies**

**Summary**

# Section I

## Theoretical Framework

### Introduction

#### 2.1 Evaluation

##### 2.1.1 Definition of Evaluation

##### 2.1.2 Types of Evaluation

##### 2.1.3 What to Evaluate?

##### 2.1.4 Methods of conducting evaluation

##### 2.1.5 Textbook Evaluation

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##### 2.2.2 Reading Objectives in *English for Palestine-Grade 9*

##### 2.2.3 Components of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*

##### 2.2.4 Format of units in *English for Palestine-Grade 9*

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##### 2.3.2 Types of Reading

##### 2.3.3 Skills Involved in Reading

#### 2.4 Criteria for Evaluating Reading Texts & Exercises

##### 2.4.1 Criteria for Evaluating Reading Texts

##### 2.4.2 Criteria for Evaluating Reading Exercises

### Summary

## **Chapter II**

### **Introduction**

This chapter consists of two sections: the theoretical framework and the previous studies. The first section consists of four parts: part one presents the concept of evaluation in terms of the definition, types, what to evaluate, methods of conducting evaluation and criteria for textbook evaluation. Part two presents *English for Palestine- Grade nine* in terms of, overview of *English for Palestine* curriculum, reading objectives in it, its components and format. Part three presents the concept of reading comprehension in terms of the definition, importance, types and skills involved in reading. Part four presents the criteria for evaluating reading texts and exercises. This part is divided into two categories. The first category deals with eight criteria for evaluating reading texts and the second category deals with four criteria for evaluating reading exercises.

The second section in this chapter deals with the previous studies which the researcher reviewed.

### **Section I**

#### **Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.1 Evaluation**

###### **2.1.1 Definition of Evaluation**

A variety of definitions for evaluation are offered by different specialists. Here are some of these definitions:

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:96) define evaluation as "a matter of judging the fitness of something for a particular purpose". Richards et al. (1985) define evaluation as "the

systematic gathering of information for purposes of making decisions". Worthen and Sanders (1973:19 cited in Johnson,1989:223) offer another definition:

Evaluation is the determination of the worth of a thing. It includes obtaining information for use in judging the worth of a program, product, procedure, or object, or the potential utility of alternative approaches designed to attain specified objectives.

Brown (1989 cited in Weir and Roberts 1994:4) defines evaluation as:

The systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of the curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants' attitudes within a context of particular institutions involved.

In fact, the definitions of Richards et al. and Hutchinson and Waters are too broad and the definition offered by Worthen and Sanders provide a broader perspective. The researcher believes that Brown's definition is the most comprehensive one. It requires that information not only be gathered but also analyzed, and that both should be done systematically. Also there are two purposes: the promotion of improvement as well as the assessment of effectiveness. Finally, this definition stresses that evaluation is necessarily site-specific in the sense that it must focus on a particular curriculum.

### **2.1.2 Types of Evaluation**

There are three types of evaluation: Formative evaluation, Summative evaluation and Illuminative evaluation.

#### **A- Formative Evaluation**

According to Tomlinson (1998:229), formative evaluation takes place during the development of a program and its curriculum. Its purpose is to collect information that will be used to improve the program. The types of decisions that will result from such evaluation will be relatively small scale and various, and will lead to modifications and fine tuning of the existing program design. Additionally, Williams and Burden (1994:22) and Richards (2001:288) say that formative evaluation involves evaluating

the project from the beginning. It is ongoing in nature, and seeks to form, improve and direct the innovation, rather than simply evaluate the outcomes.

In this regard, Richards (2001:288) thinks that formative evaluation aims to find out what is working well and what is not. The collected data are used to address problems to improve the delivering of the program. It seeks to find details about the time spent on particular objective, result of placement test, methodology, difficulties facing teachers or students, students' enjoyment for the program, sufficient practice work for students and adequate material pacing.

### **B-Summative Evaluation**

Tomlinson (1998:229) states that summative evaluation is often thought of as occurring at the end of the program. The purpose for gathering the information in this type of evaluation is to determine whether the program was successful and effective. The types of decisions that will result from such analyses will be fairly large-scale and may result in sweeping changes (for example, the continual funding of a program or its cancellation). Similarly, Graves (2000:215) says that it assesses the achievement of the course to provide information when the course is redesigned.

### **C-Illuminative Evaluation**

The purpose of illuminative evaluation is not necessarily to change the course but to find out the work of different aspects of the program and how they are implemented. It is concerned with establishing a deeper understanding of the processes of teaching and learning that occur in the program. (Richards 2001: 289)

According to Williams and Burden (1994:23) a variety of information-gathering techniques are normally used in the process of illuminative evaluation-mainly interviews, questionnaires, observation, diaries, and examination of existing documentation such as student records-in order to keep the richness of the data and to



acknowledge multiple perspectives. Illuminative techniques can be employed either summatively or formatively. These techniques assist us in interpreting the complexities of the situation.

The researcher concluded that formative evaluation aims at improving the programme and making modifications. It can be conducted during adopting certain curriculum and so the decisions will be related to the teacher. But summative evaluation is placed after the program has been implemented. It seeks information about effective achievement of the course aims, what students learned, if the material works well, adequacy of objectives, adequacy of placement and achievement tests, amount of time for each unit, appropriacy of teaching methods and problems met during the course.

### **2.1.3 What to Evaluate?**

Evaluation may focus on many different aspects of a language program, such as:

1. curriculum design: to provide insights about the quality of a program planning and organization.
2. the syllabus and program content: for example, how relevant and engaging it was, how easy or difficult, how successful tests and assessment procedures were.
3. classroom processes: to provide insights about the extent to which a program is being implemented appropriately.
4. materials of instruction: to provide insights about whether specific materials are aiding student learning.
5. teachers: for example, how they conducted their teaching, what their perceptions were of the program, what they taught.
6. teacher training: to assess whether training teachers have received is adequate.
7. students: for example, what they learned from the program, their perceptions of it, and how they participated in it.
8. pupil progress: to conduct formative (in-progress) evaluations of student learning.
9. learner motivation: to provide insights about the effectiveness of teachers in aiding students to achieve goals and objectives of the school.
10. institution: for example, what administrative support was provided, what resources were used, what communication networks were employed.
11. learning environment: to provide insights about the extent to which students are provided with a responsive environment in terms of their educational needs.
12. staff development: to provide insights about the extent to which the school system provides the staff opportunities to increase their effectiveness.

13. decision making: to provide insights about how well the school staff-principals , teachers and others – make decisions that result in learner benefits.(Richards,2001:286-287)

In the current study, the main focus is on the materials of instruction. It aims at identifying the strengths and weaknesses in the reading texts and exercises of *English for Palestine Grade 9* and to what extent the reading material match the suggested criteria of evaluation.

#### **2.1.4 Methods of conducting evaluation**

There are many different methods for conducting textbook evaluation that Richards (2001:299-303) Nunan, (1988:123), Graves (2000:215), White (1988:155) and Weir and Roberts (1994:29) review: systematic observation, feedback, questionnaire, dialogue, document analysis, delphi technique, self assessment checklists, journals, ranking activities, tests, diaries, interview, peer appraisal. Richards (2001:299-303) adds more: student log, case study, students evaluations and audio, video-recording as one method may be better than another in specific situation. White (1988:155) believes that there is no one best method for conducting textbook evaluation although some methods are better for some kinds of data than others.

The researcher uses document analysis as the main instrument for conducting the current study as it is the most suitable one for the purpose of the study which is evaluating the reading texts and exercises of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*. This can be achieved through analyzing them in terms of a list of criteria to see to what extent they match the criteria. Also the researcher used another tool which is an interview with 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to find out the problematic areas in the reading texts and exercises of *English for Palestine -Grade 9*.

### **2.1.5 Textbook Evaluation**

The idea of evaluating textbooks is seen to be closely linked to the selection of textbooks. Evaluation helps in selection, which serves as an important decision-making process, as Sheldon (1988:237) puts it:

The selection of a particular core volume signals an executive educational decision in which there is considerable professional, financial and even political investment. This high profile means that the definition and even application of systematic criteria for assessing coursesbooks are vital.

Additionally, Hutchinson (1987:37-38)) suggests an interactive view of materials evaluation. He emphasizes the deeper level of materials evaluation by asking the question why materials are the way they are. He claims that:

materials evaluation plays such an important role in language teaching that its potential for influencing the way teachers operate is considerable. Materials evaluation can and should be a two-way process which enables teachers not just to select a textbook, but also to develop their awareness of their own teaching/learning situation.

No textbook is perfect. No textbook can fit each teaching situation or a language program (Richards, 2001:257), (Lamie, 1999), and (Ansary and Babaii, 2002:1). Therefore, the option of making modification, adaptation or assigning supplementary materials is needed. For example, a textbook may be suitable in one situation as it matches the situation needs, but in a different situation it seems to be unsuitable due to the unsuitability of the situation. Before evaluating a textbook, information is needed on the following issues:

- The role of the textbook in the program.
- The teachers in the program.
- The learners in the program. (Richards, 2001: 256)

### **2.1.6 Criteria for Textbook Evaluation:**

The whole process of textbook assessment is inevitably a subjective activity. As Sheldon (1988:245) observes, "materials evaluation is fundamentally a rule-of-thumb activity and that no formula, grid or system will ever provide a definite yardstick". To avoid the dangers of allowing subjective factors to influence judgment in the early stage of analysis, Hutchinson and Waters (1987:97) emphasize the importance of objectivity in evaluation. Evaluation is basically a matching process: matching needs to available solutions. If this matching is to be done as objectively as possible, it is best to look at the needs and solutions separately. Thus they divide the evaluation process into four steps: defining criteria, subjective analysis, objective analysis and matching. The checklist they present contains criteria for both objective and subjective analysis for each item to be assessed.

Because of the significance of evaluating textbooks, the ways of evaluating them and the criteria followed in the process of evaluation are discussed in this part. Sheldon (1988:240) maintains that since no one set of criteria is applicable to all different situations, we can only commit ourselves to checklists or scoring systems. He suggests the use of textbook evaluation sheets in the ELT classroom. The evaluation sheet consists of a list of factors such as rationale, availability, layout etc. and rating (poor, fair, good, excellent) and comments will be given at the corresponding space by the evaluator.

Similarly, many researchers adopted the idea of checklists for textbook evaluation like Ansary and Babaii (2002:5-6) who identify a set of common consensus reached characteristics of EFL/ESL textbooks. This is what they think a set of universal features of EFL/ESL textbooks:

1- Approach reflects the dimension of a vision, theory or approach about the nature of the language, the nature of learning and how the theory can be put to applied use.

2- Content presentation includes:

- Stating purposes and objectives for the total course and individual units.
- Selection and its rationale through coverage, grading, organization and sequencing.
- Satisfaction of the syllabus to the teacher by providing a guide book, giving advice on the methodology and supplementary material available and to the student through piecemeal, unit-by-unit instruction, graphics, periodic revisions, workbook exercises and activities, periodic test sections and accompanying audio-visual aids.

3- Physical make-up relates to the appropriate size and weight, attractive layout, durability, high quality of editing and publishing and appropriate title.

4- Administrative concerns macro-state policies, appropriate for local situation (culture, religion, gender) and appropriate price.

In the same context, Cunningsworth (1995 cited in Richards 2001:258) proposes four criteria for evaluating textbooks, particularly course books:

1. They should correspond to learners' needs. They should match the aims and objectives of language learning program.
2. They should reflect the uses (present or future) that learners will make of the languages. Textbooks should be chosen that will help equip students to use language effectively for their own purposes.
3. They should take account of students' needs as learners and should facilitate their learning processes, without dogmatically imposing a rigid " method".
4. They should have a clear role as a support for learning. Like teachers, they mediate between the target language and learner.

It can be concluded that using checklists is the most effective and objective method for conducting evaluation. No checklist of criteria will be applied to different situations. Building checklists depends on the purpose of the evaluation. The researcher did not find specific comprehensive standard criteria for evaluating the reading texts and exercises, so she built her own criteria after reviewing different sources (previous studies, related literature, books and institutions' publications) (Appendices 1-6).

## **2.2 English for Palestine Grade Nine**

### **2.2.1 Overview of *English for Palestine Grade 9***

*English for Palestine-Grade 9* complements and extends the work in Grade 8. As such, Grade 9 achieves the continuity of the course. As in the previous levels, the course has a double strand of communicative activities and skills work. The skill of reading, writing, listening and speaking are integrated throughout the course. There is more emphasis on combining the skills in sequences of activities. New vocabulary and grammatical structures are carefully controlled and are introduced in the context of the language skills. Writing is presented in graded activities to encourage them to write independently. The writing element of the syllabus in grade 9 focuses on using notes to write clearly and accurately about the topic and on writing summaries. ETB (2008 :4).

As the main focus of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* is developing the reading skills and using reading to expand vocabulary, the researcher intended to evaluate the reading skill through content analysis of the reading texts and exercises.

### **2.2.2 Reading Objectives in *English for Palestine Grade 9***

As the researcher's main concern is evaluating the reading texts and exercises of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*, it is important to have a look at the objectives of teaching reading as stated in ELC (1999:32-33):

1. Read familiar material with correct pronunciation and intonation.
2. Recognize pronoun referents.
3. Generate questions about reading texts.
4. Summarize reading texts
5. Make predictions about reading texts.
6. Make inferences about reading texts.
7. Develop awareness of semantic fields (word mapping).
8. Develop awareness about synonyms and antonyms.
9. Identify the main idea of reading texts.
10. Identify supporting details.
11. Distinguish main idea from supporting details.

12. Recognize rhetorical markers and their functions.
13. Comprehend visual survival material.
14. Deduce meaning of unfamiliar words from context.
15. Skim for gist or general impressions of text or graphics.
16. Distinguish fact from opinion.
17. Infer mood and author's attitude or tone.
18. Understand different types of letters.
19. Scan for specific information from texts and realia.
20. Interpret information presented in diagrammatic display.
21. Relate text to personal experience , opinion , or evaluation.
22. Analyze components of text such as setting , theme, characters , etc.
23. Extract and synthesize information from different sources

These objectives include all the necessary reading skills needed for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. They are used by the researcher to build the criteria for evaluating the reading exercises as they represent what students are expected to achieve from learning the reading texts and exercises.

### **2.2.3 Components of *English for Palestine Grade 9***

- Student's Book (SB)- presents the new language and provides classroom activities for practice and recycling.
- Workbook (WB)- provides exercises and activities that help students to practice and consolidate what they have learned from the students' book.
- Teacher's Book (TB)- offers detailed, step-by step lesson notes and model tests.
- Teacher's audio cassette- provides all the listening activities and useful pronunciation model.

### **2.2.4 Format of units in *English for Palestine Grade 9***

There are 16 units in the SB, including 14 main teaching units which contain 6 lessons each. Lessons 1&2, lessons 3&4, and lessons 5&6 are on two pages in the SB. Lessons 1, 2, 5 and 6 are designed to be covered in one class period each. Lesson 3, however, is designed for two class periods. Similarly, lesson 4 is designed for two

class periods. Each of the main teaching units is designed for a total of eight class periods.

The system of dividing the lessons into 3a, 3b, 4a and 4b allows for much more time to be spent on reading texts. Therefore, there are opportunities for vocabulary expansion and the development of important skills such as skimming, scanning, predicting content and identifying the main idea of a text. Each regular teaching unit has six lessons in the book, which correspond to eight classroom periods, as explained in Table (2.1). Although each unit may have some variations, they have a standard structure. The structure of each unit is illustrated in Table (2.1) ETB (2008:4)

**Table (2.1)**  
**The structure of each unit in *English for Palestine-Grade 9***

Lesson	Main Skill	Components of each lesson
Lesson 1	Vocabulary and Listening	A new vocabulary set with previously-seen and new vocabulary. A dialogue which practices some of this vocabulary
Lesson 2a	Language and Speaking	Language Box with new/ expanded language points.
Lesson 2b	Speaking Fluency	A role play activity based on the theme of the text in lesson 1.
Lesson 3a	Reading and Vocabulary	Familiarization with the text and vocabulary expansion , plus an optional reading skills activity.
Lesson 3b	Reading	Intensive reading of the text
Lesson 4a	Reading	Further intensive reading of the text ; other reading and vocabulary activities in the workbook.
Lesson 4b	Language and Speaking	Language Box with new/ expanded language points.



Lesson 5	Listening and Speaking	Listening skills work - Pronunciation work
Lesson 6a	Writing	A guided writing activity
Lesson 6b	writing	The Unit task: this is usually a second writing activity, but may be a speaking activity.

## 2.3 What is Reading?

Many researchers and educationalists define reading comprehension as follows:

Zintx (1978:7) states that reading is the ability to anticipate meaning in lines of print so that the reader is not concerned with the mechanical details but with grasping ideas from words that convey meaning. Widdowson (1979) cited in Al-Qudah (2002:111) says that "reading is not a reaction to the text, but an interaction between the writer and the reader mediated through the text". So the reader's prior knowledge and familiarity with the topic are main factors that determine the level of readability on which reading comprehension depends.

Additionally, Savage and Mooney (1979:29) state that comprehension –the ability to derive meaning and understanding from printed language– is the consummation of the act of reading. Reading is language activity. Since language is a tool of communication, and communication involves the reception as well as the expression of ideas, then the act of reading is not complete until comprehension has taken place.

Besides, Alderson (2000:28) defines reading as "...an enjoyable, intense, private activity, from which much pleasure can be derived, and in which one can become totally absorbed. Millrood (2001:117) declares that reading is a visual and cognitive process to extract meaning from writing by understanding the written text processing information and relating it to existing experience. According to Al-Yousef

(2005:144), reading can be seen as an interactive process between a reader and a text which leads to automaticity or (reading fluency). In this process, the reader interacts dynamically with the text as he/she tries to elicit the meaning and where various kinds of knowledge are being used: linguistic or systemic knowledge (through bottom-up processing) as well as schematic knowledge (through top-down processing).

Generally speaking, most writers define reading as getting meaning encoded by the writer from the text. It is an interactive skill in which the reader interacts with the text and employs his experience and previous knowledge to get meaning. Studying the previous definitions, it can be concluded that reading is a means to an end not an end in itself. It is always a purposeful activity, and our role as teachers is to help students identify these different purposes and master the strategies best suited to achieve them. The aim of the reading text is to develop good reading strategies. The increase in the student linguistic understanding is thus gained as a by-product.

### **2.3.1 Importance of Reading Skill**

Reading is a very important skill for it provides students with knowledge, various skills, values and good manners and pleasure as well. This will be illustrated as follows:

As the researcher's concern is to evaluate the reading skill, it is essential not to neglect the importance of reading as a tool of learning. Reading, the mother of all skills, is a basic tool of learning and one of the most important skills in everyday life. All children begin school with the expectation they will learn to read, and one of the most important things a child is asked to do is to read. McDonough and Shaw (1994:101) argue that reading is the most important and fruitful foreign language skill to teach, particularly in case where students have to read English material for their own

specialist subjects but may never actually have to speak the language. Such cases are often referred to as "English as a library language."

In this context, Al-Qudah (2002:109) points out that of all language skills, reading is the most necessary for independent learning. Through reading, students can gain access to further knowledge both about the language and about other subject. Similarly, Al-Drees (2008:18) says that by reading a lot, the readers can advance their English background knowledge and broaden vision, inspire their thought, build the values, train the creative performance and develop their intelligence. Also Rabel (2005:1) adds that reading develops a person's creativity. Unlike movies where everything is determined by the producer, writer and director, books allow students to create in their minds how a particular character looks like or imagine how a scene plays out. Reading a book therefore, allows a student to exercise and cultivate her/his creative thinking skills. Additionally Hamdan (1991:7) mentions the importance of reading in the following points:

1. Training students to get information rapidly and with full understanding.
2. Introducing basic linguistic forms; rhythm, spelling , pronunciation.
3. Broadening students' knowledge of more vocabulary, ideas, cultural content, language functions and expressions.
4. Improving students' competences in English as it provides real life situations.
5. Reading forms an additional tool of communication to listening and speaking.
6. Having an access to literature, journal and civilization.
7. Reinforcing the basic knowledge they have acquired.

Shoebottom (2007:1) explains the importance of reading in the following points:

1. A student who is a good reader is more likely to do well in school and pass exams than a student who is a weak reader.
2. Good readers can understand the individual sentences and the organizational structure of a piece of writing.
3. They can comprehend ideas, follow arguments, and detect implications. They know most of the words in the text already.
4. Good readers can also determine the meaning of many of the unfamiliar words from the context - or if they fail, they can use their dictionary effectively to do so.
5. Good readers can quickly extract what is important for the particular task they are employed in the writing.

In fact we live in a reading world where it is difficult to manage without reading. Reading is considered to be the indispensable channel of communication in an ever-widening world. It can be considered as a window through which foreign/second language learners could see other cultures and gain more specific knowledge. It can be concluded that reading is often more important in the Arab world than any language skill as English is taught more for academic purposes than for daily communication. The researcher thinks that it is the most essential skill needed to acquire knowledge. It develops critical thinking and increases a student's ability to concentrate. It also increases the pleasure and effectiveness. Moreover, it helps in all the other subjects and in the personal and professional lives. It is through reading that students can advance their English background, broaden their vision, inspire their thoughts, build their values and develop their skills and creative performance.

### **2.3.2 Types of Reading**

There are two main types of reading : extensive reading and intensive reading

#### **2.3.2.1 Extensive Reading**

Many researchers have given definitions for extensive reading and they are all extremely similar. Some use it to describe "skimming and scanning activities," others associate it to quantity of material. Hafiz and Tudor (1989:5) state :

the pedagogical value attributed to extensive reading is based on the assumption that exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting L2 material will, in the long run, produce a beneficial effect on the learners' command of the L2.

Day and Bamford (1998:xiii), in the introduction of their book, declare that "in extensive reading, language learners read a large quantity of books and other materials that are within the learner's linguistic competence." Krashen (1982) argues that extensive reading is reading through which students can acquire language and

improve their reading skills because they are exposed enough to comprehensible language. It should be done in a low anxiety environment. Students should be flooded with a large amount of easy reading material with little follow up or testing. It is self-selected reading. Extensive reading or reading for pleasure enables readers to acquire language unconsciously. The following characteristics of extensive reading were summarized by Day & Bamford (1998:136-141) under the title 'Top ten principles for teaching extensive reading'.

1. The reading material is easy.
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available.
3. Learners choose what they want to read.
4. Learners read as much as possible.
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.
6. Reading is its own reward.
7. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
8. Reading is individual and silent.
9. Teachers orient and guide their students.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader.

Nuttal (1996) argued that researches on extensive reading confirmed that it is influential in improving reading ability, motivation and attitude towards reading and it improves the overall linguistic competence. Vocabulary and spelling are also enhanced. Extensive reading is influential in developing not only reading comprehension but all language skills. According to Krashen (2004:149)

When children read for pleasure, when they get 'hooked on books,' they acquire involuntarily and without conscious effort, nearly all of the so called language skills many people are so concerned about: They will become adequate readers, acquire a large number of vocabulary, develop the ability to understand and use complex grammatical constructions, develop a good writing style, and become good (but not necessarily perfect spellers).

The researcher concludes that extensive reading can be defined as free voluntary reading that involves rapid reading of large amounts of material or longer reading for general understanding with focus on meaning of what is being read than on language. Readers should read a large amount of easy, interesting, enjoyable, authentic material. It should be practiced in low anxiety environment to create a natural setting for language acquisition. In fact, extensive reading improves the general knowledge of the reader and widens the reader's intellectual exposure. In case of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*, extensive reading is not included as the main aim of teaching reading is intensive reading and vocabulary expansion as stated in ELC (1999). Extensive reading is introduced in *English for Palestine-Grade 11*.

### **2.3.2.2 Intensive Reading**

In intensive (or creative) reading, students usually read a page to explore the meaning and to be acquainted with writing mechanisms. Hamdan (1991) explains that the emphasis in intensive reading is on details that support the main points picked out at the skimming level. According to Broughton (1980:93)

intensive reading is typically concerned with texts of not more than 500 words in length. The objective is to achieve full understanding of the logical argument, the rhetorical arrangement or pattern of the text, of its symbolic, emotional and social overtones, of the attitudes and purposes of the author, and of the linguistic means that he employs to achieve his ends.

In this context, Nuttall (1996:38) states that intensive reading involves approaching the text under the guidance of a teacher (the right kind of guidance) or a task which forces the student to focus on the text. The aim is to arrive at an understanding, not only of what the text means, but of how the meaning is produced. Hafiz and Tudor (1989: 5) differentiate between extensive and intensive reading:

In intensive reading activities learners are in the main exposed to relatively short texts which are used either to exemplify specific aspects of the lexical, syntactic or discourse system of the L2, or to provide the basis for targeted reading strategy practice; the goal of extensive reading, on the

other hand, is to ‘flood’ learners with large quantities of L2 input with few or possibly no specific tasks to perform on this material.

The researcher thinks that intensive reading involves learners reading in detail with specific learning aims and tasks. It can be compared with extensive reading, which involves learners reading texts for enjoyment and developing general reading skills. The purpose of intensive reading is to teach new words and new patterns. Therefore, the reading material designed for intensive reading is usually a little higher than the students' level. In the classroom, intensive reading activities include skimming a text for specific information to answer true or false statements or filling gaps in a summary, scanning a text to match headings to paragraphs, and scanning jumbled paragraphs and then reading them carefully to put them into the correct order. So intensive reading is a process of learning instead of acquisition.

### **2.3.3 Skills Involved in Reading**

Reading involves a variety of skills. Many specialists prepared lists for these skills.

The following is a variety of lists of reading skills given by different researchers and specialists. This is the list of Munby (1978) cited in Grellet (1981:4-5):

1. Recognizing the script of a language
2. Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items.
3. Understanding explicitly stated information.
4. Understanding conceptual meaning.
5. Understanding the communicative value (function) of sentences and utterances
6. Understanding relations within the sentences.
7. Understanding relations between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices.
8. Interpreting text by going outside it.
9. Recognizing indicators in discourse.
10. Identifying the main point or important information in a piece of discourse.
11. Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details.
12. Extracting salient points to summarize ( the text , an idea etc. )
13. Selective extraction of relevant points from a text.
14. Basic reference skills.
15. Skimming.

16. Scanning to locate specifically required information.
17. Transcoding information to diagrammatic display.

Lunzer et al.(1979 cited in Urquhart and Weir 1998:90-91) summarizes the reading skills in these points:

1. Word meaning.
2. Words in context.
3. Literal comprehension.
4. Drawing inferences from single string.
5. Drawing inferences from multiple strings.
6. Interpretation of metaphor.
7. Finding salient or main ideas.
8. Forming judgments.

Hamdan (1991:5) states that the main skills involved in reading are:

1. Controlling eye movement (from left to right).
2. Recognizing letter /number shapes.
3. Recognizing word shapes.
4. Interpreting letter /numbers and words in to sound pattern .
5. Interpreting the meaning of word.
6. Relating word meaning in to sentence meaning .
7. Relating sentence meaning in to general understand of a text.
8. Using ones own knowledge of the outside world to make predictions.
9. Distinguishing the main idea from the minor ones.
10. Deducing the meaning of unknown words ignoring unknown words that contribute nothing to meaning.
11. Understanding meaning relation: e.g., cause, result, purpose, time reference, contrast , paraphrase, definition, warning, conclusion , etc.
12. Understanding relations within the sentence and the text(referential) words.
13. Scanning (extracting specific information)
14. Skimming (to obtain the gist)
15. Understanding implied information and attitudes.

Similarly Jordan (1997:143-144) enumerated some of the main strategies, skills and sub-skills utilized in reading as follows:

1. Prediction
2. skimming (reading quickly for the main idea or gist)
3. scanning (reading quickly for a specific piece of information)
4. distinguishing between: factual and non-factual information- important and less important items- relevant and irrelevant information- explicit and implicit information - ideas and examples and opinions
5. drawing inferences and conclusions
6. deducing unknown words
7. Understanding graphic presentation (data , diagrams, etc.)
8. Understanding text organization and linguistic /semantic aspects.



Studying the previous classifications of reading skills, the researcher concludes that the most common skills among all the above-mentioned lists include: skimming, scanning, understanding the author's use of language, locating and recalling information, finding main ideas, drawing conclusions, making generalizations, sequencing events, distinguishing fact from opinion, determining the author's purpose, relating the text to personal experience, developing awareness about synonyms and antonyms, distinguishing between cause and effect, drawing conclusions from information given in the text, making predictions and finding meanings of new vocabulary in contexts.

## **2.4 Criteria for Evaluating Reading Texts & Exercises**

In an attempt to build suitable criteria for the purpose of the current study, the researcher reviewed different sources (previous studies, related literature, books and institutions' publications). It is found that the lists prepared by Al-Masri (2008) and Barzq (2007) are the most related ones. Thus, the researcher extracts what is related from these checklists and adds some of her own with the help of her supervisors. Here the researcher focused on discussing general criteria items mentioned in the checklist for evaluating reading texts and exercises. (Appendix 1)

They are divided into two main categories: criteria for evaluating reading texts and criteria for evaluating reading exercises.

### **2.4.1 Criteria for Evaluating Reading Texts**

In this section, the researcher discusses eight criteria for evaluating the reading texts as follow:

#### **2.4.1.1 Interest**

The most important factor in selecting a reading text is interest. Williams (1986:42) claims that "in the absence of interesting texts, very little is possible." Jordan

(1997:145) and Williams (1986:42) add that interest is vital, for it increases motivation, which in turn is a significant factor in the development of reading speed and fluency. When the topic of a passage is not of interest to students, their motivation to read is substantially lessened. Without this motivation, it is exceedingly difficult to meet one of the generally accepted aims of a reading program: to help get the learners to read in English on their own, outside the reading classroom. Krashen (1993 cited in Kamhieh 2000:65) states that research confirms that when students have access to interesting and suitable material, they read more. Besides, Savage and Mooney (1979 :31) state that

If we are truly interested in what we are reading, we will likely comprehend it better than if we could not care about the topic. Interest or motivation is an important factor in determining how hard readers will work at trying to understand what they read.

Since interest leads to motivation, then motivation is one of the key factors that determine the students' success. It provides the main incentive to initiate learning a foreign language. Without sufficient motivation, even students with the best abilities can not accomplish any success. In this context, Cunningsworth (1984:59 cited in Al-Masri 1993:160) states that there is no doubt that motivation is a crucial force in determining to a large extent the degree of success or failure in foreign language learning as well as in other fields of learning. The significance is well-expressed by Cunningsworth:

Motivation is arguably the most important single factor in success or failure at language learning. A well-motivated student badly taught will probably do better than a poorly-motivated student taught well. Motivation determines the student's level of attention during class, and the assiduity with which he does his homework and revises what has been taught during the day. It certainly has a deep influence on the effectiveness of learning.

The importance of motivation in reading has come to be regarded more and more seriously by researchers into readability. Teachers would tend to agree that often a

child who is not a particularly good reader can surprise us by reading with comprehension as well as enthusiasm a book which seems far too dense in terms of vocabulary and grammatical complexity compared with what he can normally manage. When this happens, the reason tends to be related to a high level of motivation. Firm evidence of this phenomenon is found in a study reported by Shnayer (1969 cited in Lunzer and Gardner 1979: 87)

In the words of Al-Masri (1993:37), providing the learners with content, carrying interesting facts and information about various aspects of life is more likely to attract the learners' interest, especially if content has unfamiliar information. This makes the learners feel that learning English opens a new window on the world. It also helps them to feel they are learning something new rather than repeating something they are already familiar with. This is likely to improve the learners' attitude and motivation. Hence, the whole process of learning is promoted.

In general, the more the learner reads, the better a reader will become, not only improving his language level but also confidence. If the text interests the learner, it can also be related to his own experiences. The researcher believes that interest is a key that affects the readability of the reading text because of its relation to motivation. Interest in reading is affected by a number of factors that include the following. The reading texts that interest the students, according to the researcher's attitude, are those texts that:

1. Deal with different types and topics.
2. Deal with topics related to the students' culture, society, personal problems and daily routine.
3. Have too little new information.
4. Students have previous background knowledge about.

### **2.4.1.2 Lexical Knowledge**

New lexical items are defined by Nuttall (1982:16 cited in Day 1994) as words and idioms or compound phrases. Carter and McCarthy (1988:104) define density as the ratio of unknown to known words in a text. There is evidence that too high a density of unknown words in a text has a negative effect on comprehension and vocabulary learning. Thus determining the amount of unknown vocabulary is crucial in order to know if it enables the foreign language learner to read with reasonable comprehension. Since the readers possess a reasonable range of vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension can come out in a practical way. (Calixto,2004:74)

Vocabulary is an important part of reading. The relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension is complex and dynamic. Without sufficient vocabulary, readers may make a wild guess at the unknown words, and may not be able to fully understand the reading texts.

Trying to establish a vocabulary size that could provide 95% coverage of academic text, Laufer (1989) assumes that a vocabulary size with about 5,000 words would be adequate to supply 95%-98% coverage of academic text. Day (1994:22) recommends that the number of unknown lexical items should be kept to a maximum of no more than one or two words per page. This recommendation is based on the premise that the purpose of the reading lesson is reading, not vocabulary development.

Four other studies, Lui and Nation (1985), Hirsh and Nation (1992), Carver (1994), and Hsueh and Nation (2000), examined the role of vocabulary knowledge in reading from the perspective of lexical coverage, that is, the percentage of unknown words that might affect reading for pleasure and acquisition of word meanings. Lui and Nation (1985) suggest that 95% coverage is needed for sufficient comprehension,

while Hirsh and Nation (1992) maintain that to read unsimplified fiction for pleasure, learners need about 5,000 words, below which reading will be laborious; this amounts to about 95%-98% of lexical coverage. In a somewhat complicated procedure, Carver (1994) investigates the relationship between the number of unknown words and relative difficulty of a passage. Difficult texts, those that are above the learner's ability level, contain about 2% or more of unknown basic words. Lastly, Hsueh and Nation (2000) state that a vocabulary size around 98% of text coverage would be necessary to achieve a very good comprehension of it. As the number of unknown words increases, comprehension falls.

The researcher believes that lexical knowledge is one of the most important elements that determine the text readability. It is clear that the more number of unknown vocabulary in the reading text, the more difficult it is for students to read with comprehension. How much new vocabulary should be in a reading passage, depends at least partly on the type of reading program extensive or intensive and also on the objectives of the reading lesson. Concerning the Palestinian Curriculum, the reading program is intensive and not extensive. All the reading texts are intended to be read intensively as stated in ELC (1999). Accordingly, the researcher concludes, after reviewing the above-mentioned studies that the suitable number of unknown vocabulary in a reading text should be between 2%-5% of the whole number of the text vocabulary. This ratio of unknown vocabulary will enable the students to read with comprehension.

### **2.4.1.3 Authenticity**

Authenticity is defined differently by researchers: According to Peacock (1996:2), authenticity refers to materials that have been produced to fulfill some social purpose in the language community. Grellet (1981:8) points out that authenticity means that nothing of the original text is changed and also that its presentation and layout are retained. A newspaper article, for instance, should be presented as it first appeared in the paper: with the same typeface, the same space devoted to the headlines, the same accompanying picture. Harmer (1991:185) defines authentic texts as "those which are designed for native speakers" e.g. the articles in a newspaper or a magazine whereas non-authentic texts those which have been changed, most often simplified to suit the requirements of a foreign language curriculum. Additionally, Lee (1995:324) states that "A text is usually regarded as textually authentic if it is not written for teaching purposes, but for a real-life communicative purpose, where the writer has a certain message to pass on to the reader".

By standardizing the presentation of texts in a textbook, one not only reduces interest and motivation, but one actually increases the difficulty for the students. The picture, the size of the headline, the use of bold-face type, all contribute to conveying the message to the reader. It is obvious that a reprint will never be completely authentic, since a textbook consists of several texts taken out of context and juxtaposed, but should at least try to keep them as authentic as possible in order to help the student anticipate meaning by using these non-linguistic clues. (ibid)

Using authentic materials has several advantages as Cunningsworth (1984:72) cited in Al-Masri (1993:36) mentions that authentic materials:

1. provide proper representation of the linguistic forms occurring in a particular text.
2. heighten the learners' awareness of grammar in real use.
3. train the learners to deal with real English without feeling inhibited.

4. promote the learners' confidence and motivation and, therefore, their overall learning performances is promoted.

Berardo (2006:64) summarizes the main advantages of using authentic materials in the classroom in the following points:

5. having a positive effect on student motivation;
6. giving authentic cultural information;
7. exposing students to real language;
8. relating more closely to students' needs;
9. supporting a more creative approach to teaching.

This goes with what Al-Masri (1993) asserts that authentic tasks that parallel as closely as possible the way people communicate in real life can be beneficial in various ways. They enable the learners to practice the skills necessary for successful learning in their present course as well as those skills necessary for their future purposes. Further, they are more likely to lead learners to develop a feel for the immediate relevance of what they are learning to real life. So the learners are likely to be more motivated by the relevance and usefulness of such learning tasks.

In this regard, Lee (1995:324) notes that authentic texts are often regarded as more interesting than textbook materials because they can be more up-to-date, and related to everyday issues and activities. Linguistically, however, they tend to be more difficult, being unsimplified, with ungraded syntactic patterns and vocabulary. Ur (1996:150) states that the language in an authentic text is varied, whereas in a non-authentic one there is often one single structure that is repeated. The use of truly authentic texts is an important means of teaching students to communicate effectively. Unfortunately, most textbooks make use of non-authentic texts. They are supposed to be easier than authentic ones and to be better suited to the students' language proficiency level.

Concerning the disadvantages of using authentic materials, Martinez & City (2002) summarize them in the following points:

- They may be too culturally biased, so unnecessarily difficult to understand outside the language community.
- The vocabulary might not be relevant to the student's immediate needs.
- Too many structures are mixed so lower levels have a hard time decoding the texts.
- Special preparation is necessary which can be time consuming.
- With listening: too many different accents.
- The material can become outdated easily, e.g. news.

Moreover, there is a general agreement that at advanced level or intermediate level, foreign language students are able to read authentic texts. Beginners might be frustrated if they have to tackle an authentic text because it might turn out to be far more difficult than the ones they can understand properly, so “the use of authentic texts with less proficient learners is often frustrating and counter-productive”. Nuttal (1996:172) agrees with Nunan (1988) in that as the focus will be on assisting learners to do in class what they will need to be able to do outside, materials should reflect the outside world. In other words, they should have a degree of authenticity. Authentic texts can be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purposes by real people.

In short, authentic texts bring learners close to the target language culture, making learning more enjoyable and therefore more motivating. Through the authentic materials provided, learners can explore a wider range of topics and situations in the target language, with the accompanying linguistic elements, than may be available to them in their course books. The interest of students in the reading texts will lead to more reading and thus success. The researcher believes that the use of authentic reading texts will be frustrating for students who are at beginning or intermediate levels because they are more difficult than non-authentic texts. It is clear that authentic texts are intrinsically more interesting or stimulating than artificial or non-authentic materials. But at the same time, the researcher agrees with Ur (1996) in that the use of authentic texts with less proficient learners is often frustrating and



counter-productive and so they can be used for more proficient and advanced learners. Despite the difficulty of the authentic texts, the researcher agrees with Nunan (1988), Nuttal (1996), Grellet (1981) and Lee (1995) that they are more interesting and motivating for students.

#### **2.4.1.4 Variety in the topics of reading texts :**

The researcher used the term "variety" to mean using different types of topics in dealing with reading texts. The topic is the broad, general theme or message of the text. It is what is called the subject of the reading text. Day (1994:27) states that the variety of topics used in the reading texts would help to maintain students' interest and motivation. Garinger (2002) confirms that familiarity and routine can be comforting, but too much familiarity can lead to disinterest and boredom. Similarly, Berardo (2006:62) argues that a reading course can be made more interesting if a variety of texts are used. Students very often find it very boring when dealing with only one subject area, as can be the case when dealing with English for specific purposes (ESP). One of the advantages of using texts dealing with the same subject is that they use the same vocabulary, with the student having to make very little conscious effort to learn it. While on the contrary, the student becomes highly specialized in that particular area and not in others. This goes with Krashen's (2004) idea of "narrow reading" by which he means reading more in depth on a subject. He claims that it might facilitate second-language acquisition as the vocabulary and structure are often recycled. Additionally, Dubin (1986) cited in Day (1994:27)) stresses the same claim that a reading-in depth approach

- facilitates comprehension,
- provides background knowledge and
- students would be familiar with the author's style, vocabulary, concepts and background information important to the topic.

Examining the two different views, the researcher agrees with Day (1994), Garinger (2002) and Berardo (2006) that the topic of a reading article is an important factor to consider and that the variety of topics in the reading texts attracts students' attention and motivates them to read more. Throughout her experience as a teacher, the researcher observes that whenever a new topic is introduced in every unit and every reading text, students become more motivated and interested to read. So it is generally accepted that variety leads to interest and motivation which in turn leads to success in learning and thus the whole process of language learning is enhanced.

#### **2.4.1.5 Cultural Background Knowledge**

According to Chastain (1988:302), culture may mean different things to different people. Culture is defined as the way people live. Brown (1994:163) points out that culture is the context within which we exist, think, feel and relate others. It is the “glue” that binds a group of people together. It can be defined as a blueprint that guides the behavior of people in community and is incubated in family life. It governs our behavior in groups, makes us sensitive to matters of status, and helps us know what others expect of us and what will happen if we do not live up to their expectations.

Pang et al (2004:13) state that reading comprehension is about relating prior knowledge to new knowledge contained in written texts. Prior knowledge, in turn, depends on lived experience. Topics that are familiar and openly discussed in one culture may be unacceptable in another. Children growing up in rural communities will have different experiences from those from urbanized, developed countries. Because having more prior knowledge generally facilitates comprehension, having more cultural knowledge has the same effect. Having rich but different types of cultural knowledge will also affect our understanding and appreciation of written text. For example, jokes and humour depend on shared cultural knowledge between the

writer and reader. Similarly, Duzer (1999 cited in Vaezi 2006) says that the topics of the texts chosen should be in accordance with the age range, interests, sex and background culture of the students for whom they are intended. Al Masri (1993:58) points out that a lack of immediate connection between the learning materials and the learners' contemporary reality, interests and purposes is likely to weaken their drive for learning English and slow their achievement. Also Williams (1999) declares:

Much of successful reading is affected by the way the subject matter relates to the pupil's existing cultural and general knowledge or to subject-specific knowledge. Pupils will be helped in their reading if some of the information is already understood and this will help the learning of new vocabulary.

More recently, Alptekin (2006 cited in Razi 2009:62) illustrates that when cultural elements of a short story are nativized to make the text culturally more familiar, students can make better inferences than when they read the original but culturally-remote story. He uses the same text only by changing some cultural elements, such as the names of people and places, and by adapting them to the students' own cultural context. This, according to Alptekin, reduces the possible bias posed by varying levels of conceptual density and complexity in different texts. He claims (2006: 497)

the role of cultural background knowledge . . . needs to be investigated not necessarily in the framework of two texts that are thought to be syntactically, lexically, and rhetorically equivalent, but in the context of the *same text* used in two different ways, one being the original and the other a culturally nativized version. Nativization refers to the pragmatic and semantic adaptation of the textual and contextual clues of the original story into the learner's own culture, while keeping its linguistic and rhetorical content essentially intact.

The researcher thinks that cultural background is an essential factor that affects comprehension. The texts that are not related to the students' culture and religion will be less motivating for them to read and will be more difficult to comprehend than the culturally-related ones. Throughout her experience as a teacher, the researcher observed that a text which does not coordinate with background

knowledge of the students and students do not know anything about the subject under discussion, they feel it completely difficult to understand the text.

#### **2.4.1.6 Text Layout :**

Many factors affect the legibility of a reading text. Among those are: font type (i.e. the particular style used by the printer), font size (e.g. 8-point, 12-point), the size of spaces between words, lines, or paragraphs, the width of margins, the nature of ink used for printing and the texture, colour and reflective qualities of the paper. (Lunzer and Gardner, 1979:76)

The font size and type are factors to consider for beginning readers. Font type that is larger than normal is an aid in the initial stages of reading, as it helps in the decoding process. Larger size is commonly used in beginning readers for first-language reading. Type that is too large, however, may be a detriment to developing rapid reading, for it can hinder the readers' ability to process chunks of print as the eyes move across the page. The font should be clear and attractive to aid beginning readers in the decoding process. Day (1994:29) In this context, Berardo (2006:62-63) states that it may seem to be a very superficial aspect but the appearance of any article is the first thing that the student notices. An "attractive" looking article is more likely to grab the reader's attention rather than a page full of type.

The researcher goes with (Lunzer and Gardner, 1979), (Day,1994) and Berardo (2006) in that the most important factor in the text layout is its organization. If the reading text is divided into paragraphs, this will help students to feel the unity of the topic and will organize their reading. Dividing the reading material into paragraphs means dividing it into sub-topics. A well presented passage will affect students' comprehension. Students will have better comprehension of well-organized texts while a text that is not well organized might present problems for students. The

layout of the reading text should be clear and cluttered. It should be well presented with colourful illustration and with quite a large amount of spaces between lines.

#### **2.4.1.7 Text Visuals**

Jahangard (2007) defines visual materials as the facilities that can enhance language learning in classrooms. They can range from simple hand-made realia, charts and pictures to electronic and digital materials. According to Griffiths, (1995:52) pictures and other visual materials can activate students' prior knowledge. Students usually react more favorably to bright, colourful, interesting and well-illustrated material. In this regard, Broughton et al (1980:107) state that a series of devices which may help to foster better understanding are those which involve the use of picture, diagrams, charts and models.

Berardo (2006:62-63) states that the authentic presentation, through the use of pictures, diagrams and photographs helps put the text into a context. This helps the reader not only understand the meaning of the text better but also how it would be used. A more attractive text will appeal to the student and motivate them into reading. Grellet (1981:7) expresses the importance of visuals and text layout in the following lines:

By starting with longer units and by considering the layout of the text, the accompanying photographs or diagrams, the number of paragraphs, etc., the students can be encouraged to anticipate what they are to find in the text. This is essential in order to develop their skills of inference, anticipation and deduction.

The researcher thinks that the text's diagrams, tables, figures and graphs are of great importance. They can clarify meaning and help students to predict what the text will be about or to express a reaction (positive or negative) to the text. They can help students/readers understand texts and tasks better. They attract students' attention by referring them to real life situations. They can be used as stimuli for the learners to reconstruct the basic information of a text in their own words. Teachers can assist

their students with gaining insights out of the photos and illustrations in text by allowing them time to discuss the pictures in order to predict what the texts will be about. The teacher may want to use other related pictures and illustrations more than those found in the textbook.

#### **2.4.1.8 Values:**

A value is a belief which need not rely upon facts or evidence, although a value position can be supported or challenged by knowledge propositions. Ryle (1994) talks of values as ‘dispositions’ which incline us towards specific structures, tasks and patterns of behaviour.

The school is an educational institution that considerably influences the individual's moral constitution, steers his behaviour, and affects his tendencies, inclinations and attitudes. Hence high values and morals must be one of the pillars of child education both at home and school. Thus the child will know what is right and virtuous and follow it, and what is wrong and sinful and avoid it. Such knowledge is gained from school materials during the process of learning. Therefore, it is important that school regulations and programmes in general, and curricula in particular shall provide a link between the educational and moral objectives so that education becomes a means of cultivating Islamic values and high ideals.(Al-Sowidy,1992:35)

Values represent the third basic component of a syllabus. Litz (2005:8) declares that the materials selected for reading should reflect the needs of the learners, the aims, the methods and values of the teaching program. In this context, Hill (2001) states that:

Values are learnt, not inherited. Education therefore performs a fundamental role as one of the factors which shapes values. Cultural relativists argue that values are very much tied to cultural contexts and may be influenced by the political, economic and social environment on an international, national, local and even family level.

According to Savage and Mooney (1979:1) reading involves the reader's sensations, perceptions, cognition and language. Learning to read involves mastering a constellation of skills along with the development of attitudes and values related to reading. Also, Richards (2001:2) states that curriculum development focuses on determining what knowledge, skills and values students learn in schools, what experiences should be provided to bring about intended learning outcomes, and how teaching and learning in schools or educational systems can be planned, measured and evaluated. In this regard, ELC (1999:20) mentions that :

The Palestinian English Language Curriculum aims to reinforce in students the concepts of love, peace, equality, freedom, human rights, democracy, tolerance, respect for oneself and others, as well as to maintain positive attitudes toward good and virtue. Such notions appear in the English curriculum as extended experiences and are disseminated throughout the assigned subjects, complementing, and supporting them in what ultimately forms the character of the learner. In addition, the English language curriculum aims to help students analyze, clarify, judge and acquire values of civil society in the areas of: global concern, environmental concern, social responsibility, etc.

This indicates that in all reading texts, three elements should be presented. There should be knowledge; that is the information that it contains. Also the skills that students acquire through reading . The most important element is the value. It means what lesson or message the reading text conveys. It is also noted that the English language curriculum aims at enriching the curriculum with many values and good manners that will help in forming the character of the learners. They nearly include most of the values that students of 9<sup>th</sup> grade need.

## **2.4.2 Criteria for Evaluating Reading Exercises**

Reading is comprised of various sub-skills such as skimming, scanning, locating specific information, inferring, understanding implications and presuppositions, etc. The training of reading skills, therefore, needs to enable language learners to practice and gradually build up their competence in using these skills to decode the intended messages from the written words. The reading exercises should cover all the needed reading skills which are stated in the curriculum plan. Generally, there are many criteria to evaluate reading exercises. Below is a discussion of four criteria used for evaluating the reading exercises in *English for Palestine-Grade 9*.

### **2.4.2.1 Variety in reading exercises**

By variety in exercises, the researcher means to use different kinds of questions that cover all the skills. This may be covered by open questions, multiple-choice questions, right or wrong questions, etc. Grellet (1981:9) and Garinger (2002) state that reading comprehension exercises should be suited to the texts and to the reasons for reading them. They declare that keeping students motivated and interested as they work through a textbook is much easier if the students see something new in each chapter.

Reading is an active skill. It constantly involves guessing, predicting, checking and asking oneself questions. This should therefore be taken into consideration when devising reading comprehension exercises. It is possible, for instance, to develop the students' powers of inference through systematic practice, or introduce question which encourage students to anticipate the content of a text from its title, and illustrations or the end of a story from the preceding paragraphs. Similarly, one should introduce exercises in which there is no single straightforward answer. This type of exercise has too often required students to exercise only their powers of judgment and



appreciation, but extending the range of these exercises to cover other reading skills will lead to greater effect on students' interest (Grellet,1981:8).

Ur (1996:149) states that we should make sure that our learners are provided with a variety of different kinds of reading tasks, and encourage them explicitly to use different strategies. In this context, McDonough and Shaw (1993:124) state that a variety of different question forms and types enables learners to use their different reading skills in appropriate ways. They think that when thinking about reading comprehension questions, it is important to consider the form of the question; for example, yes/no; true or false; multiple choice; non-verbal matrix to be completed and open ended questions.

Different types of reading questions are listed by different researchers and specialists. They are almost similar. Here, Gebhard (1996:205) mentions some of the types of reading exercises:

1. Students study the title and skim to capture the main idea.
2. Students read two paragraphs and predict what will follow.
3. Students do several different scanning tasks, such as underlining past tense verbs in red and adverbs indicating sequence(e.g., first, second, next, etc.) in blue, circling words they do not recognize, and putting stars next to words that seem important.
4. After students have a sense of what the reading material is about, they read silently while answering true-false or multiple-choice questions.
5. Students meet in groups, consider the text, write down questions, and give them to another group to answer.
6. Students draw pictures of the main characters in a story or draw pictures that illustrate the story line.
7. Students, working in groups, reconstruct material previously cut into pieces (also called a jigsaw task)
8. Students read a story with the conclusion missing, then write their own endings.
9. Students give the reading material a new title.
10. Students put a set of pictures or photos in order to show the story line or content.
11. Students meet in groups to summarize an article and to separate main ideas from supporting ideas and examples.

The researcher concludes that variety of comprehension questions is an important factor in promoting motivation and for developing different skills to be covered. In fact, the repetition of the same questions will decrease students' motivation and interest. Indeed the textbook should include exercises that give students opportunities to practice and extend their reading skills. This can be achieved through different types of comprehension questions including: yes/no questions, true or false, wh-questions, multiple-choice and open ended questions.

#### **2.4.2.2 Background Knowledge**

Grabe (1997:115) states that reading is interactive between the reader and the text. It requires sufficient knowledge of language, sufficient knowledge of the world and a given topic. The importance of prior knowledge in the comprehension process has often been recognized by teachers and material writers and it can be summarized in the following points:

1. Students are encouraged to relate what they read in the text to what they already know.
2. When readers have sufficient knowledge of a given text and language, they discover their own strategies to understand the meaning of text.
3. Having a rich background can be a means to guess the meaning of unknown words from context (Yin, 1985:375).
4. The more a reader brings to a printed page in terms of knowledge and background, the better s/he will be able to understand what s/he reads (Savage & Mooney (1979:31).

Students who lack sufficient background knowledge may struggle to access, participate and progress throughout the general curriculum.

Savage & Mooney (1979:31) state that comprehension is difficult sometimes impossible, if one lacks essential information that the writer assumes the reader has.

For example, if one reads a text in which the author describes the implications of the balance of power in the Third World. Without understanding the concept of balance of power, his comprehension will break down.

Carrel and Eisterhold (1983 cited in Parvaz & Nodoushan 2006:4) consider language background knowledge an important factor in comprehending a reading text; they express this importance as follows:

Efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge. Comprehending words, sentences, and entire texts involves more than just relying on one's linguistic knowledge.

Because comprehension and communication are so dependent on prior knowledge, children whose knowledge of a topic is limited have difficulty comprehending much of what they read and have a difficulty communicating in writing about that topic. Allington & Cunningham (ND).

Throughout her experience as a teacher, the researcher notices that activating background knowledge before reading is an important technique in teaching reading. Readers use their background knowledge automatically, without realizing it so readers need to learn to use their own background knowledge, activate and extend this knowledge to make sense of what they are reading. If students do not have any background knowledge on the topic of the reading material that is to be used, then every effort should be made to build that knowledge through prior discussion, discussing pictures or objects, or through other means before introducing the new text. That will lead to much greater success with the reading experience. The researcher thinks that activating prior knowledge can develop readers' understanding by helping them to see links between what they already know and new information they are encountering and this can assist students with the learning process.

For more information about schemata theory refer to (Alderson 2000:34)

### 2.4.2.3 Purity of Reading Exercises:

By purity in reading exercises, the researcher means that the answer of these exercises depends mainly on reading and comprehension. The pure reading exercises measure how much students understand from the reading text. They do not take into consideration other language skills ; writing, listening and speaking or language aspects; pronunciation, grammar, spelling and vocabulary. Examples of pure reading exercises are the following:

- Read the following text and choose the correct answer.
- Read the text and decide the following statements true or false. Then correct the false ones.

Examples of integrated reading exercises:

- Read the following text and write a summary of main points. (Reading & writing)
- Find the opposite of the following from the passage. (Reading & vocabulary)

Grellet (1981:8) suggests that reading comprehension should not be separated from the other skills. There are few cases in real life when we do not talk or write about what we have read or when we do not relate what we have read to something we might have heard. It is therefore important to link the different skills through the reading activities chosen as follows:

- Reading and writing, for example, summarizing, mentioning what learners have read in a letter and note-making.
- Reading and listening, for example, comparing an article and a news-bulletin, using recorded information to solve a written problem, matching opinions and texts.
- Reading and speaking, for example, discussion, debates and appreciation.

Indeed the integration of skills seems to occur naturally. The researcher thinks it is important to link the different skills through the reading tasks. Reading is integrated with other skills such as writing, listening and speaking and also other language aspects such as pronunciation, grammar, spelling and vocabulary. At the same time,

the researcher thinks that purity is needed in reading exercises as the main focus in a reading lesson is to measure how much the students understood of what they read.

#### **2.4.2.4 Coverage of the Reading Skills:**

As stated by ELC (1999:32-33), the reading exercises should cover all the skills that the curriculum aims at. Indeed the main objectives of teaching reading skill to the 9<sup>th</sup> graders are to enable the students to practice: skimming, scanning, summarizing, distinguishing fact from opinion, making inferences, making predictions, recognizing pronoun references, developing awareness about synonyms and antonyms, deducing meaning of unfamiliar words from context and inferring mood and author's attitude or tone. The researcher thinks that the reading exercises should cover all the skills mentioned above. These skills are discussed below.

#### **A-Inferring**

Inferring means to go beyond the surface details to see the meanings that the details imply in order to come to a conclusion or judgment. Grellet (1981:13) states that "Inferring means making use of syntactic, logical and cultural clues to discover the meaning of unknown elements". Readers should be provided with clues (syntactic, logical and cultural clues) in order to come to correct inferences. These might help the reader to know the writer's assumption. The reader, then, can reconstruct the text by making use of the clues that the text supplies and draw the necessary inference. Moreover, Day & Park (2005:33) state that making inferences involves more than a literal understanding. Students may initially have a difficulty in answering inference questions because the answers are based on material that is in the text but not explicitly stated. An inference involves students combining their literal understanding of the text with their own knowledge and intuitions. Examples of questions which would develop this skill are taken from (Greenwall and Swan,1986)

- Read the passage again with another student, discuss the meaning of following statements.
- If there is no evidence, explain what the passage really says.
- What advice for tourists can you infer from the passage.
- Work in pairs and discuss what the writer is implying by the following extracts.

### **The positive impact of making inferences**

Because inferring is such an important part of skilled reading, explicitly teaching and reinforcing the skill can reap several benefits summarized by Hassan (1994:165-166):

#### **1. Successful inferring leads to better overall comprehension**

When students can make inferences accurately, they are able to grasp the author’s meaning and understand “the whole picture” of a text. Rather than simply decoding words, they can recognize an implication and draw it to its logical conclusion, resulting in fewer gaps in comprehension.

#### **2. Successful inferring leads to more engagement with text**

Students who infer habitually and accurately are more engaged in the text. Not only do they understand better, but also they enjoy reading more because they are able to easily draw on information from their own lives and prior knowledge. This helps them better identify with characters and relate to literature. Furthermore, when students make inferences such as predictions or theories, they are eager to read more, to see if their intuition will be confirmed.

#### **3. Successful inferring makes sophisticated readers**

Making inferences focuses students on looking beyond the events of a story and the text on the page. This “global view” can help students understand literary concepts such as character, theme and figurative language.

#### **4. Successful inferring helps students be metacognitive**

In teaching students to infer, teachers can help students think about their own thinking—how to apply their background knowledge and experience to draw

reasonable conclusions in specific situations. As students learn to consciously apply this process, it becomes a tool they can use deliberately and methodically whenever they feel as if they are “missing something” in their independent reading.

The researcher concludes that all comprehension strategies involve inferring in the sense that comprehension requires readers to note text clues, to access prior knowledge associated with those clues, and then, on the basis of that background knowledge, infer what the meaning is. So, in this sense, inferring is something a reader does as part of all comprehension strategies.

### **B- Predicting**

Day & Park (2005:33) declare that prediction involves students using both their understanding of the passage and their own knowledge of the topic and related matters in a systematic fashion to determine what might happen next or after a story ends. Hassan (1994:168) and Nation (1993:37) state that the reader's predictions, no matter right or wrong, will get his mind closer to the theme of the text to be read. Then the real reading will either confirm or reject the predictions.

In this regard, Day (1994) thinks that predictions help the learner learn better, new information is easily assimilated if it can be fitted into an existing framework of ideas in the learner's mind. This will depend on the reader's knowledge of the topic and its relationship to the world. In addition, prediction can be a sign that the reader has understood the text. When the reader understands the text, he can say what is likely to come next. Also if the learner can interpret the thoughts of the writer in advance, he will be able to understand what the writer is in fact saying.

Predictions can be done in many different ways. Some predictions are based on the title. Indeed a good title always contains the most important information of a written text. This kind of predictions seldom go far wrong. Some predictions are based on

vocabulary. Students can be asked to predict some lexical items that they think are likely to occur in the text. Then, the students read the text to confirm their predictions.

Harmer (1999:201) mentioned that readers sometimes guess in order to try and understand what is being written or talked about, especially if they have first identified the topic. Sometimes they look forward, trying to predict what is coming; sometime they make assumptions or guess the content from their initial glance as they try to apply their schemata to what is in front of them. Their subsequent reading helps them to confirm their expectations of what they have predicted or just read what they thought was going to happen in the light of experience.

Readers of all ages make predictions. Preschoolers and kindergartners make predictions as they are listening to stories being read to them. More proficient readers make predictions when they are reading expository text. Consequently, predicting can be taught to kindergartners and to high scholars alike, and it is appropriate in various genres of narrative texts as well as in various forms of expository texts. As with all comprehension strategies, predicting is based on the thoughtful use of prior knowledge. Readers make predictions based on purpose for reading, topic clues, and the type of text being read (Duffy, 2009:101).

The researcher believes that prediction is a vital reading skill as it enables students to make use of their prior knowledge of the topic and it is a sign that the students understood the text. If the reader formulates his predictions as questions in advance and expects the text to answer his questions, he is preparing himself to read for a purpose. He is likely to see which of his questions are answered and which are not. Exercises on predictions make the students very much involved in reading. They are useful even when the predictions are not correct, as mistaken predictions can show the sources of misunderstanding and help avoid false assumptions.



## **C- Summarizing**

Summarizing means to reduce the texts to their bare essentials: the gist, the key ideas, the main points that are worth noting and remembering. Webster's calls a summary "the general idea in brief form"; it's the distillation, condensation, or reduction of a larger work into its primary notions. (Raymond, 2009:32)

According to Duffy (2009:153), summarizing is the creation of a brief retelling of a text. While it may include the main idea or theme, the focus is on describing in brief form the text's major points. Primary-grade students often have difficulty summarizing because they want to tell everything. Even middle school students sometimes have difficulty deciding what information to include in a summary and what not to include. Edge (1983:93) states that the ability to make notes on a text, and possibly to summarize the content of that text, is clearly very important for students at upper secondary and elementary levels of education, since this is frequently a crucial requirement of students.

The best way to teach students how to summarize is to teach them to organize their summaries around text structure. Well-written text is always well organized. That is, it has an internal structure. If readers have been taught to recognize the structure of a text, they can use it when summarizing. Stories, for instance, have a structure that can be predicted or mapped. Some people teach students a story map. A story map begins with a description of the characters, the setting, and the problem, then describes a series of events, and concludes with a resolution of the problem. Expository text also is structured or mapped, but there are a variety of expository text structures. The most prevalent one is to state the facts one after another, then conclude. Other expository text structures include compare-contrast structures, chronological structures, and cause-effect structures (Duffy, 2009:153).

In fact, while summarizing skill is difficult for most students to master, it is an important skill as it means that the reader grasps the main points of the reading text and can express these points in their own words.

#### **D- Skimming:**

Wikipedia defines skimming as a process of speed reading that involves visually searching the sentences of a page for clues to meaning. Kailani and Muqattash (1995:93) describe it as passing eyes over head lines, titles, topic sentences and summaries in order to recognize the main idea of a text. Idiagbon & Sani (2006) and Urguhart and Weir (1998:213) state that skimming is a reading skill that involves reading rapidly through a material in order to identify the main points in a passage. It aimed at understanding the gist or a particular piece of information. However, it is not essential to understand every word of the passage.

Al-Drees (2008:21) argues that when readers read the newspaper, they are probably not reading it word-by-word, instead they are scanning the text. Skimming is done at a speed three to four times faster than normal reading. People often skim when they have lots of material to read in a limited amount of time. It is used when one wants to see if an article may be of interest in your research. Urguhart and Weir (1998:213-214) mention the purposes for using the skill of skimming as follows:

1. to establish a general sense of the text.
2. to quickly establish a macro propositional structure as an outline summary.
3. to decide the relevance of texts to established needs.(ibid:213)

#### **Examples of Skimming:**

1. The Newspaper (quickly to get the general news of the day).
2. Magazines (quickly to discover which articles you would like to read in more detail).
3. Business and Travel Brochures (quickly to get informed)

The researcher observes that skimming involves reading rapidly through a material in order to identify the main points of discussion. It aimed at understanding the gist or a

particular piece of information. It is however, not essential to understand every word of the passage. It is an important reading skill as it gives the student a sense of the general idea of the text and so how to make a good summary later.

### **E- Scanning :**

Many researchers and specialists give similar definitions for scanning as follows: Grellet (1981:19) defines scanning as "quickly searching for some particular piece of information in the text". Kailani and Muqattash (1995, p.93) state "scanning means looking through a text for specific item of information such as a date, a number or a place". They add:

....when scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even follow the linearity of the passage to do so. We simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it is a name, a date, or a less specific piece of information.

According to Idiagbon & Sani (2006), scanning entails reading rapidly to find specific or particular piece of information. This is done by running one's eyes through the passage scouting for the required specific details. Booth (2001:46 cited in Bard El-Din 2009:16) states:

Skimming and scanning are reading strategies students can use when reading for information, when reading a text or when deciding whether to read a text. When we skim, we form a general picture of the text, and have a sense of the main ideas. When we scan a text, we have a specific goal in mind. We skim through a text looking for key words, focusing on headings and opening and end paragraphs.

Skimming is therefore a more thorough activity which requires an overall view of the text and implies a definite reading competence. Scanning, on the contrary, is a far more limited since it only means retrieving what information is relevant to our purpose. Yet it is usual to make use of these two activities together when reading a given text. For instance, one may well skim through an article first just to know whether it is worth reading, then read it through more carefully because he has decided that it is of interest. It is also possible afterwards to scan the same article in

order to note down a figure or a name which one particularly wants to remember.

Grellet (1981:19)

Al-Drees (2008:21) explains that when scanning, one should look for the author's use of organizers such as numbers, letters, steps, or the words, first, second, or next or look for words that are bold faced, italics, or in a different font size, style, or color. The following activities are examples to practice this skill. They are taken from *English for Palestine- Grade 9 SB*:

1. Choose the best way to complete the statements 1,2 or 3.
2. Scan the text and do these tasks:
  - a-Find all the words that relate to religion.
  - b-Find all the geographical names.
  - c-Find the names of historical leaders.

The researcher concludes that skimming and scanning are actually two different ways of going through text. Scanning while speed reading is the process of looking for a specific piece of information, like looking up a word in the dictionary for example. Skimming on the other hand involves going through the book page by page just looking at text titles and sub titles, categories, pictures and diagrams to get a general feel for the text and its layout to familiarize yourself with its structure. This is done in order to help get an overview of the subject matter the book is on and to get a general impression of what the text contains.

#### **F- Guessing Meaning of Unfamiliar Words from Context**

The free dictionary site defines guessing meaning of unfamiliar words from context as "To predict (a result or an event) without sufficient information" or "to estimate or conjecture correctly." In this context, Duffy (2009:85) states that the most efficient way to learn the meaning of a new word when reading is to figure it out through thoughtful use of context. When readers encounter an unknown word in the text, they can use the clues embedded in the text around the new word to figure out for them what the word means. By learning this strategy, readers develop an enduring

technique for increasing vocabulary independently and quickly. Context clues range from fairly straightforward clues, such as direct definition clues, to subtle clues, such as mood clues. Children can learn to use the more obvious clues early, often during listening activities in the primary grades. More sophisticated context clues may not be learned until the middle and upper grades. Consequently, learning to use context clues is emphasized throughout all levels. Grellet (1981:14) states that when dealing with a new text, it is better not to explain the difficult words to the learners beforehand. They would only get used to being given 'pre-processed' texts and would never make the effort to cope with a difficult passage on their own. On the contrary, students should be encouraged to make a guess at the meaning of the words they do not know rather than look them up in a dictionary to get a precise meaning- which is an important and necessary activity too-they should only do so after having tried to work out a solution on their own.

According to Kandil (2001 cited in Kamhieh 2006:65), students in the Arab classrooms get very little opportunity to use guessing. They are required to look up the meaning of every word that they do not know. Because words often convey different meanings, according to their contextual location, heavy reliance on a dictionary will be of little use in helping a reader make sense of a text. Yet, this is often the only strategy that students are taught to use. Day and Bamford (1998:93) state that fluent reading is hindered by a reader stopping to use a dictionary. Students interrupt their interaction with the text by looking up meanings of words, so they should be encouraged to guess the meanings of words which they do not know.

Reading is a process of guessing. Teachers will not help pupils a lot if they teach every new word before reading. In fact, it is not necessary for pupils to know every word in a text in order to understand it. To help pupils get meaning, reading exercises should focus on this skill. Hamdan (1991:2-3)

This is similar to what Ur (1996:140) says: "We need to understand some words in order to understand the meaning of a text, but by no means all: we often 'skip' or misread words in order to make sense of the whole more quickly or conveniently. The implication of this for teaching is probably that we should not insist too strongly on our learners understanding every word, but rather encourage them to go for the overall meaning of a text. In this regard, Grellet (1981) says that

When we read, our eyes do not follow each word of the text one after the other—at least in the case of efficient readers. On the contrary, many words or expressions are simply skipped; we go back to check something, or forward to confirm some of our hypotheses.

During the reading skills activities, the students should not be allowed to ask more questions about the vocabulary in the text. This is to encourage the students to develop the vital skill of guessing meaning, and to help them realize that it is not essential to understand every word in a text. This is especially important for the following reasons as stated in ETB (2008:8) :

1. It means that the students can read effectively, rather than stopping as soon as they see an unfamiliar word.
2. It encourages the students to become independent learners.
3. It gives the student a powerful tool for increasing their vocabulary.
4. It gives the student a sense of achievement and makes English seem more accessible.

The researcher concludes that guessing the meanings of words in a written context is considered one of the comprehension skills. By this skill, readers know that words may have more than one meaning and may have many functions. So the reader can adapt the suitable meaning according to the context. The classroom treatment of reading is often ruined by excessive pre-teaching of new words which prevents the students from developing the important skill of guessing or ignoring unknown words. Moreover, limiting the pre-teaching of vocabulary to a few key items makes it possible for the students to devote more time to the actual reading-and-understanding

activities. Guessing meaning of words from context is a strategy that needs finding clues in the sentences related to the word or finding the relation between the word and the topic or the reader's background knowledge.

## **Summary**

To sum up, this section deals with the theoretical framework of the study in order to give a clear vision about the topics related to the issue of textbook evaluation and criteria for evaluating the reading texts and exercises. Following is the section that covers previous studies of the research and commentary.

# **Section II**

## **Previous Studies**

### **Introduction**

#### **1- Studies Related to Evaluating EFL Textbooks**

#### **2- Studies Related to Developing Criteria for Textbook**

### **Evaluation**

#### **3- Studies Related to Evaluating *English for Palestine***

### **Textbooks**

#### **4- Studies Related to Evaluating Reading Courses and**

### **Textbooks**

### **Commentary on the previous studies**



## Section II

### Previous Studies

#### **Introduction:**

To the researcher's best knowledge, few studies have been carried out on evaluating the New Palestinian English Textbook (*English for Palestine*). The studies which were conducted in this field evaluated the whole textbook. None of the studies tried to examine a specific skill or parts of a textbook. In fact, the current study will be the first study to deal with one skill in a textbook. It evaluates the reading skill in *English for Palestine-Grade 9*.

This section surveys thirty-two studies thoroughly in an attempt to benefit from their procedures, tools, results and recommendations. The studies are divided into four domains. The first domain, which includes half of the studies, reviews studies related to evaluating EFL Textbooks. It evaluates many different EFL Textbooks such as PETRA and AMRA in Jordan, ESP textbooks and New Headway. The second domain reviews the studies related to developing criteria for textbook evaluation. The third domain reviews the studies related to evaluating *English for Palestine series*. The fourth domain deals with the studies related to evaluating reading materials, framework and textbooks. The studies in all these domains are sequenced thematically.

#### **1- Studies Related to Evaluating EFL Textbooks**

In order to evaluate the New Headway Upper-Intermediate which is one of the course books used at the foreign language Institute of Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, Ranalli (2002) used Cunningsworth's four guidelines with particular emphasis on the syllabus and methodology used. The results of the study show that the *New*

*Headway Upper-intermediate* is well designed and well written. It offers a good balance of work on accuracy and fluency. Overall emphasis is clearly on oral communication. On the other hand, methodology is one disadvantage where it was restrictive and rested on some arguably theoretical foundations.

Similar to the previous study, Al-Madany (2005) investigated Saudi students' view of the English textbooks *Headway Series* based on need analysis, in order to identify the students' needs and help them learn English language in a smooth way. The study consists of three parts: literature review, research methodology, and the results and recommendations. In order to evaluate *Headway Elementary* textbooks, certain criteria from De Jong (1996), Byram (1991), Zareva (1993) have been borrowed. Data was collected from 20 Saudi female students aged (18). The results showed that there was a general satisfaction about the textbook, most students' answers showed that the textbook has a good design; it covers all the four skills and encourages learner's independence and the use of technology.

A further study was done by Kayapinar (2009) who revealed the teachers' views on the quality of foreign coursebook packages (from beginner to intermediate level) used in the teaching process of English preparatory classes in twenty-five different high schools. The data were collected from the questionnaire results of ninety-four teachers and standard open-ended interview of forty teachers who teach in English preparatory classes and use particular coursebook packages in the classroom environment. The results reveal that teachers do not have positive impressions about the coursebook packages used in general. Moreover, the general conceptions of the teachers suggest that course books should be developed and used to meet the needs of the learners in the national context. In general, the results reveal that the coursebook packages do not represent the teachers' expectations and they do not meet the needs of learners in the teaching process.

For evaluating EFL textbooks used in Jordan, Mu'men (1992) conducted a study in which he evaluated the new EFL textbooks *PETRA* for the seventh and eighth grades in government schools in Jordan. An evaluation scale was developed on the basis of language teaching and learning criteria that determine the specifications of good quality textbooks. The population of the study consisted of all EFL teachers (males and females) who taught *PETRA* textbooks for the seventh and eighth grades in the government schools in the First and Second Directorates of Education in Greater Amman for the academic year (1990-1991). The results revealed that *PETRA* textbooks were judged to be adequate regarding rationale and objectives, language skills, grammatical structures and functions, vocabulary, content, students' book, workbook, audio-visual aids and the physical make-up of the textbooks. On the other hand, teachers' evaluation pointed out the following negative aspects: too long reading passages, the role cards required much time, limited type of the writing activities and the readers did not sufficiently address scientific and technological subjects. In the light of the results of this study, the researcher recommended holding training programmes for EFL teachers and *PETRA* methodology. It was also recommended that other evaluation studies on the other *PETRA* textbooks be conducted in different areas in Jordan.

Similarly, Al-Momani (1998) conducted a study to evaluate *AMRA* textbooks for the first and the second secondary classes in Jordan. To achieve that purpose, the researcher developed three evaluation instruments. The first one was two evaluation questionnaires, one for teachers and supervisors which contained (91) likert-type items covering eleven major characteristics of a good EFL textbook. Another questionnaire was designed for students which included (85) likert-type items concerning the characteristics of the textbooks. The second evaluation instrument was the interview form that consisted of (22) questions. The third evaluation instrument

was the observation form which included actual observations on teaching methods and use of evaluated textbooks in the classrooms. The results showed that the objectives of *AMRA* textbooks were based on teaching English for communication, and they met the students' needs and interests, the vocabulary items were selected to suit the students' level and to facilitate communication, the grammar and structural functions were selected to suit students' backgrounds, the textbooks were good in terms of their general aspects; they were paginated correctly, clearly typed and free of misprints, the teaching aids, wall pictures and cassettes were not provided, the exercises in *AMRA* workbooks were not related completely to the material and their real life situations. It was also found that the teacher's book included model answers that help teachers of English understand the rationale of *AMRA* textbooks, listening and speaking skills were not stressed in *AMRA* textbook and that the number of allocated periods per week to cover the material was not suitable.

Apart from the studies that evaluated EFL textbooks, Kırkgöz (2009) evaluated the three English textbooks (*Texture*, *Time for English* and *Trip 1*) which have been prescribed for use in grade 4 classes by the Turkish Ministry of National Education in state primary schools. Teachers and students responded to a 37-item textbook evaluation questionnaire to express their perceptions concerning various aspects of the textbooks. Both groups of participants were also interviewed to gain further insights into the use of the textbooks. While the results of the study indicated some significant differences (at .05 level) on all statements in the evaluation scheme between the three textbooks, they also show that the three textbooks are well designed to serve as potential agents for curriculum innovation in meeting MNE curriculum objectives, and in being appropriate for the students' learning needs and interests. Of

the three textbooks, *Trip1* was found to be the most appropriate textbook, followed by *Texture and Time for English*.

The Third Grade Intermediate English Coursebook (CB) in Saudi Arabia, *Say It in English*, was evaluated by Al-Yousef (2007). The significance of the study derives from the fact that it could expose the strengths and weaknesses in the CB, and determine whether it is viable, or needs supplementation and/or modification for optimal learning. The researcher used a retrospective mixed-methodology research design (both quantitative and qualitative) to evaluate the CB, which includes interviews/ document analysis (Micro-Analysis) and questionnaires (Macro-Analysis) with different populations: students, teachers, supervisors, and policymakers. The quantitative analysis was conducted with a total sample of 184 students, teachers and supervisors. The Textbook Evaluation Tool (TET) contained 50 specific criteria in 14 categories. The results of the study revealed that both the teachers-supervisors and the students perceived the CB as moderately adequate. Both the quantitative and the qualitative findings have shown that the content and the visuals of the textbook were among the categories that gained the most support, while gradation and recycling and supplementary material were the most poorly rated categories. The study concludes with suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of the 2005 English CB.

In order to evaluate EFL textbooks used in Iran, Razmjoo (2007) aimed at investigating the extent to which the Iranian high school and private institute textbooks represent the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles. This study investigates the extent to which high school and EFL institute textbooks represent CLT principles. The first objective of the study deals with the analysis of high school textbooks from the perspective of representing CLT features. The second objective is to find out to what extent EFL institute textbooks represent CLT features. Third, it aims at comparing the amount of representation of CLT features in the

textbooks of each domain. The results of the study point out that CLT principles are not utilized in the Iranian high school textbooks. This is due to the fact that textbooks were designed by experts outside the foreign language instruction context. Thus the textbooks do not fit EFL communicative teaching and do not fulfill language learners' needs. As a result, the researcher proposed a model for the Iranian context.

In the same context, Janhangard (2007) evaluated four EFL textbooks which have been prescribed for use in Iranian high schools by the Ministry of Education. The merits and demerits of the textbooks are discussed in detail with reference to 13 common features extracted from different material evaluation checklists. These criteria were found to be most common and used for evaluation : 1. Are objectives explicitly laid out in the introduction, and implemented in the material? 2. Good vocabulary explanation and practice. 3. Approaches educationally and socially acceptable to target community. 4. Periodic review and test sections. 5. Appropriate visual materials available. 6. Interesting topics and tasks. 7. Clear instructions 8. Clear attractive layout, print easy to read. 9. Content clearly organized and graded. 10. Plenty of authentic language. 11. Good grammar presentation and practice. 12. Fluency practice in all four skills. 13. Encourages learners to develop own learning strategies and to become independent in their learning.

The results of the study show that the books are acceptable regarding clarity and orthographic beauty. Most instructions are clear and easy to understand for the learners but some of the reading comprehension texts tend to be more difficult for the learners to understand than others due to their structural complexity. Also the grammar drills occupy the lion's share of each lesson from repetition, substitution to transformational ones. In conclusion, regarding the above mentioned criteria , book 4 is considered to be qualified in helping learners to develop some of the learning

strategies found in good language learners but books 1, 2 and 3 in the series need much revision and modifications .

Close to the previous studies' aims, Surur (1990) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of *Textbook 1* which was in use at the time of the study in all intermediate schools in Saudi Arabia. The study aimed at serving two primary purposes: 1- to provide feedback to educators in general and teacher's trainers and administrators in particular, 2- to increase the awareness and involvement of teachers, curriculum designers and whoever is concerned with school activities. The target analysis and criticism were the publisher's claim included in the introduction of the Teacher's Book and the content of the Pupils' Book such as vocabulary, expressions and subject matter as a whole. The researcher adopted theoretical, empirical and practical findings set by many specialists in the field of TEFL as criteria for analysis. The study showed the importance of controlling the curriculum in general and FL content in particular by native Arab in order to avoid faults committed by foreign agents due to cultural differences.

In the study of Salameh (2005), the researcher selects the *Action Pack* for the seventh grade (Student Book) as a representative sample to analyze all the activities impeded to examine to what extent this textbook actually includes some of the communicative aspects. To conduct the analysis, the researcher extracts some criteria from the communicative approach to use them while analyzing with high degrees of reliability and validity. The analysis reveals some positive indicators, such as the total number of the activities which relate students to real life situations. On the other hand, the analysis reveals some negative indicators such as the insufficient number of the activities that integrate between the four language skills and which ask students to access information from other sources. In the light of the findings, the researcher

recommends further studies to be conducted to make sure that the content includes activities which utilize the aspects of the communicative approach .

For providing a detailed evaluation of a coursebook that is *Passport*, Atkins (2001) shows that textbook evaluation is a necessary and worthwhile process for teachers in any context and not only an exercise to be carried out before a book is used. Results indicate that *Passport* looks really good. The layout of the book is organized and the graphics are colourful and interesting. Unfortunately, the benefits of such graphics are purely cosmetic, as they are not intended to be exploited in class, but are supposed to contextualize the listening activities. The artwork is well drawn but photographic images may have been better. The Teacher's Guide for *Passport* holds the hand of the inexperienced teacher, but may be considered patronizing by others with more experience or training. The book is suitable for young high school students. Although the book has many weaknesses, it could be adapted and edited to provide a usable coursebook that provides a valuable learning experience for the students. Some of the units are not very relevant for high school students thus they can simply be omitted. The Teacher's Guide provides a number of suggestions on how to supplement the lessons and some of these are reasonably communicative. The TG does however contain too much 'hand holding' and would benefit from greater focus on alternative ways to teach lessons.

In the study of Olajide (1997), the focus is on *New Practical English* by the Longman Group which is one of the numerous publications for the Nigerian Secondary Schools. The researcher tends to evaluate *New Practical English* textbooks. The researcher used the established criteria to assess the *New Practical English series*. Results show that the course-books satisfied most of the criteria. The '*New Practical English*' series appear to be adequate textbooks for the target readers. The learning experiences provided tend to conform to the syllabuses involved.



Considerable efforts have been made by the writers to facilitate the use of the textbooks by the teachers and the pupil. Apart from the learning experiences being spirally arranged across the textbooks, there are textual, pictorial, and other graphological devices to support the use of the materials. The textbooks are also well-structured, and inter-spaced with evaluative devices, which make it easy for the learners to practice on their own.

The evaluation of the English Language Junior School Curriculum in Lagos-Nigeria was done by Makinde & Lawyer (2008). The study investigates the academic performance of students based on the teachers' qualifications, the available and unavailable resources, and the identified difficult aspect of English language, methods of teaching English language and finally their gender status. The findings reveal that the academic performance of students does not entirely depend on the qualifications of teachers or the method used in teaching English language or the availability of instructional materials but on the proper implementation of the curriculum. It recommends that English teachers should make sure the curriculum is properly implemented. Parents should encourage students to speak the language and that government should provide resources for the teaching of the language.

Litz (2001) also conducted a study to discuss and describe the intricate and complex evaluation process that was undertaken at Sung Kyun Kwan University in Suwon, South Korea in 2000-2001 for *English Firsthand 2* textbook. The research project aimed to determine the overall pedagogical value and suitability of *English Firsthand 2* which was in use in that specific program mentioned above. The results showed worthwhile characteristics towards *English Firsthand 2*. It contained a wide variety of useful supplementary materials. The book was attractive and organized in a clear, logical and coherent manner. Its organization reflects a topic- based structural-

function syllabus that was designed with the goal of facilitating communicative competence as well as reflecting a multi-skills syllabus with integration for the four language skills without neglecting other aspects of other materials such as vocabulary development. The book covered different skills and techniques that were consistent with many fundamental principles of the second language acquisition. Regarding the treatment of grammatical structures and functions, the book utilized the successful and long-standing presentation, practice and production approach. The tasks and activities were basically communicative and seemed to consistently promote a balance of activities approach. Yet, some shortcomings existed in this book. Many of the activities failed to encourage truly meaningful practice, promote realistic discourse or lead to the internalization of language. Many were repetitive. Overall, *English Firsthand 2* could be neither whole-heartedly recommended nor unconditionally utilized in the particular teaching and learning situation. It could be effective in the hands of a good teacher and instructors with the appropriate learner audience.

The final study and the most distinguished one in this section is Al-Masri's (1993) study which intends to improve the learning of English language in Gaza Strip secondary school through a framework for developing appropriate learning materials in terms of content and methodology. It also intends to provide a practical framework for helping the teachers to use the existing textbook *practice and Progress* more effectively. For achieving these aims, the thesis is divided into eight chapters.

Chapter One outlines the background of the Palestinian education system in general and that of Gaza Strip in particular. It examines the extent of mismatch between the aims of the textbook and the aims of learning English as stated by the Egyptian Ministry of Education and the learners' own reasons for learning English. In Chapter Two, the researcher discusses different aspects related to the selection of the

language content. Then, it defines the basic principles that should be taken into account when the learning materials are developed. Chapter Three is divided into two sections. Section One critically evaluates the texts. Section Two generalizes two main types of approaches to syllabus design: synthetic and analytic. Chapter Four classifies language purposes into instruction, description and narrative and discusses features of each. It also considers how these communicative purposes can be used as a central mechanism for controlling syllabus design. Chapter Five illustrates how the communicative purposes described in Chapter Four can be used as an overall framework for developing learning materials.

Chapter Six proposes a three-stage learning strategy: input, transition and output. It also illustrates several purposeful learning tasks that cover the three types of discourse discussed in Chapter Four and Five. Then, Chapter Seven examines the efficiency of the textbook in question in respect of the exercises (methodology) involved. Further, it highlights the negative aspects of the textbook so that it can be modified where possible. Chapter Eight provides a feasible framework for adapting and teaching the existing materials in ways best suited to the learners' purposes.

## **2- Studies Related to Developing Criteria for Textbook Evaluation**

Hassan (2004) conducted a study that aimed at setting up some criteria for choosing ESP text and finding out if the ESP textbook used at the faculties at Al-Azhar University meet those criteria. The researcher mentioned that there was inadequacy and limitation in the ESP textbook because of the absence of stating criteria for choosing ESP course at Al-Azhar University. The researcher conducted a pilot study during the first term of the academic year 2003-2004 in the form of an open interview applied on a randomly chosen group of forty non-specialized students from different departments at the faculty of education and the faculty of Theology and Islam Call as well as nine teachers of English. The participants stated that they faced problems while teaching and learning ESP course. The study recommended setting up and designing ESP Centre at Al-Azhar University to serve all specializations in the faculties and to train ESP teachers, English specialists of instruction and curriculum development to run this ESP Centre.

In addition, Hemsley (1997) sought to develop a model for teacher's guide evaluation. The study began with a discussion of the functions of the teacher's guide (stating purpose, encouraging the development of teaching skill, providing guidance and assisting teachers to understand the course). Then it reviewed an examination of various issues in the design of teacher's guide evaluation, and introduced existing checklists of criteria for the teacher's guide and ELT materials evaluation. Finally the researcher formed an outline for the teacher's guide evaluation and saw it as a pragmatic based on his personal experience of what actually possible in practice in the private language school context. The researcher concluded "If a suitable TG, textbook, workbook and tape set can be found through a systematic evaluation procedure of this kind, the benefits are likely to be several: the training budgets

reduction, more comfort with trade due to active involvement in the process of evaluation and selection, feeling of value in adapting course material."

To assess the importance of the process of textbook evaluation, Yilmaz (2005) conducted a study that stresses the importance of selecting and evaluating textbooks in the process of language teaching and learning. Moreover, it aims to illustrate the criteria for selecting and evaluating textbooks while seeking to build such a theoretical framework onto the learning and teaching process in which the teacher trainees are, in practical terms, actively indulged. This paper also relies on the empirical data obtained from students' perceptions of the course which they took in the first semester of the fourth year. Students' answers to the relevant questions are intended to bring about data on students' common tendency toward this course. The study revealed that materials evaluation is a highly challenging task for the teacher trainees. It becomes clear that a close co-operation between lecturers and teacher trainees is needed to accomplish the ultimate goals contained in such a course. The results also confirmed that the students are capable of making their own valuable judgments when evaluating textbook without becoming the slave of it once they have familiarized themselves with the procedure that were discussed. It was found that heavy dependence on certain textbooks has a detrimental effect on the teaching process. Instead, the task to be undertaken on the part of teachers is to be selective in the process of evaluating and selecting materials on the basis of students' particular needs and expectations.

The common-core characteristics of standard EFL/ESL textbooks were outlined by Ansary and Babaii (2002). It was the result of the researchers' attempts to find out consensus among what makes a good standard EFL/ESL textbook. This is in a great effort to (a) look for some theory-neutral, universal, and broad consensus-reached characteristics of EFL/ESL textbooks, and (b) draw up some guidelines for

the generation as well as systematic evaluation of EFL/ESL textbooks. The researchers used ten EFL/ESL textbook reviews and ten EFL/ESL textbook evaluation checklists as an attempt to jot down points for and against a particular textbook. The result of the study showed what a set of universal features of EFL/ESL textbooks can be made: Approach, Content, Presentation, Physical Make-up and Administrative concerns. The researchers thought that "perhaps, no neat formula or system may ever provide a definite way to judge a textbook. However, at the very least, probably the application of a set of universal characteristics of EFL/ESL textbook may well help make textbook evaluation a coherent, systematic and thoughtful activity".

The final study under review for developing criteria for textbook evaluation is that of Karamoozian & Riazi (2009). The researchers attempted to explore the main quality features of several available textbook evaluation checklists, proposed by researchers and professionals in this field while it has a special focus on reading comprehension textbook evaluation schemes and checklists. All checklists are investigated in terms of their strong and weak points and their practical limitations. The results of this review revealed that although the reviewed checklists have several strong points specifically regarding their format and scope, they mostly fail in terms of other features that lead to practicality. Furthermore, it is really worth considering that the available checklists are mostly designed to evaluate general English textbooks while they are not generalizable enough to be adapted to evaluate other English language textbooks. This study also focused on several specifically developed checklists for evaluating reading comprehension textbooks, while the results revealed that they also suffer from the same shortcomings. Therefore, the authors have developed a new checklist in which they have eliminated the mentioned defects. The

checklist is a comprehensive reference specifically for evaluating reading comprehension textbooks while flexible enough to be used for other purposes too.

### **3- Studies Related to Evaluating English for Palestine Textbooks**

The content of *English for Palestine- Grade Ten* textbook was evaluated by Al-Mazloun (2007). It was evaluated in the light of standards for foreign language learning. The study aims at finding out if this newly implemented textbook matches requirements of the new current trends of standards within the allowed period for developments and innovations agreed upon by the Ministry of Education and Macmillan Press as the first four publications are trial ones. The researcher designed an analysis card as a basic tool to collect data relevant to process the study.

The findings show a variance in the frequencies of the standards. Communications standards scored the most and Comparisons Standards came in the second rank to mark points of strengths. There is also a variance in the frequencies of each standard in each unit of the textbook. The researcher points out that there should be more balance in the distribution of these standards among the units of the textbook since there are some relatively neglected standards. The findings also show good employment for topics in the textbook. Various topics are introduced throughout the twelve units. The study recommends establishing a follow-up research committee whose duty is to apply formative and summative evaluation researches to achieve more innovations and developments.

The same textbook was also evaluated by Mahmoud (2006). The purpose of his study was to evaluate the book entitled "*English for Palestine-10*" for teaching English for the tenth graders in Public Schools in Palestine. To achieve this aim, the researcher used two tools: a questionnaire that contains 52 items which help to judge the suitability of a good textbook and a list that contains the characteristics of a good

textbook. The two tools are adapted from Solicits, (1978), Cunningsworth (1984), Sheldon (1988), Skierso, (1991), Al-Makhzoumi (1992), McMillan and Schumacher (1997), Laime (1999), Ur (1996) and Grainger (2002). The researcher gave the questionnaire to 50 male and female English teachers who teach the tenth graders from Nablus district. After analysis of the textbooks, the researcher noticed that these textbooks are suitable and could be used in private and in government schools after carrying out the different suggestions and modifications the researcher concluded.

In another study for the same researcher Mahmoud (2007) *English for Palestine IV* was evaluated. To achieve this aim, the researcher used several evaluative tools such as: a questionnaire that contains important items through which a person can judge the suitability of a good TEFL or ESL textbook and a list that contains the characteristics of a good textbook. The characteristics of a good textbook and the questionnaire are adopted from Solicits, (1978), Al- Makhzoumi (1992) and Macmillan (1997). The questionnaire was given to 60 of the English teachers who teach the fourth graders from Jenin and Qabatia districts. After the analysis of the textbooks, the researcher noticed that these textbooks are suitable and he strongly recommended using these textbooks in private as well as in government schools after carrying out the suggested modifications the researcher mentioned. Also these textbooks can be said to be in full agreement with all the evaluative criteria that the researcher conducted. Besides, they would have had a positive effect in creating a better educational atmosphere. However, the analyzed books lack few items that characterize a good book such as:



1-Teachers, supervisors, and parents as well as the local society did not participate in selecting the materials or in choosing the objectives.

2-The textbooks overlooked the local environment and the country: thus they do not help students in aiding their nation and improving their country.

3-The number of the periods per week is not enough to cover the selected materials.

4-Additionally, the students' book for the fourth graders does not contain a glossary, proper pronunciation, and phonetic transcription for each word.

5-Besides it lacks an index listing the key words with their meanings and page numbers. For any future improvement or evaluation, such shortage of important items should be considered.

Close to the previous studies' aims, Masri's (2003) study aimed to evaluate the first graders' new English textbook *English for Palestine Grade 1* from teachers' perspective in the Northern Districts of Palestine. An evaluation scale was developed on the basis of language teaching and learning. A questionnaire was developed for the purpose of this study. It included fifty items distributed on the five domains of the study. The population of the study was all teachers in the Northern Governorates who taught *English for Palestine Grade 1*. The size of the proposed population was (356) teachers. The sample was chosen randomly and it consisted of (208) teachers. Different statistical techniques were used to find out the results of the study. The results revealed that the physical appearance outlook of the textbook domain was (79.9%), level of education for the students domain was (79 %), structures and grammar domain was (74%), methods, aids (teacher book) domain was (73.2%) and book content domain was (72.2 %). It was also found that there were significant differences in the degree of evaluation for the Palestinian English Textbook for the first grade in Northern Governorates due to educational level in favor of M.A degree holders. In addition, there were significant differences in the degree of evaluation for

the Palestinian English Textbook for the first grade in Northern Governorates due to experience in favor of those who had less than five years of experience.

#### **4- Studies Related to Evaluating Reading Courses and Textbooks**

In his study Walsh et al (2006) conveyed that the National Council of Teacher Quality (NCTQ) analyzed a number of reading courses to assess their suitability. The study found that most education schools were not teaching the science of reading. In fact nearly one third of the institutions made no reference to reading science in their courses. Findings include: (1) only 15% of the education schools provide future teachers with minimal exposure to the science of reading; (2) course syllabi reveal a tendency to dismiss the scientific research in reading, continuing to adopt approaches to reading that will not serve up to 40% of all children; and (3) course texts were equally unsatisfactory. Only four of the 222 texts were rated as “acceptable” for use as a general, comprehensive textbook. The report closes with recommendations to improve this serious failure in adequately preparing teachers in the best practices of reading instruction. Several suggestions were also offered for improving these reading courses and for more systematic evaluation and modification.

Additionally, the reading skills development books of Maryland community college developmental/remedial reading programs were the focus of Charles (1980) in an evaluation process by categorizing the questions found in these books via Bloom Taxonomy of educational objectives. The study sought to determine the number of questions per taxonomy category; whether there was a significant difference between observed and expected frequency; and whether there was a significant difference among the categories. The study involved a survey of community college developmental reading programs, which revealed that 185 different skill development books were being used, and the selection of a sample of 555 questions from these

books for analysis. Of the questions, 145 fell into the knowledge category of Bloom's Taxonomy, 400 into the comprehension category, 2 into the application category, and none in the categories of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This concentration on questions in the two lowest levels of thinking indicated that very little motivation for the higher thinking processes was offered via the questions used in the reading skills development books used in the community colleges. The authors and publishers of these books, and the educators that use them need to become more concerned about the higher level thinking development of students, estimate the intellectual capabilities of these students at a higher level, and consider that reading material on a higher level may build reading motivation. It was recommended that a greater amount and more balanced representation of higher cognitive level questions should be included in reading skill development books by authors and publishers.

Similarly, Dixon (1980) investigated the availability of reading instruction in secondary schools, to assess what proportion of the current programs might be considered good programs, to identify characteristics common to actually successful programs, to discover needs in the areas of teacher training and program planning, and to determine the feasibility of conducting a national study of secondary school reading programs. A detailed questionnaire was sent to 11 middle, junior high, and senior high schools in Illinois. The most important findings in terms of the characterization of programs were the extremely small apportion of programs meeting the criteria of effective programs. Several suggestions were offered for improving these programs and for more systematic evaluation of reading programs in order to increase the likelihood of providing reading programs that meet the needs for all students.

Additionally, Kitao et al (1986) evaluated 150 traditional reading textbooks in Japan and 32 new reading textbooks published for use in 1985. Traditional textbooks are those with main texts and notes and sometimes a few comprehension questions. New reading textbooks have main texts, comprehension questions, and other exercises. The new trends identified include: large books with fewer pages, more visual aids, simpler English usage, more non-native literary texts, more texts intended specifically for non-native speakers, more recently written main texts, more supplementary exercises, increased emphasis on language skills, increases the use of main texts written specifically for non-native speakers, more accompanying audiotapes, and more teacher's manuals. The study concluded that the textbooks published in 1985 are larger, with fewer pages. The textbooks have more pictures and other visual aids. Also the English used in the textbooks is easier. More textbooks emphasize developing language skills, have audio tapes and have exercises to supplement the main text. The overall judgment when over viewing recently-published textbooks is to carefully consider first of all students and second how students can be better helped to understand the English they are reading and to develop reading skills.

Close to the previous studies, Brown et al (1984) evaluated the effectiveness of self-access reading materials used by Chinese EFL students in an English for science program. To this end, these questions were addressed : (1) How much of the reading material was based on scientific subject matter? (2) How accurate were the author's claims for the reading levels of the materials? (3) How effective were the materials in terms of learning gain? (4) Were the placement tests provided by the author reasonably reliable and valid when applied to Chinese EFL students? And (5) What were the students' attitudes toward the materials after they had used them? The subjects (N=18) were all students at the Guangzhou English Language Center in the

People's Republic of China. They were asked to take the placement examinations provided with the materials, to use the material themselves for ten weeks , and to take additional standardized reading tests at the beginning and end of the ten week period. The results indicated that the self access reading materials were generally beneficial to the program with one serious reservation: the placement procedures provided with the reading materials were found to be completely inadequate for these EFL students.

In a unique study, which is the most related one, Barzaq (2007) discussed the intricate and complex evaluation process that was undertaken at Qattan Centre for Educational Research and Development (QCERD)-Gaza, in 2006-2007 for judging the *English for Palestine language reading Curriculum in Grades six and seven*. The purpose of this research project was to determine the overall pedagogical value and suitability of the language reading framework LRF in the curriculum being implemented within the language classroom. Through this study, teachers will become familiar with the content of their curriculum frame work, assess their thoroughness of scope and depth, practical applicability and relevance for teaching and learning with a specified student population. A group of teachers analyze the framework collaboratively and work in workshops and focus groups and panel discussion of the philosophy of the curriculum development, knowledge base, structure, content and assessment plan outlined in the English for Palestine LRF documents. Then, the teachers determine the degree of correspondence between the two and gaps in coverage, inconsistencies, compensatory strength overall degree of match between the teaching method and the LRF reading documents, recommendations and requirements.

The findings indicated that the RLF match the objectives of the course. It can be used consistently within the classroom being useful for both teacher and learner. The textbooks meet the needs of the learners in several ways not only in terms of language objectives, but also through visually stimulating material that is well organized and easy to follow and considering the learners' cultural background, ages, interests and purposes in acquiring EFL. Thus the reading texts are mainly sensitive to the cultural background of learners. However, the RLF not only pertains to focus on reading strategies but also covers a wide range of cognitive skills, especially higher order skills such as analyses, synthesis and evaluation.

The final study in this section is Rivas's (1999) study in which he presents an analysis of the reading component in a representative sample of ELT course books for intermediate level and above, published in the last ten years. It examines the way those course books reflect current theories on foreign language reading in their treatment of the reading skill. Based on the instructional implications of interactive models of reading, the analysis focuses on the attempts to develop both lower-level processing skills and higher-level comprehension and reasoning skills in EFL learners. From this analysis, it is concluded that, in general, the course books seem to reflect current interactive views on reading, although they differ in the number and type of activities included. The activities are deficient in various ways. This implies that EFL teachers need to supplement deficient reading activities to help learners become efficient readers.

## **Commentary on the previous studies:**

Having reviewed those studies, the researcher's background has been enriched especially on specifying and identifying the procedures that researchers follow when conducting evaluation studies. In the current study, the researcher has been evoked to evaluate the Palestinian English Textbooks as very few studies evaluated them and even none of the studies evaluated the newly Palestinian textbook *English for Palestine Grade-9*. The researcher came out with her own criteria to evaluate the reading texts and exercises in *English for Palestine-Grade 9*. The researcher built these criteria after revising different sources (previous studies, related literature, books and institutions' publications) to build these criteria.

The researcher reviewed thirty-two studies. The researcher chose sixteen previous studies related to evaluating EFL textbooks. In addition, the researcher chose four studies related to evaluating the Palestinian Textbooks *English for Palestine* series. Besides evaluating EFL Textbooks and "*English for Palestine*" series, studies of Kitao et al. (1986), Barzaq (2007), Dixon (1980), Charles (1980) and Walsh *et al* (2006) evaluated reading textbooks, exercises and programs. Finally the researcher reviews five studies that deals with developing criteria and checklists for textbook evaluation .

Definitely, this study is intended to be distinguished from other studies by evaluating the reading texts and exercises in *English for Palestine–Grade 9* in three dimensions. Firstly, because most of the pre-mentioned studies have dealt with evaluating textbooks as a whole, this study is thought to take a new dimension by dealing with one skill that is reading. Secondly, the pre-mentioned studies evaluated textbooks in terms of international standard criteria set for the purpose of textbook evaluation, whereas in the present study, the researcher herself built the criteria of

evaluation. Thirdly, a few number of the pre-mentioned studies evaluated *English for Palestine Series* the present study is the first study to be conducted on evaluating the reading texts and exercises in the newly implemented Palestinian textbook "*English for Palestine –Grade 9*".

The most important issue that the researcher benefited from is the variant results and findings that the studies gave. It is clear that some studies gave negative findings such as Hassan's study (2004) which found some difficulties and problems facing the teachers and students at Al Azhar University due to absence of stating criteria for choosing ESP course at Al Azhar University. Ranalli's study (2002) found disadvantages in the methodology used in teaching. Razmjoo (2007) and Kayapinar (2009) reveal that teachers do not have positive impressions about the course books used and that the course book packages meet neither the teachers' expectations nor the learner's needs.

On the other hand, the majority of the studies confirmed that the textbooks are well-designed and fulfill the textbook evaluation criteria as well as the learners' needs such as Kırkgöz (2009), Olajide (1997), Al-Mazloun (2007), Mahmoud (2006) and Mahmoud (2007). These studies proved that the textbooks analyzed were suitable and highly recommended for use in the classroom. Moreover, the researchers in most of the studies concluded different suggestions and modifications for improvements in the textbooks analyzed.

The last comment to be made is the varied instruments used in the previous studies have given some insights to carry out this study effectively. Some of the important and suitable used tools to conduct these studies include analysis cards (Hassan 2004, Ranalli 2002, Surur 1990, Al-Yousef 2007, Razmjoo 2007, Janhangard 2007, Al-Madany 2005, Litz 2001, Al-Mazloun 2007, Mahmoud 2006, Mahmoud 2007, Charles 1980 and Barzaq 2007); questionnaire (Kırkgöz 2009, Al-Yousef 2007,



Kayapinar 2009, Mu'men1992, Makinde & Lawyer 2008, Masri, S. 2003, Dixon 1980 and Barzaq 2007) and an interview (Hassan 2004, Kırkgöz 2009, Al-Yousef 2007, Yilmaz 2005, Al-Momani 1998).

## **Summary**

The major concern of this chapter is reviewing the related literature of evaluation, the reading skill and the criteria of evaluating the reading texts and exercises. Then numerous previous studies were presented and commented on.

# **Chapter III**

## **The Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

### **3.2 Research Design**

### **3.3 Instrumentations**

#### **3.3.1 The Content Analysis Card**

#### **3.3.2 The interview**

### **3.4 Procedures of the study**

### **3.5 Summary**

## **Chapter III**

### **The Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the practical aspect of the study including the various techniques of collecting and describing the data through employing the suitable tools to achieve the purposes of the study. In this chapter there will be an illustration for the method decided to be used, the tools of the study that involve constructing a content analysis card and a structured interview, examining their validity and reliability and the procedures that are followed.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The researcher used the descriptive analytical method of research to carry out the study. Brown and Rodgers (2002:117) define the descriptive research as "A research that describes group characteristics or behaviors in numerical terms". They maintain that "the descriptive statistics are those statistics used to analyze descriptive research data, usually in terms of central tendency and dispersion".

The researcher conducted this method due to its relevance for investigating the extent to which the reading texts and exercises in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* match the suggested criteria used in the analysis.

#### **3.3 Instrumentations**

The researcher used two main tools: content analysis card and a structured interview.

##### **3.3.1 The Content Analysis Card**

Content analysis is used as the research design for this study. White and Marsh (2006) define content analysis as a systematic, rigorous approach to analyze documents obtained or generated in the course of research and it is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use. Content

analysis is an appropriate research method to use when manipulating large quantities of textual information to systematically identify certain characteristics or properties.

To achieve the purposes of the study, a content analysis card is used for collecting, describing and analyzing data regarding the content of the reading text & exercises in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* in the light of the suggested criteria in the analysis card ( Appendix 1).

### **3.3.1.1 Constructing the content analysis card:**

After reviewing some books, previous studies, related literature and institution's publications, the researcher built her own criteria as only some of the criteria in the checklists that were reviewed suit the purpose of the current study. The English Language Curriculum (1999) which is produced by the Ministry of Education provides the researcher with the main reading skills to be acquired by 9<sup>th</sup> graders. These skills formulate some of the criteria of evaluating the reading exercises. The researcher borrowed some of the criteria used by Barzq (2007) in evaluating the reading texts. Also the researcher added more criteria about the text vocabulary, text layout and text visuals. The following are the six checklists that the researcher reviewed for building her criteria.

The Massachusetts Department of Education (2002) designed criteria for evaluating instructional materials and programs in reading to help districts, schools and teachers assess the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and materials they have in place, as well as assess the strengths and weaknesses of programs and materials being considered for implementation. The criteria are classified into six main domains. The first is reading content with eleven items. The second is pedagogical features with five subcategories and twenty-four items. The third domain is learning activities with ten items. The fourth is teacher support materials with eight

items. The fifth domain is student materials with five items. The last domain is program development and implementation with three items (Appendix 2).

Al-Masri (2008) held a series of workshops about textbook evaluation in which the researcher participated. The textbooks to be evaluated were *English for Palestine–Grades 1-8*. The main objectives of the workshop are to identify specific sources of difficulties in the SB, WB and TB for grades 1-8 and effective suggestions to the problematic areas specified. The criteria used for evaluation were divided into nine aspects: reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling and practical considerations. The reading skill contains nine criteria, the writing skill includes nine criteria, the listening skill includes ten criteria, the speaking skill includes seven criteria, the vocabulary includes eight criteria, the grammar includes twelve criteria, the pronunciation includes eleven criteria, the spelling includes five criteria and the practical considerations include ten criteria (Appendix 3).

Qattan Centre for Educational Research and Development (QCERD) (2007) – Gaza held an evaluation process for judging Language Reading Curriculum in grades six and seven. The study was conducted by the researcher Maha Barzaq to determine the overall pedagogical value and suitability of the Language Reading Framework (LRF) in the curriculum being implemented. The criteria were divided into eight sections. The first is presentation and layout which includes twelve items. The second is guidance and instructions with five items. The third is type of reading texts which includes ten items. The fourth is tasks with thirty-eight items. The fifth is language ability which includes fourteen items. The sixth is contextual expected response which includes fifteen items. The seventh section is comparison with two items and the last section is evaluation with eight items (Appendix 4).

The ESL textbook evaluation checklist by Miekley (2005) provides educators with a valuable tool for evaluating reading textbooks for use in ESL/ EFL classrooms. The criteria in the checklist are divided into three major sections: the textbook, the teacher's manual and context. The first section is subdivided into four parts: the context with five items, vocabulary and grammar with five items, exercises and activities with six items and attractiveness of the text and physical make-up with four items. The second section (General Features) is subdivided into four other parts: general features with two items, background information with two items, methodological guidance with three items and supplementary exercises and materials with three items. The third section (Teacher's Manual) is subdivided into three other parts: is the textbook appropriate for the curriculum?, is the textbook appropriate for the students who will be using it? and are the textbook and teacher's manual appropriate for the teacher who will be teaching from them? (Appendix 5).

Al-Jarf (2007) prepared a checklist for evaluating EFL reading textbook design. The list is divided into six sections. They are planning of pages, illustrative material, spatial organization of text, layout of bibliographies, references and indexes and layout of exercises (Appendix 6).

Textbook evaluation form was developed by Crystal Development Centre for Educators to evaluate textbooks across curriculum areas using a measured, or quantitative, method. The list of criteria is divided into seventeen sections: table of contents, glossary, bibliography, recommended reading, web sites, index, writing style, headings/subheadings, captions and labels, sidebars, topic sentences, section summary, extension activities, page layout, end-of-section comprehension and critical thinking questions, type style, line length and graphic elements (Appendix 7).

### **3.3.1.2 Description of the content analysis card**

#### **Purpose of the Analysis:**

The analysis aims at identifying to what extent the reading texts and exercises in SB & WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* match the suggested criteria for reading texts and exercises.

#### **Sample of the Analysis:**

All the (16) reading texts and exercises in SB & WB of *English for Palestine - Grade 9*.

#### **Elements of Analysis:**

The researcher built the criteria for evaluation after reviewing different sources. These criteria are the elements of analysis.

#### **Units of Analysis:**

The researcher considers the reading text as a unit for analyzing reading texts and the exercise as a unit for analyzing reading exercises.

#### **Limitations of the Analysis:**

- The analysis is for all the reading texts and exercises in SB & WB of *English for Palestine - Grade 9*.
- The analysis includes text pictures, text vocabulary and text layout as well.
- The analysis does not include the teacher's book.
- The analysis does not include other language skills.

### **3.3.1.3 Validity of the content analysis card:**

Al Agha (1996:118) states that valid test is the test that measures what it is designed to measure. To validate the content analysis card, it was shown to twelve experts from different institutes in the field of education. Three of the referees were from the Islamic University-Gaza, five of them were from the Ministry of Education, one from

Al-Aqsa University, two supervisors of English Language in UNRWA Schools and a researcher in Al-Qattan Centre. (Appendix 8)

The list of criteria was checked to ensure:

- 1- the suitability of the units, elements and limitations of the analysis.
- 2- the comprehensiveness of the dimensions of all the needed criteria.
- 3- the relevance of the items to the general dimensions.
- 4- the clarity of the criteria for analysis.
- 5- the correctness of the criteria linguistically.

The aim of showing the card to those experts is to benefit from their comments and suggestions that may include modification, addition and deletion. All the referees agreed on deleting one of the items under the category of "Text Visuals". Three items were added in the reading exercises. One ambiguous item was modified according to their suggestions. Generally, all the referees confirmed the suitability of the list of criteria for evaluating the reading texts and exercises in *English for Palestine-Grade 9*. After considering the comments and suggestions of the referees, the researcher reedited the final form of the analysis card to be applied. Consequently, the number of items became (52) distributed into six categories as shown in Table(3.1) (Appendix 9)

**Table (3.1)**

**The Number of Items in each Domain of the Analysis Card**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Domain</b>	<b>No. of items</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>The Reading Texts</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Reading Text Vocabulary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Reading Text Visuals</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Reading Text Layout</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Reading Exercises</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Workbook Exercises</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>52</b>



### 3.3.1.4 Applying the analysis card

The researcher held three workshops to train two other colleague researchers so as to conduct the analysis through the content analysis card. The researcher provided the researchers with the criteria for evaluating the reading texts and exercises and discussed with them how to conduct the analysis. For the second meeting, the researchers were asked to start analysis for units 1-4 in the SB and WB to check understanding of the colleague researchers. There was relative approximation among the researchers' collected data in the second meeting. After assuring the researchers' involvement, they were asked to complete the analysis for all the (16) units in the third meeting. The analysis is conducted through using a tick which indicates the presence of the criterion or a cross which shows its absence. In some cases, the judgment was for the majority of the presence or absence of the criterion.

### 3.3.1.5 Reliability of the analysis card:

Mackey and Gass (2005:364) state that reliability is the degree to which there is consistency of scores students would receive on alternate forms of the same test. To examine the reliability of the analysis card, the researcher asked for the cooperation of two researchers. The researcher conducted the analysis by making a survey to four units of the reading texts and exercises of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*. The first and second colleague researchers did the same.

The aim is to find the correlation among the three results of the surveys for reliability.

She used Holesti correlation to determine the reliability as the following:

$$\text{Holesti Equation } R = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

(R) refers to the consistency;(M) refers to the number of elements of the analysis agreed upon by the analyzers; (N1&N2) refers to the elements of the analysis. Table (3.2) shows the correlation among the three researchers.

**Table (3.2)**

**Coefficient Correlation Among Researchers: Reliability through Persons**

<b>Researchers</b>	<b>Points of Agreement</b>	<b>Points of Difference</b>	<b>Total of points</b>	<b>Coefficient Correlation</b>
Res. 1/ 2	422	34	456	<b>92.4%</b>
Res. 1/ 3	415	45	460	<b>90.2%</b>
Res. 2/ 3	406	35	441	<b>91.8%</b>
<b>Total of Coefficient Correlation</b>				<b>91.8%</b>

It is clear from Table (3.2) that the correlation between the first and the second researcher is 92.4% and that between the first and the third researcher, it is 90.2 %. Moreover, the correlation between the second and the third researcher is 91.8 %. The consistency is (91.8). This strong correlation enables the researcher to process the data collected.

**3.3.1.6 Reliability Through Time**

The researcher repeated the analysis of units 1-4 after three weeks. Then, she calculated the reliability through time by using Holisti Equation. Table (3.3) shows the reliability through time:

**Table (3.3)  
Reliability Through Time**

<b>Domains</b>	<b>Points of Agreement</b>	<b>Points of Difference</b>	<b>Total of points</b>	<b>Coefficient Correlation</b>
<b>The Reading Texts</b>	14	2	16	<b>87.5</b>
<b>Text Vocabulary</b>	16	1	17	<b>94.2</b>
<b>Text Visuals</b>	12	1	13	<b>92.3</b>

<b>Text Layout</b>	14	1	15	<b>93.3</b>
<b>Reading Exercises</b>	35	7	42	<b>83.3</b>
<b>Workbook Exercises</b>	25	1	26	<b>96.2</b>
<b>Total</b>				<b>89.9%</b>

The results mentioned in the above table show a strong correlation that enables the researcher to process the data collected.

### **3.3.2 The interview**

#### **3.3.2.1 The aim of the interview:**

Due to the lack of objective judgments towards certain issues related to evaluating the reading texts and exercises, the researcher decided to interview 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers on some problematic issues. The researcher conducted a structured interview with fifteen 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in Rafah city and asked them nine questions related to the subject of the study i.e. the problematic areas in the reading texts and exercises of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*. The main purpose of the interview is to find out their views about the reading texts and exercises in order to validate or refute the findings the researcher obtained through the content analysis card.

#### **3.3.2.2 Description of the interview:**

The questions in the interview handle the following topics: (Appendix 10 )

1. The most and the least interesting reading texts for students.
2. The suitability of the reading texts to the 9<sup>th</sup> graders' comprehension level.
3. The purposefulness (clarity-attractiveness-colour) of the text visuals used in the reading texts.
4. The suitability of the font type & size used in the reading texts for the 9<sup>th</sup> graders.
5. The time allocated for teaching the reading texts and exercises.
6. Any other comments related to the reading texts and exercises.

### 3.3.2.3 The population of the interview:

The population consists of all 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers of English in UNRWA schools in Rafah City. It consists of (30) teachers; (14) male teachers and (16) female teachers.

### 3.3.2.4 Sample of the study:

The sample consists of (15) teachers; (6) male teachers and (9) female teachers. The sample represents 50 % of the population. The sample was a stratified random one. The researcher chooses the teachers who taught 9<sup>th</sup> grade all the SB and WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*. In fact, the researcher contacted all the population of the study but she managed to interview only fifteen teachers which stand for 50 % of the whole population.

### 3.3.2.5 Validity of the interview:

To ensure the interview validity, the researcher gave it to (8) juries from the Islamic University, UNRWA English supervisors and Al-Aqsa University. All of them agreed on the suitability of the questions in the interview card. (Appendix 8)

### 3.3.2.6 The reliability of the interview:

The researcher re-interviewed two teachers after a week of the first interview to measure the internal consistency. Then, she calculated the reliability through time by using Holisti Equation. Table (3.4) shows the reliability through time for the interview.

**Table (3.4)**

**The Reliability through Time for the Interview**

Teachers	Points of Agreement	Points of Difference	Total of points	Coefficient Correlation
Teacher 1	44	8	52	84.6 %
Teacher 2	46	10	56	82.1 %
<b>Total</b>				<b>83.3 %</b>

The results mentioned in Table (3.4) show a strong correlation that enables the researcher to process the data collected.

### **3.4 Procedures of the study**

1. Building the criteria of evaluation through reviewing the literature related to textbook evaluation and evaluating reading programs.
2. Consulting a number of experts for verifying the tools (the content analysis card and the interview questions).
3. Modifying the analysis card according to the referees' comments.
4. Applying the analysis card with the help of other two researchers.
5. Getting the permission from UNRWA administrator to carry out the interview.  
(Appendix 11)
6. Conducting the interview with 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers of English in Rafah City .
7. Analyzing the collected data in the form of frequencies and percentages and organizing it through tables.
8. Giving interpretations and comments.
9. Presenting recommendations and suggestions.

### **3.5 Summary**

This chapter described how the research was conducted, the instrumentations that were used, how the data were collected, recorded and analyzed and how validity and reliability of the data were ensured.

It discussed the following major sections: research design, instrumentations, constructing the content analysis card, its description, purpose of the analysis, its sample, its elements, its units, its limitations, validity of the analysis card, its reliability and applying the analysis card. Then the interview, its aim, its description, its population, its sample, its validity and reliability and the procedures of the study.

# **Chapter IV**

## **The Study Findings**

### **Introduction**

#### **Results of content analysis card**

**1- The developed list of criteria for reading texts and exercises**

**2- Evaluating the reading texts and exercises:**

- 1. The Reading Text**
- 2. Reading Text Vocabulary**
- 3. Reading Text Visuals**
- 4. Reading Text Layout**
- 5. Reading Exercises**
- 6. Workbook Exercises**

**3- The areas of weaknesses in the reading texts & exercises in SB & WB**

#### **Results of Interviews**

- 1. Interesting reading texts**
- 2. Not interesting reading texts**
- 3. Suitable texts to students' comprehension level**
- 4. Not suitable texts to students' comprehension level**
- 5. Visuals accompanying reading texts**
- 6. Font type and size**
- 7. Time for teaching the reading texts and exercises**
- 8. Other comments related to the reading texts**
- 9. Other comments related to the reading exercises**

#### **Summary**

# Chapter IV

## The Study Findings

### Introduction

This chapter introduces the findings of the study. The researcher used two different statistic forms (i.e. frequencies and percentages) to show the final collected data results. Tables are also used to clarify and present these data. Through these forms, points of strengths and weaknesses are identified.

### 1- The developed list of criteria for reading texts and exercises

One of the purposes of the study is to specify a list of evaluation criteria for evaluating the reading texts and exercises as stated in the first research question: **"What are the needed criteria for evaluating the reading texts and exercises?"**

The suggested criteria that the researcher built can be a guide to cite the points of strengths and weaknesses in the reading texts and exercises. Moreover, the organization of these criteria helped the researchers and can help those who are concerned better analyze and evaluate the reading texts and exercises by examining the extent to which these criteria are applied. The criteria developed are fifty-two classified into six basic domains as follows:

#### **1. The Reading Texts**

- 1.1 help students to read extensively. (skill)
- 1.2 help students read intensively. (skill)
- 1.3 use authentic texts. (skill)
- 1.4 present topics related to the Palestinian culture (knowledge)
- 1.5 discuss topics related to the Palestinian reality (knowledge)
- 1.6 enrich students' general knowledge about different topics (knowledge)
- 1.7 present values and good manners. (values)

The criteria in this domain are classified into (skill- knowledge and values) which are the three main components in any reading text as mentioned on P. (44)

## **2. Reading Text Vocabulary**

2.1 contain suitable number of new (unknown) vocabulary (not more than 3% -5% from the whole number of the text words)

2.2 employ new (unknown) vocabulary that are concrete and abstract.

2.3 use colours to highlight new (unknown) vocabulary.

2.4 are easy to learn (know their meaning and to pronounce) by 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

2.5 include guessable words.

## **3. Reading Text Visuals** (pictures, diagrams, charts, tables and figures)

3.1 are relevant to the reading text.

3.2 are clear to 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

3.3 are colourful and attractive.

3.4 are authentic (especially pictures).

## **4. Reading Text Layout**

4.1 sufficient margins on sides

4.2 sufficient spaces between text lines

4.3 uses indentation

4.4 is divided into paragraphs.

## **5. Reading Exercises**

5.1 include a variety of questions (wh-questions, multiple-choice, factual questions, thinking & guessing questions, hypothetical questions, etc.).

5.2 present clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders..

5.3 focus on pure reading. (based on reading)



- 5.4 activate students' background knowledge before reading the text through questioning , picture reading, word clustering .
- 5.5 require students to relate the text to their personal experience.
- 5.6 require students to find the main idea. (skimming)
- 5.7 require students to scan for specific information presented in the text (scanning)
- 5.8 require students to find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts.
- 5.9 require students to develop awareness about synonyms and antonyms.
- 5.10 require students to develop awareness of semantic fields (word mapping)
- 5.11 require students to recognize pronoun references.
- 5.12 require student s to distinguish between cause and effect.
- 5.13 require students to distinguish between fact and opinion.
- 5.14 require students to infer the author's attitude .
- 5.15 require students to make predictions (guessings , inferences) about the reading text.
- 5.16 require students to draw conclusions from information given in the text.
- 5.17 require students to make a summary of the reading text.
- 5.18 require students to draw lessons.
- 5.19 require students to work out answers in pairs and groups.

## **6. Workbook Exercises**

- 6.1 include a variety of questions (wh-questions, multiple-choice, factual questions, thinking & guessing questions, hypothetical questions, etc.).
- 6.2 present clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders..
- 6.3 focus on pure reading. (based on reading)
- 6.4 use exercises that are based on (relevant) to the ones in the SB.
- 6.5 use exercises that reinforce the ones in the SB.

- 6.6 require students to find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts.
- 6.7 require students to develop awareness of synonyms and antonyms.
- 6.8 require students to develop awareness of semantic fields (word mapping)
- 6.9 require students to recognize pronoun references.
- 6.10 require student s to distinguish between cause and effect.
- 6.11 require students to distinguish between fact and opinion.
- 6.12 require students to make a summary of the reading text.
- 6.13 require students to infer the author's attitude.

## **2- Evaluating the reading texts and exercises:**

After setting these criteria, the researcher designed a content analysis card and refereed it to analyze the reading texts and exercises to collect the relevant data concerning the second research question **"To what extent do the reading texts & exercises in SB & WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* match the suggested criteria for the reading texts and exercises ?"** The results of the content analysis card are based on the six basic developed domains as follows:

### **1. The Reading Texts**

This domain contains (7) criteria related to the reading texts in SB. Table (4.1) shows the percentage and frequency of each item in the first domain "The Reading Texts".

They are arranged in a descending order.

**Table (4.1)**  
**Frequency & percentage of the items in The Reading Texts**  
**(The First Domain)**

No.	Criteria	Mean of Frequency	Percentage
<b>1. The Reading Texts</b>			
1.1	enrich students' general knowledge about	16	100 %

	different topics. (knowledge)		
1.2	help students to read intensively . (skill)	15.6	97.9%
1.3	present values and good manners. (values)	9.33	58.3 %
1.4	present topics related to the Palestinian culture (knowledge)	4	25 %
1.5	discuss topics related to the Palestinian reality (knowledge)	3.66	22.9 %
1.6	help students to read extensively. (skill)	0	0 %
1.7	are authentic. (skill)	0	0 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>48.66</b>	<b>43.44%</b>

It is clear from the above table that very high percentages are scored for the items that follows:

### **1.1 Enriching students' general knowledge about different topics**

A scrutiny of the scored percentages and frequencies of each item in the reading texts in Table (4.1) shows that the item "enrich students' general knowledge about different topics (knowledge)" got the highest score of 100 % with the frequency of 16 (i.e. in all 16 units the textbook has). This means that in every unit, throughout the textbook, there is a new and different topic.

### **1.2 Helping students to read intensively**

Next, the criterion "help students to read intensively" got a very high percentage of 97.7 % with the frequency of 15.6. This shows that almost all the reading texts in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* are meant to be read intensively.

### **1.3 Presenting values and good manners**

Concerning the values and good manners, the results show that they got the percentage of 58.3 % with the frequency of 9.33. This shows that about nine out of

the sixteen reading texts in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* present values and good manners.

#### **1.4 Presenting topics related to the Palestinian culture**

In regard to "topics related to the Palestinian culture", it is indicated that it got the percentage of 25% with a frequency of 4. This reveals that four units out of the sixteen units in the textbook tackle topics related to the Palestinian culture.

#### **1.5 Discussing topics related to the Palestinian reality**

With respect to "topics related to the Palestinian reality", it got 22.9% with a frequency of 3.66. This means that approximately four units out of the sixteen units in the textbook tackle topics related to the Palestinian reality.

#### **1.6 Helping students to read extensively**

On the other hand, the item "help students to read extensively" got 0 %. This indicates that none of the reading texts is meant to be read extensively.

#### **1.7 Using authentic texts**

Analyzing the reading texts, it is obvious that the item "use authentic texts" got 0%. This indicates that none of the sixteen reading texts in *English for Palestine- Grade 9* is an authentic text. All of them are non-authentic.

## **2. Reading Text Vocabulary**

In this domain there are (5) criteria related to the reading text vocabulary in SB. Table (4.2) presents these criteria together with the frequency and percentage for each item. They are arranged in a descending order.

**Table (4.2)**  
**The Frequency & Percentage of the Items in Reading Text Vocabulary**  
**( The Second Domain)**

No.	Criteria	Mean of Frequency	Percentage
<b>2. Reading Text Vocabulary</b>			
2.1	use colours to highlight new (unknown) vocabulary.	16	100 %
2.2	are easy to learn (know their meaning and to pronounce) by 9 <sup>th</sup> graders	15.6	97.9 %
2.3	contain suitable number of new (unknown) vocabulary (not more than 2% -5% from the whole number of the text words)	15.6	97.9 %
2.4	include guessable words	15.6	97.9 %
2.5	employ new (unknown) vocabulary that is concrete and abstract.	0.66	4.16 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>63.6</b>	<b>79.5%</b>

Table (4.2) shows very high percentages and frequencies for most of the items as follows:

**2.1 Using colours to highlight new (unknown) vocabulary**

In relation to "using colours to highlight new (unknown) vocabulary", the results show that it got 100%. This means that in all the reading texts, the new vocabulary is highlighted by using the yellow colour.

**2.2 Vocabulary that are easy to learn by 9<sup>th</sup> graders**

As regards the point of "are easy to learn (know their meaning and to pronounce) by 9<sup>th</sup> graders" it got 97.7 % with a frequency of 15.6. This indicates that all the new vocabulary are within the students' age and level of comprehension. Indeed this is an advantage.

### **2.3 Containing suitable number of new (unknown) vocabulary**

About containing suitable number of new (unknown) vocabulary (not more than 2%-5% from the whole number of the text words), results show that it got 97.9% with a frequency of 15.6. This reveals that the number of new vocabulary in almost all the reading texts are suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **2.4 Including guessable words**

Concerning including guessable words, this got also 97.9 % with a percentage of 15.6. This shows that all the new vocabulary are easy to be guessed by 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **2.5 Employing new (unknown) vocabulary that are concrete and abstract**

On the other hand, the item "employ new (unknown) vocabulary that are concrete and abstract" got the least percentage in this domain. It got 4.1 % with a percentage of 0.66 %. This means that all the vocabulary used in the reading texts are abstract ones.

## **3. Reading Text Visuals**

This domain contains (4) criteria related to the reading text visuals in SB. Table (4.3) presents these criteria together with the frequency and percentage of each item. The items are arranged in a descending order.

**Table (4.3)**  
**The Frequency & Percentage of the Items in Reading Text Visuals**  
**(The Third Domain)**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Mean of Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>3. Reading Text Visuals</b>			
3.1	are relevant to the reading text.	14.33	89.5 %
3.2	are colourful and attractive.	13.3	83.33 %
3.3	are clear to 9 <sup>th</sup> graders.	13	81.25 %

3.4	are authentic (especially pictures).	8.66	54.16 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>49.3</b>	<b>77.08%</b>

Table (4.3) shows high percentages and frequencies for most of the items as follows:

### **3.1 Visuals relevance to the reading text**

With reference to the relevance of visuals to the reading text, results indicate that it got the highest percentage in this domain. It got 89.5 % with a frequency of 14.33. This shows that almost all the visuals used in the reading texts are relevant to the reading texts with the exception of two.

### **3.2 Colourful and attractive visuals**

Concerning colourful and attractive visuals, it got 83.3 % with 13.3 frequency. This indicates that thirteen out of the sixteen reading texts' visuals are colourful and attractive.

### **3.3 Clarity of visuals**

As regards the criterion "are clear to 9<sup>th</sup> graders", it got 81.25 % with a frequency of 13. This demonstrates that there are thirteen out of sixteen visuals used are clear to 9<sup>th</sup> graders and there are three visuals which are unclear.

### **3.4 Authenticity of visuals**

On the other hand, the item "are authentic (especially pictures)" got 54.16 % with a frequency of 8.66. This indicates that half of the visuals used are authentic and the other half are non-authentic.

## **4. Reading Text Layout**

In this domain there are (4) criteria related to the reading text layout in SB. Table (4.4) shows these criteria together with the frequency and percentage of each item. They are arranged in a descending order.

**Table (4.4)**  
**The Frequency & Percentage of the Items in Reading Text Layout**  
**( The Fourth Domain)**

No.	Criteria	Mean of Frequency	Percentage %
<b>4. Reading Text Visuals</b>			
4.1	sufficient margins on sides.	16	100 %
4.2	sufficient spaces between text lines	16	100 %
4.3	is divided into paragraphs.	14.6	91.66%
4.4	use indentation.	12.66	79.1 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>59.3</b>	<b>92.7 %</b>

Table (4.4) reveals very high percentages and frequencies for three out of the four items mentioned in the table above as follows:

#### **4.1 Sufficiency of margins on sides**

Regarding the sufficiency of margins on sides, it got 100 % with a frequency of 16. This reveals that the margins on sides are found in all the reading texts.

#### **4.2 Sufficiency of spaces between lines**

In terms of the sufficiency of spaces between text lines, it got 100 % with a frequency of 16. This means the spaces between text lines are found in all the reading texts and they are sufficient.

#### **4.3 Paragraphs divisions**

In respect to the item "is divided into paragraphs", it got 91.6 % with a frequency of 14.6. It is a very high percentage also. It illustrates that about fourteen out of sixteen reading texts are divided into paragraphs. Indeed the two reading texts which are not divided into paragraphs are found in Units 10 and 13.



#### 4.4 Using indentation

The item "use indentation" got 79.1 % with a frequency of 12.66. This shows that indentation is used in about thirteen units out of sixteen and it is not used in the other three units as they are not divided into paragraphs.

#### 5. Reading Exercises

This domain contains (19) criteria related to the reading texts in SB. Table (4.5) presents these criteria together with the frequency and percentage of each item. They are arranged in a descending order.

**Table (4.5)**  
**The Frequency & Percentage of the Items in Reading Exercises**  
**( The Fifth Domain)**

No.	Criteria	Mean of Frequency	Percentage
<b>5. Reading Exercises</b>			
5.1	present clear instructions that can be understood by 9 <sup>th</sup> graders.	16	100 %
5.2	activate students' background knowledge before reading the text through questioning , picture reading , word clustering .	16	100 %
5.3	Require students to make predictions (guessings) about the reading text.	15	93.75 %
5.4	include a variety of questions.	14	87.5 %
5.5	Focus on pure reading. (based on reading)	12.3	77.1 %
5.6	Require students to draw conclusions (inferences) from information given in the text.	10.33	64.5 %
5.7	Require students to scan for specific information presented in the text.( scanning)	9.66	60.4 %
5.8	require students to distinguish between cause	8.66	54.16 %

	and effect.		
5.9	require students to develop awareness of semantically related words.	7.33	45.8 %
5.10	require students to develop awareness about synonyms and antonyms.	6.66	41.66 %
5.11	require students to find the main idea. (skimming)	6.66	41.66 %
5.12	require students to draw lessons.	6.33	39.5 %
5.13	require students to make a summary of the reading text.	6	37.5 %
5.14	require students to relate the text to their personal experience.	2.33	14.58 %
5.15	require students to distinguish between fact and opinion.	2	12.5 %
5.16	require students to work out answers in pairs and groups.	1.33	8.33%
5.17	require students to infer the author's attitude .	1.33	8.33 %
5.18	require students to find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts.	0.33	2.08 %
5.19	require students to recognize pronoun references.	0	0 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>130.6</b>	<b>42.96 %</b>

As noted in this table, very high percentages are scored for many items as follows:

### **5.1 Presenting clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders**

With respect to the criterion "present clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders", it got 100 % with a frequency of 16. This shows that all the instructions used in the reading exercises are clear and can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

## **5.2 Activating students' background knowledge before reading the text**

The item "activate students' background knowledge before reading the text through questioning, picture reading and word clustering" got 100 % with a frequency of 16. This means that all the pre-reading exercises activate students' previous knowledge about the reading texts through questioning, picture reading and word clustering.

## **5.3 Making predictions (guessings) about the reading text**

As regards requiring students to make predictions (guessings) about the reading text, it got 93.75 % with a frequency of 15. This means that almost all the pre-reading activities require students to make predictions (guessings) before reading the text.

## **5.4 Including a variety of questions**

With reference to including a variety of questions, this got a very high score in a percentage of 87.5 % with a percentage of 14. This indicates that a great deal of variety in questions is found in the reading exercises.

## **5.5 Focusing on pure reading**

The item "focus on pure reading" got 77.1 % with a frequency of 12.3. This reveals that most of the reading exercises are pure reading exercises but there are also some integrated ones.

By contrast, the lowest percentages in this domain were for these items that follows :

## **5.15 Requiring students to distinguish between fact and opinion**

Concerning the criterion "require students to distinguish between fact and opinion", it got 12.5 % with 2 frequency. This shows that exercises that require students to distinguish between fact and opinion are found only twice.

### **5.16 Requiring students to work out answers in pairs and groups**

In regard to the item "require students to work out answers in pairs and groups", it got 8.33 % with a frequency of 1.33. This illustrates that one of the exercises in SB require students to work out answers in pairs and groups.

### **5.17 Requiring students to infer the author's attitude**

Referring to "require students to infer the author's attitude", it got 8.33 % with a frequency of 1.33. This indicates that exercises that require students to infer the author's attitude are found only once in all the reading exercises in SB.

### **5.18 Requiring students to find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts**

About requiring students to find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts, this got 2.08 % with a frequency of 0.33. This indicates that the exercises that require students to find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts are nearly not found.

### **5.19 Requiring students to recognize pronoun references.**

Finally, the item "require students to recognize pronoun references" got 0 %. This means that none of the reading exercises in the whole textbook require students to recognize pronoun references.

## **6. Workbook Exercises**

This domain contains (13) criteria related to the reading exercises in WB. Table (4.6) presents these criteria together with the frequency and percentage of each item. They are arranged in a descending order.

**Table (4.6)**  
**The Frequency & Percentage of the items in Workbook Exercises**  
**( The Sixth Domain)**

No.	Criteria	Mean of Frequency	Percentage
<b>6. Workbook Exercises</b>			
6.1	present clear instructions that can be understood by 9 <sup>th</sup> graders.	14.66	91.66 %
6.2	use exercises that are based on ( relevant) to the ones in the student book.	14	87.5 %
6.3	use exercises that reinforce the ones in the student book.	14	87.5 %
6.4	include a variety of questions .	12	75 %
6.5	focus on pure reading. ( based on reading)	9	56.25 %
6.6	require students to develop awareness of synonyms and antonyms.	6.66	41.66 %
6.7	require students to develop awareness of semantically related words.	6.33	39.58 %
6.8	require students to make a summary of the reading text.	6.33	39.58 %
6.9	require students to distinguish between cause and effect.	3	18.75 %
6.10	require students to practice finding meanings of new vocabulary in contexts.	3	18.75 %
6.11	require students to recognize pronoun references	0.66	4.16 %
6.12	require students to distinguish between fact and opinion.	0.33	2.08 %
6.13	require students to infer the author's attitude	0	0 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>81.66</b>	<b>39.25 %</b>

The above table shows very high percentages for the following items:

### **6.1 Presenting clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders**

With regard to the criterion "present clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders", it got the highest score in a percentage of 91.6 % with a frequency of 14.6. This reveals that almost all the instructions of the reading exercises are clear and can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **6.2 Using exercises that are based on ( relevant) to the ones in the student book**

Concerning using exercises that are based on (relevant) to the ones in the SB, this got 87.5 % with a frequency of 14. This indicates that in fourteen out of the sixteen units, the reading exercises are relevant to the ones in the SB.

### **6.3 Using exercises that reinforce the ones in the student book**

The item "use exercises that reinforce the ones in the student book " got 87.5 % with a frequency of 14. This means that in fourteen out of the sixteen units, the reading exercises in the WB reinforce the ones in the SB.

### **6.4 Including a variety of questions**

As regards including a variety of questions, it got 75 % with a frequency of 12. This proves that twelve out of sixteen units have variety in questions in the WB. This indicates that there is a variety in the questions used in the reading exercises.

On the other hand, the least percentages in this domain are for the items that follow:

### **6.11 Requiring students to recognize pronoun references**

With respect to "require students to recognize pronoun references", it got 4.1 % with a frequency of 0.66. This demonstrates that only one of the exercises require students to recognize pronoun references.

### **6.12 Requiring students to distinguish between fact and opinion**

Referring to requiring students to distinguish between fact and opinion, it got 2.08 % with a frequency of 0.33. This reveals that none of the exercises require students to distinguish between fact and opinion.

### **6.13 Requiring students to infer the author's attitude**

The item "require students to infer the author's attitude" got 0 % with a frequency of 0. This means that none of the reading exercises require students to infer the author's attitude.

## **3- The areas of weaknesses in the reading texts & exercises in SB and WB**

In an answer to the third question in this research: "**What are the areas of weaknesses in the reading texts & exercises in SB & WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*, in terms of the suggested criteria for the reading texts and exercises and the teachers' perspectives ?**", the researcher found out the following weaknesses. These points are summarized as follows:

1. All the reading texts are not authentic. This is confirmed through contacting Gavin McLean, a publisher in Macmillan Education and Michael Macfarlane, the author of the books who declare that the reading texts in *English for Palestine 9* are not authentic.
2. It is found that extensive reading is not included in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* as the main objective of teaching reading is intensive reading and vocabulary expansion.
3. Only four reading texts are related to the Palestinian culture and reality.

4. There is no employment of exercises that require students to infer the author's attitude, distinguish between fact and opinion, recognize pronoun references, find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts, relate the text to their personal experience and to work out answers in pairs and groups. These reading skills are not included in the reading exercises of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*.

#### **4. Results of interviews**

To ensure objective judgments towards certain issues related to evaluating the reading texts and exercises, the researcher interviewed fifteen teachers on some problematic issues. The researcher asked the teachers nine questions related to the subject of the study i.e. the problematic areas in the reading texts and exercises of *English for Palestine –Grade 9*.

Table (4.7) shows the frequencies and percentages of questions 1-7 in the interview. The last two questions in the interview are not reported in the table and they are reported after discussing the results of the seven questions mentioned in the table as they require teachers to give their comments about the reading texts and exercises.



**Table (4.7)**

**The frequency and parentage of each question in the interview**

Unit	Q.1 Interesting Texts		Q.2 Not interesting texts		Q.3 Suitable to students' comprehension level		Q.4 Not suitable to students' comprehension level		Q.5 Not purposeful Visuals		Q.6 Problems in font type and size		Q.7 Time for teaching reading texts and exercises	
	Freq	Per%	Freq	Per%	Freq	Per%	Freq	Per%	Freq	Per%	Freq	Per%	Freq	Per%
1.	7	46.6	0	0	7	46.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	60
2.	0	0	7	46.6	0	0	5	33.3	9	60	0	0	11	73.3
3.	4	26.6	2	13.3	5	33.3	3	20	0	0	0	0	9	60
4.	3	20	0	0	4	26.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	66.6
5.	0	0	11	73.3	0	0	10	66.6	0	0	0	0	12	80
6.	0	0	7	46.6	0	0	7	46.6	8	53.3	0	0	12	80
7.	14	93.3	0	0	11	73.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	60
8.	10	66.6	0	0	9	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	53.3
9.	4	26.6	0	0	2	13.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	73.3
10.	7	46.6	0	0	7	46.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	66.6
11.	3	20	0	0	2	13.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	53.3
12.	8	53.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	66.6
13.	5	33.3	0	0	4	26.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	53.3
14.	0	0	4	26.6	0	0	4	26.6	0	0	0	0	8	53.3
15.	0	0	7	46.6	0	0	6	40	0	0	0	0	8	53.3
16.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	53.3

## 1. Interesting reading texts

The teachers were asked "Throughout your experience as a teacher, which reading texts do you think are interesting for students? Mention 2-3 texts"

Table (4.8) shows the frequencies and percentages of this question.

**Table (4.8)**  
**Frequency and percentage of question 1**

Interesting reading texts	Unit	U.1	U.2	U.3	U.4	U.5	U.6	U.7	U.8
	Freq	7	0	4	3	0	0	14	10
	Per %	46.6	0	26.6	20	0	0	93.3	66.6
	U.9	U.10	U.11	U.12	U.13	U.14	U.15	U.16	
	4	7	3	8	5	0	0	0	
	26.6	46.6	20	53.3	33.3	0	0	0	

It is clear from Table (4.8) that fourteen teachers point out that the reading text in Unit 7 is very interesting. The reading text in Unit 8 is also considered very interesting as ten teachers declare. Eight teachers declare that the reading text in Unit 12 is very interesting. Seven teachers declare that the reading texts in Units 1 and 10 are very interesting.

## 2. Not interesting reading texts

The teachers were asked: "Throughout your experience as a teacher, which reading texts do you think are not interesting for students? Mention 2-3 texts."

Table (4.9) shows the frequencies and percentages of this question.

**Table (4.9)**

**Frequency and percentage of question 2**

Not interesting reading texts	Unit	U.1	U.2	U.3	U.4	U.5	U.6	U.7	U.8
	Freq	0	7	2	0	11	7	0	0
	Per %	0	46.6	13.3	0	73.3	46.6	0	0
	U.9	U.10	U.11	U.12	U.13	U.14	U.15	U.16	
	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	26.6	46.6	0	

It is clear from the above table that eleven teachers say that the reading text in Unit 5 is not interesting. The reading texts in Units 2 , 6 & 15 are considered not interesting as seven teachers declare. Four teachers say that the reading text in Unit 14 is not interesting. The last reading text that is not interesting is found in Unit 3. In fact only two teachers declare this.

### 3. Suitable texts to students' comprehension level

The teachers were asked: "Throughout your experience as a teacher, which reading texts do you think are suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders comprehension levels? Mention 2-3 texts." Table (4.10) shows the frequencies and percentages of this question.

**Table (4.10)**

**Frequency and percentage of question 3**

Suitable to texts to students level	Unit	U.1	U.2	U.3	U.4	U.5	U.6	U.7	U.8
	Freq	7	0	5	4	0	0	11	9
	Per %	46.6	0	33.3	26.6	0	0	73.3	60
	U.9	U.10	U.11	U.12	U.13	U.14	U.15	U.16	
	2	7	2	0	4	0	0	0	
	13.3	46.6	13.3	0	26.6	0	0	0	

Throughout interviewing 9<sup>th</sup> graders, the reading texts in Units 1, 7, 8, 10 are considered suitable for students' comprehension level.

#### 4. Not suitable texts to students' comprehension level

The teachers were asked: "Throughout your experience as a teacher, which reading texts do you think are not suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders comprehension levels? Mention 2-3 texts." Table (4.11) shows the frequencies and percentages of this question.

**Table (4.11)**

**Frequency and percentage of question 4**

Not suitable to texts to students	Unit	U.1	U.2	U.3	U.4	U.5	U.6	U.7	U.8
	<b>Freq</b>	0	5	3	0	10	7	0	0
	<b>Per %</b>	0	33.3	20	0	66.6	46.6	0	0
	U.9	U.10	U.11	U.12	U.13	U.14	U.15	U.16	
	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	26.6	40	0	

During the interview, ten teachers of 9<sup>th</sup> grade confirm that the reading text in Unit 5 is not suitable for students' comprehension level. Moreover, seven teachers say that the reading text in Unit 6 is not suitable for students' comprehension level. The reading text in Unit 15 is defined as not suitable for students' comprehension level by six teachers .

#### 5. Visuals accompanying reading texts

The teachers were asked" Throughout your experience as a teacher, which visuals do you think are not purposeful ?" Table (4.12) shows the frequencies and percentages of this question.

**Table (4.12)**

**Frequency and percentage of question 5**

Visuals accompanying reading texts	Unit	U.1	U.2	U.3	U.4	U.5	U.6	U.7	U.8
	<b>Freq</b>	0	9	0	0	0	8	0	0
	<b>Per %</b>	0	60	0	0	0	53.3	0	0
	<b>U.9</b>	<b>U.10</b>	<b>U.11</b>	<b>U.12</b>	<b>U.13</b>	<b>U.14</b>	<b>U.15</b>	<b>U.16</b>	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

From the table, it is obvious that most of the visuals used are purposeful. They are colourful, attractive and relevant to the reading texts with the exception of two pictures. In Unit 2, nine teachers with the percentage of 60 % declare that the visuals used are not purposeful. Also in Unit 6, eight teachers with the percentage of 53.3 % declare that the visuals used are not purposeful.

### **6. Font type and size**

The 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers were asked: "Throughout your experience as a teacher, in which reading texts do you face any problems concerning the font type & size used in the reading texts?" Table (4.13) shows the frequencies and percentages .

**Table (4.13)**

**Frequency and percentage of question 6**

Font type and size	Unit	U.1	U.2	U.3	U.4	U.5	U.6	U.7	U.8
	<b>Freq</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Per %</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>U.9</b>	<b>U.10</b>	<b>U.11</b>	<b>U.12</b>	<b>U.13</b>	<b>U.14</b>	<b>U.15</b>	<b>U.16</b>	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

All the fifteen 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers point out that the font type and size used in the reading texts of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* are suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. They declared that they never face any problems in the font type and size.

### 7. Time for teaching the reading texts and exercises

The 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers were asked "Which reading texts do you think need more time than is allocated?" Table (4.14) shows the frequencies and percentages of this question.

**Table (4.14)**

**Frequency and percentage of time for teaching the reading texts and exercises**

Time for teaching the reading texts	Unit	U.1	U.2	U.3	U.4	U.5	U.6	U.7	U.8
	freq	9	11	9	10	12	12	9	8
	Per %	60	73.3	60	66.6	80	80	60	53.3
	U.9	U.10	U.11	U.12	U.13	U.14	U.15	U.16	
	11	10	8	10	8	8	8	8	
	73.3	66.6	53.3	66.6	53.3	53.3	53.3	53.3	

It is clear from the results in Table (4.13) that all the teachers agree that the reading lesson need more than the allocated time (two teaching periods) in order to cover all the needed skills and all the exercises in the SB and WB.

### 8. Other comments related to the reading texts

The 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers were asked to give any other comments related to the reading texts. The teachers give these general comments:

1. The students need more reading texts that are related to the Palestinian culture and reality.

2. Teachers need more teaching periods to teach the reading texts with all the reading exercises in the SB and WB.
3. Some irrelevant reading texts should be replaced by more related ones.
4. No stories are found in the textbook.

### **9. Other comments related to the reading exercises**

The 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers were asked to give any other comments related to the reading exercises. They give these general comments:

1. There should be variety in the types of questions. The main focus in the questions were on the wh- ones.
2. Not all the reading skills are covered throughout the reading exercises so they need to be enriched by an enrichment material.
3. There is no balance in the distribution of the exercises. Some units have more than five exercises but others have only two.

### **Summary**

This chapter answered the questions of the study by presenting the results of the two instruments used (the content analysis card and the structured interview). Regarding these results, it can be concluded that four of the reading texts in *English for Palestine 9* are interesting, the texts layout have no problems, the texts vocabulary are suitable, easy to be guessed and the visuals used are clear, attractive and colourful. Also the reading exercises match most of the criteria but some skills are missed. Generally, it is found that the reading texts and exercises of *English for Palestine 9* have few weaknesses and most of the results show that they have many strong points. In the light of these results, the discussion will be provided in the next chapter.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion, conclusions and recommendations**

#### **Introduction**

#### **Discussion of the results of content analysis card**

##### **1- The developed list of criteria for reading texts and exercises**

##### **2- Evaluating the reading texts and exercises:**

- 1. The Reading Text.**
- 2. Reading Text Vocabulary**
- 3. Reading Text Visuals**
- 4. Reading Text Layout**
- 5. Reading Exercises**
- 6. Workbook Exercises**

##### **3- Discussion of the areas of weaknesses in the reading texts & exercises in SB & WB**

#### **Discussion of the results of interviews**

- 1. Interesting reading texts**
- 2. Not interesting reading texts**
- 3. Suitable texts to students' comprehension level**
- 4. Not suitable texts to students' comprehension level**
- 5. Visuals accompanying reading texts**
- 6. Font type and size**
- 7. Time for teaching the reading texts and exercises**

#### **Conclusions**

#### **Recommendations**



## Chapter V

### Discussion, conclusions and recommendations

#### Introduction

The chief aim of this chapter is to discuss the study results thoroughly and to find out a close connection between these results and the results of the previous studies. Also, the researcher comes out with overall suggestions and recommendations depending on the study findings, interpretations and analysis.

#### 1- The developed list of criteria for reading texts and exercises

The developed list of criteria included six main domains presented in the previous chapter. Most of the criteria related to the reading exercises are taken from ELC (1999:32) as they constitute the main objectives that students are expected to gain after learning the reading texts.

The list includes all the related dimensions of the reading skill dealt with in the SB and WB. All the items in the six domains are chosen carefully to suit the aim of the study and to pinpoint the points of weaknesses and strengths in the reading texts and exercises. This list of criteria is a comprehensive one that involves all the aspects of the reading skills found in *English for Palestine* series. The researcher believes that this list of criteria can help researchers and those who are concerned to analyze and evaluate the reading texts and exercises by examining to what extent these texts and exercises match these criteria.

#### 2- Evaluating the reading texts and exercises:

The second question is trying to find out to what extent the reading texts & exercises in SB &WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* match the suggested criteria for the reading texts and exercises. The following is a discussion of the results which are divided into the main six domains as follows:

## 1. The Reading Text

### 1.1 Enriching students' general knowledge about different topics

The results show that the item "enrich students' general knowledge about different topics (knowledge)" got the highest score of 100 % with the frequency of 16. This shows that in every unit, throughout the textbook, there is a new and different topic. This result confirms the results found by Al-Mazloum (2007), Janhangard (2007) and Barzaq (2007) who found good employment for topics in the textbooks they analyzed. Various topics are introduced throughout textbooks that they evaluated.

Indeed there are sixteen main topics distributed among the units in the textbook. The suggested topics mentioned in ELC (1999:44-45) are the following:

1. Cultural Heritage: the national and global cultural heritage.
2. Science and Technology e.g. media, e-mail, computers and telecommunication
3. Environment & Ecology topics e.g. deforestation and reforestation, natural phenomena .
4. Sports & games.
5. Palestine : history, economy, lifestyles, demography & refugees.
6. Food and Nutrition : diet and healthy food .
7. Society and Social problems.
8. Personal : friends, daily routine, inter-personal relations.
9. Health and welfare: personal hygiene and medical care.

The researcher found out full correspondence between the suggested topics recommended in ELC (1999) and those included in the reading texts in *English for Palestine- Grade 9* as shown in Table (5.1).

**Table (5.1)**

#### **Topics Survey throughout the Textbook**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Title of the reading text</b>	<b>Suggested Topics in ELC</b>
1.	Gaza, ancient and future city of trade	History of Gaza-Palestinian refugees.

2.	Introducing Istanbul	Cultural Heritage, historical landmarks and figures in Istanbul, national events, customs.
3.	Home is a special place	Cultural Heritage, customs.
4.	How to be fit and safe	Health & welfare, personal hygiene, medical care.
5.	Finding the way	Science & Technology: media, computers , great scientists and inventions.
6.	Building a modern city	Environment & Ecology :pollution, services in a city , running water and electricity.
7.	Salah Al-Din: a leader ahead of his time.	Cultural Heritage: history of Islamic leader
8.	A great man and a great Muslim	Cultural Heritage, religious man Abu Bakr
9.	Our friends, the forests	Environment & Ecology: Deforestation and reforestation, carbon cycle.
10.	Quiz: Could you look after your home and family	Personal: daily routine, inter-personal relations.
11.	Reaching out to others	Society & Social Problems: voluntary work
12.	The United Nations at work	International Organization :UN, its services in Palestine.
13.	Help, World!	Personal: daily problems, dealing with feelings and emotional states.
14.	An email from China	Cultural Heritage, Chinese culture, lifestyle, customs , national events.
15.	Science Magazine Talks To .....	Science & Technology, great scientific inventions, scientific research , bionic arms.

16.	Beautiful New Westhill Community Garden Opens	Society and Social Problems, cooperation, voluntary work
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The above table reinforces the idea of employing a variety of topics effectively in this textbook. The researcher thinks, throughout the survey of the topics in the textbook, there is a great variety in the topics which is one of the advantages of this textbook. The researcher goes with Garinger (2002) in that the variety in the topics of the reading texts will help to maintain students' interest and motivation. Throughout her experience as a teacher, the researcher has observed that when dealing with a new topic in every unit, students are eager to read and learn more about it. The researcher in the present study finds that the variety in the reading texts is essential. It motivates learners to be successful in learning as motivation results from interest in reading.

### **1.2 Helping students to read intensively**

Next, the criterion "help students to read intensively" got a very high percentage of 97.7 % with the frequency of 15.6. This reveals that almost all the reading texts in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* are meant to be read intensively. The results show that the extensive reading is not included in the curriculum of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*. This result goes on with the results of Barzaq (2007) who found that extensive reading is lacked in *English for Palestine grade six and seven*. She recommends supportive materials and resources such as supplementary reading levels and library books.

Extensive reading is not included in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* though it has a significant impact on the learners' development. According to Nuttall (1996), Day & Bamford (1980) and Hafiz and Tudor (1985), reading extensively breaks down the

artificial barriers that conventional reading instructions create. It is stated that extensive reading improves students' reading skills. In this context, Richards and Renandya (2002) argue strongly for extensive reading in the second language curriculum. They argue that not only can extensive reading improve reading ability, it can also enhance learners' overall language proficiency (e.g. spelling, grammar, vocabulary and writing). In addition, extensive reading with its emphasis on encouraging learners to read self-selected, large amounts of meaningful language, is in line with current principles for good second and foreign language pedagogy. It can be significantly drawn that the absence of the extensive reading may be due to the main objective of teaching reading in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* which is reading intensively. Indeed, it is mentioned in ETB (2008:21) that the main objective for teaching reading in this grade is intensive reading and vocabulary expansion. Extensive reading is introduced in Grade 11.

### **1.3 Presenting values and good manners**

Concerning the values and good manners, it got the percentage of 58.3 % with the frequency of 9.33. This demonstrates that about nine out of the sixteen reading texts of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* present values and good manners. As stated in ELC (1999:20)

The English language curriculum aims to reinforce the concepts of love, peace, equality, freedom, human rights, democracy, tolerance, respect for oneself and others, as well as to maintain positive attitudes toward good and virtue. In addition, the English language curriculum aims to help students to analyze, clarify, judge and acquire values of civil society in the areas of : global concern , environmental concern, social responsibility, etc.

When analyzing the reading texts, it is found that many values and good manners are presented in the reading texts. Table (5.2) indicates the values expressed in the reading texts throughout the textbook:

**Table (5.2)****Values Survey throughout the Textbook**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Title of the reading text</b>	<b>Values Expressed</b>
1.	Gaza, ancient and future city of trade	Freedom - love - peace
2.	How to be fit and safe	Respect of oneself and others
3.	Building a modern city	Peace - equality - environmental concern
4.	Salah Al-Din: a leader ahead of his time.	Respect of oneself and others – tolerance – democracy – love
5.	A great man and a great Muslim	Tolerance - democracy – love - equality
6.	Quiz: Could you look after your home and family	Social responsibility – co-operation
7.	Reaching out to others	Social responsibility – co-operation- tolerance - love
8.	The United Nations art work	Human rights- global concern. – love – peace – equality – democracy - tolerance
9.	Help, World!	Love – respect of others – co-operation - tolerance
10.	Beautiful New Westhill Community Garden Opens	Social responsibility – co-operation – love - peace

This wide variety of values and good manners expressed in the reading texts emphasizes the idea of Savage & Mooney (1979:1) that reading involves the reader's sensations, perceptions, cognition, and language. Learning to read involves mastering a constellation of skills along with the development of attitudes and values related to

reading. Also it goes with Richards (2001:2) who states that curriculum development focuses on determining what knowledge, skills and values students learn in schools.

#### 1.4 Presenting topics related to the Palestinian culture

In regard to "present topics related to the Palestinian culture", it got the percentage of 25% with a frequency of 4. This indicates that approximately four out of the sixteen units in the textbook tackle topics related to the Palestinian culture.

These units are as follows in Table (5.3)

**Table (5.3)**

#### **Topics related to the Palestinian culture and reality**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Title of the Unit</b>	<b>Reason</b>
1	Gaza, ancient and future city of trade	-It talks about Gaza, one of the Palestinian cities, its history, economy and lifestyle.  -A related topic to student' society, culture history.
7	Salah Al-Din : A leader a head of his time	-It is related to the students' history and religion.
8	A great man and a great Muslim	-It talked about Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq.  -A related topic to students' history and religion.
12	The United Nations at Work	-It is related to the Palestinian reality as it talks about the Palestinian refugees and the various services provided by the UN.

Regarding this issue, Pang (2004) stated that having rich cultural knowledge will affect our understanding and appreciation of the written text. Also Williams (1999) points out that successful reading is affected by the way the subject matter relates to the pupils' existing cultural and general knowledge or to subject-specific knowledge.

Students will be helped in their reading if some of the information is already understood. The researcher believes that cultural background is an important factor in comprehension. The texts that are not related to the students' culture and reality are not motivating and thus more difficult to comprehend than the culturally related ones. This result contradicts with the results of Mahmoud (2007) who finds out that textbooks overlooked the local environment and the country and thus they do not help students in aiding their nation and improving their country but this result goes with the result of Barzaq (2007) who indicates that the reading texts are mainly sensitive to the cultural background of learners .

### **1.7 Using authentic texts**

Analyzing the reading texts shows that using authentic texts got 0%. This means that none of the sixteen reading texts in *English for Palestine- Grade 9* is an authentic text. All of them are non-authentic. This was confirmed by contacting the publishers of this textbook in Macmillan Education. With the help of her supervisor Dr. Al-Masri, the researcher got the personal emails of Gavin McLean, a publisher in Macmillan Education and Michael Macfarlane, the author of the books (Appendix 12). They both confirmed that the texts in *English for Palestine 9* are not 'authentic' in the sense that they are original unedited texts from different fiction and non-fiction sources. The texts have been created to act as stimuli for the key structures and vocabulary of the syllabus at this level. They are, however, designed to appear authentic to the reader, in the sense that they are stylistically identical to authentic texts. They say that it is normally necessary to control the language level so that students can cope.

As Lee (1995), Nunan (1988), Nuttal (1996) Cunningsworth (1984), Ur (1996) and Berardo (2006) suggest that authentic texts can be motivating and more interesting than textbook materials as said before on P.(35-36)



Also Al-Masri (1993:37) asserts that the learners are likely to be more motivated by the relevance, usefulness and authenticity of the learning tasks. Although the researcher agrees with Lee (1995), Nunan (1988) and Nuttal (1996), she also agrees with Ur (1996) in that beginners might be frustrated if they have to tackle an authentic text because it might turn out to be far more difficult than the ones they can understand properly, so the use of authentic texts with less proficient learners is often frustrating and counter-productive. The researcher believes that authentic texts are motivating and interesting but they are suitable for more proficient students. This result goes with the results of Al-Masri (1993) who emphasized that the textbook, *Practice and Progress* has shown texts that are irrelevant and ineffective as well as non-authentic. He emphasized the need to expose the learners to authentic language input that deals with a variety of topics, which are relevant to the learners' interests, reality and ability. He adds that this can be done through exposing students to authentic learning materials written for native children. Such materials would be simple and related to students' interest and level.

## **2. Reading Text Vocabulary**

### **2.1 Using colours to highlight new (unknown) vocabulary**

With respect to using colours to highlight new (unknown) vocabulary, it got 100%. This shows that in all the reading texts, the new vocabulary is highlighted by using the yellow colour. In fact, using colours for highlighting new vocabulary indicates to the teacher which vocabulary s/he should present and which vocabulary students must learn. The usage of colour for highlighting the new vocabulary has a great effect on learning them. Students will be more attracted to them and will not forget them easily. So one advantage of this textbook is that it is designed in a way that draws the attention of students to the new vocabulary by colouring them.

### **2.3 Containing suitable number of new (unknown) vocabulary**

As regards the point of "contain suitable number of new (unknown) vocabulary (not more than 2%-5% from the whole number of the text words)", it got the percentage of 97.9% with a frequency of 15.6. This reveals that the number of new vocabulary in almost all the reading texts are suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. This agrees with Al-Momani (1998) who stated that the vocabulary items were selected to suit the students' level and to facilitate communication.

In fact, vocabulary plays an important role in reading comprehension. Readers will misunderstand the text without having sufficient vocabulary. Many studies examine the role of vocabulary knowledge in reading and the percentage of unknown words that might affect comprehension. Lui and Nation (1985) suggest that 95 % coverage is needed for sufficient comprehension and Hirsh and Nation (1992) indicated that reading will be laborious if the number of new vocabulary is below 95% -98% of the lexical coverage of the reading text. Moreover, Hsueh-Chao & Nation (2000) stated that a vocabulary size around 98% of text coverage would be necessary to achieve a very good comprehension of it. Also English as foreign language learners must have around 98% coverage of the words in the text to be able to read. Examining these studies, the researcher concludes that the number of new vocabulary should not be more than 2% -5% from the whole number of the text words. Table (5.4) explains the number of new vocabulary in each of the sixteen reading texts in comparison with the whole number of the text words.

**Table (5.4)****Survey of Number of New Words throughout the Textbook**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Number of text words</b>	<b>Number of new vocabulary</b>	<b>Ratio of new vocabulary %</b>
1.	338	11	3.2 %
2.	361	10	2.7 %
3.	359	10	2.8 %
4.	357	12	3.3 %
5.	399	11	2.7 %
6.	354	10	2.8 %
7.	383	10	2.6 %
8.	302	3	1 %
9.	351	15	4.2 %
10.	275	10	3.6 %
11.	374	10	2.6 %
12.	364	13	3.5 %
13.	378	9	2.3 %
14.	342	9	2.6 %
15.	365	8	2.2 %
16.	289	3	1.1 %
<b>Average</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>2.75 %</b>

Table (5.4) shows that all the reading texts contain suitable number of new vocabulary ; i.e. between 2 %-5 % of the whole number of the text words. The only exception is for Units 8 & 16. The reading texts in these two units contain only three new vocabulary as they are revision units where students need not be taught any new vocabulary but to revise the previous ones.


### **2.5 Employing new (unknown) vocabulary that are concrete and abstract**

About employing new (unknown) vocabulary that are concrete and abstract, this got the least percentage in this domain. It got 4.1 % with a percentage of 0.66 %. This

indicates that all the vocabulary used in the reading texts are abstract ones. The researcher believes that introducing abstract vocabulary to the 9<sup>th</sup> graders is suitable. This is also confirmed by 9<sup>th</sup> graders teachers who were interviewed. They stated that there is no problem in teaching abstract new vocabulary. Generally, students prefer concrete words more than abstract ones because these words call up pictures that use the senses and so they are easier to learn. Making long lists of vocabulary and their definitions to memorize rarely helps students to actually use new words. On the contrary, students end up practicing rote memorization without being able to incorporate the words into their daily speech or writing.

To bridge this gap, the researcher agrees with the idea of Al-Masri (2009) to help students learn new vocabulary by designing a semi-dictionary notebook in which students write down every new vocabulary accompanied with its spelling, definition, example sentence (usage) and the picture that this word calls for the students' mind. This technique will help students learn the new vocabulary better as well as recall them easily. Table (5.5) illustrates how to make this notebook:

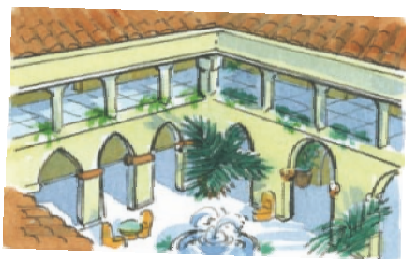
**Table (5.5)**  
**The Semi-Dictionary Notebook (Al-Masri, 2009)**

No.	New Vocab.	Spelling	Definition (Meaning) synonym-antonym	Picture	Usage (Example sentence)
1.	Disabled (adj)	disabled disabled disabled	unable to use a part of his body properly		You should help people who are disabled.
2.					
3.					

### 3. Reading Text Visuals

#### 3.1 Visuals relevance to the reading text

With reference to the relevance of visuals to the reading text, it got the highest percentage in this domain. It got 89.5 % with a frequency of 14.33. This shows that almost all the visuals used in the reading texts are relevant to the reading texts. Indeed no irrelevant visuals are found but this exception is found in Unit (13) in which there are no visuals used at all. The textbook is full of examples of related visuals to the reading text. For example, in Unit 3 (P.20) there are four pictures and they are of different kinds of houses. The pictures of these kinds of homes are shown below. They are related to the topic of the reading text which is talking about home and its different types. The homes pictures are really colourful, attractive and relevant to the reading text.



#### 3.2 Colourful and attractive visuals

Concerning colourful and attractive visuals, this got 83.3 % with 13.3 frequency. This illustrates that about fourteen out of the sixteen reading texts' visuals are colourful and attractive. For example the pictures used in Unit 11 (P. 54). In this unit, there are two

pictures of forests as shown below. In fact, the pictures used in this unit are clear, attractive and colourful. They are also related to the reading text which talks about forests and the carbon cycle in life.



The results show also that in two units, the visuals used are neither attractive nor colourful. These Units are 2 & 6. In Unit 2 the picture used is a very small picture of the city of Istanbul which did not show where the Blue Mosque and Aya Sofya are clearly. In fact, students are asked to look at the picture and guess which building is the Blue Mosque while the picture did not show any marks and it is a very small picture. Colours are not clear in this picture although they are important for determining the places in it. Here is the picture of the old city of Istanbul.



Also in Unit 6, the pictures used are two pictures of the old city of Manchester. They are neither colourful nor attractive. They are very old pictures of the old city of Manchester which are not clear at all as well. Students have to refer to the pictures to answer some questions about them but they could not as these pictures are very old and not clear. Below are the pictures of Manchester.



### 3.3 Clarity of visuals

As regards the criterion "are clear to 9<sup>th</sup> graders", it got 81.25 % with a frequency of 13. This indicates that thirteen out of sixteen visuals used are clear to 9<sup>th</sup> graders and there are three visuals which are unclear. These results correspond to the results of the interview in this study. When asking 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers "Throughout your experience as a teacher, which visuals do you think are not purposeful?", most of them assured the suitability and purposefulness of all the text visuals except for two; those which are used in Units 2 & 6. The reasons why these visuals are unclear are mentioned above in the previous point.

### 3.4 Authenticity of visuals

On the other hand, the item "are authentic (especially pictures)" got 54.16 % with a frequency of 8.66. This shows that half of the visuals used are authentic and the other half are non-authentic. This means that approximately nine of the visuals used in the reading texts are authentic and the others are painted. The authentic pictures are used in Units: 2 , 4 , 5 , 6 , 7 , 8 , 12 , 14 & 15. This is confirmed by referring to the cover page in the SB of *English for Palestine 9* in which all the authentic visuals are mentioned. The following are two examples of authentic pictures in Units 8 and 6 respectively.



As a matter of fact, pictures and other visual materials are important as they assist students with learning and understanding the content. This goes with Griffiths (1995) who points out that pictures and other visual materials can activate students' prior knowledge. Students usually react more favorably to bright, colourful, interesting well-illustrated material. The findings are similar to those of Jahangard's study (2007), Barzaq's study (2007) and Atkin's study (2001) who point out that the graphics used are colourful and interesting and that there is wide variety of authentic, up-to-date visual images.



## **4. Reading Text Layout**

### **4.1 Sufficiency of margins on sides**

Regarding the sufficiency of margins on sides, it got 100 % with a frequency of 16. This means that the margins on sides are found in all the reading texts. This result goes with the result of the interview which indicates that no problems are found in the layout of the reading texts. The researcher believes that having sufficient margins on both sides of the reading texts will motivate students to read. Students are accustomed to find sufficient margins. If this is lacked, it will affect their ability to read and their motivation will be lessened.

### **4.2 Sufficiency of spaces between lines**

In terms of the sufficiency of spaces between text lines, it got 100 % with a frequency of 16. This demonstrates that the spaces between text lines are found in all the reading texts. Throughout her experience as a teacher, the researcher thinks that having sufficient spaces between lines in the reading texts has a significant positive effect on students' ability to read. Students will read easily when there are spaces between lines as they will be able to follow lines and to know where to stop. This will also affect their motivation to read.

### **4.3 Paragraphs divisions**

In respect to "is divided into paragraphs", it got 91.6 % with a frequency of 14.6. It is a very high percentage also. It shows that about fourteen out of sixteen reading texts are divided into paragraphs. Indeed the two reading texts which are not divided into paragraphs are found in Units 10 and 13. Unit 10 is a reading text with a different text structure. It is a quiz; a group of multiple-choice questions where students are put into

personal situations and they have to choose what to do in these situations and Unit 13 is about a group of letters and replies.

The researcher believes that the appearance of the reading text is the first thing that students notice. Whenever the text is divided into paragraphs, it means it is divided into topics. Every paragraph is usually about one topic.

The researcher agrees with Lunzer and Gardner (1979) in that the layout is a very important factor that affects the legibility of the reading text. The layout of the reading text is very beneficial for students' motivation to read. If the text is attractive and well-designed , it will be more motivating than sloppy-hard-to read texts. These results correspond to those of Ranalli (2003), Al-Madany (2005), Mu'men (1992), Atkins (2001) and Masri (2003) and Al-Momani (1998) whose results showed that the textbooks they analyzed are well-designed , paginated correctly, clearly typed and free of misprints.

Also, these results go with the results of the interview in the current study. The 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers were asked "Throughout your experience as a teacher, in which reading texts do you face any problems concerning the font type & size used in the reading texts?". All the fifteen 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers confirm that the font type & size are suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. They declared that they never face any problems in the font type and size. This proves that the layout of the reading texts has no problems at all. The font size in the reading texts is 12-point and this indicates that 12-point is a suitable font size for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. The font type is Times New Romans.

## 5. Reading Exercises

### 5.1 Presenting clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders

With respect to the criterion "present clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders", it got 100 % with a frequency of 16. This means that all the instructions used in the reading exercises are clear and can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders. This result goes with the results of Barzaq (2007) and Jahangard (2007) who stated that instructions supplied are relevant, easy to understand and adequate in all the books they analyzed. Also the tasks are clear and unambiguous with specific rubrics. Here are some examples of instructions used in the reading exercises in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* :

- Read and complete the notes.
- Think about these questions and discuss them.
- Look at the picture and guess which building is the Blue Mosque.
- Find opposites of words in the text.
- Choose the best way to complete the statements-1,2 or 3.
- Read and mark the sentences true or false. Correct the ones that are false

### 5.2 Activating students' background knowledge before reading the text

The item "activate students' background knowledge before reading the text through questioning, picture reading, word clustering" got 100 % with a frequency of 16. This means that all the pre-reading exercises activate students' previous knowledge about the reading texts through questioning, picture reading and word clustering.

This means that all the pre-reading questions are effective. Indeed having more prior knowledge generally aids comprehension and helps students to understand the text better. As Grabe (1997) stated when readers have sufficient knowledge of a given text, they discover their own strategies to understand the meaning of text. Reading many different kinds of books and articles in both their L1 and L2 may give

learners a rich background and the means to guess the meaning of unknown words from context.

The following is an example of an exercise that matches this criterion:

**Example: Unit 4 Lesson 3 & 4 Ex.1**

### Reading and vocabulary

**1** Discuss these questions. ⇨ 🗨️

a Which of these sports have you seen on TV? What about others?

basketball	football	running	sailing	swimming
	table tennis	tennis	volleyball	

b Which do you think are safer than most, and which might be dangerous?

**Activity description:** Students are going to discuss orally which sports they have seen on TV and which are safer than most. Then which might be dangerous. This activity matches criterion (5.2) where students' background knowledge is activated before reading the text through simple questions related to the topic of the reading text entitled " How to be fit and safe"

### 5.3 Making predictions (guessings) about the reading text

As regards requiring students to make predictions (guessings) about the reading text, it got 93.75 % with a frequency of 15. This reveals that almost all the pre-reading activities require students to make predictions (guessings) before reading the text. This skill is an important skill. It is stated by Hassan (1994) and Day (1994) that they will get his mind closer to the theme of the text to be read and increases understanding of the text.

The following is an example of an exercise that matches this criterion:

## Example: Unit 1 Lesson 3 & 4 Ex.1

### Lessons 3 and 4

#### Reading and vocabulary

- 1 Look at the picture and answer these questions.
  - a What is happening?
  - b Is this a modern or an ancient scene? How can you tell?

**Activity description:** Students are going to predict from the picture what is happening. Then whether the scene is modern or ancient. This activity employs criterion (5.3) where students make predictions about the reading text by reading the picture. This is called pre-reading prediction.

#### 5.4 Including a variety of questions

With reference to including a variety of questions, this got a very high score in a percentage of 87.5 % with a frequency of 14. This means that a great deal of variety in questions is found in the reading exercises. But it is evident that the variety in questions is within each unit only. What is noticed is that throughout reading texts, the same type of questions are repeated. The types of questions used in the reading exercises are limited to the following types which are repeated in every unit:

- Read and complete the notes.
- Read and mark the sentences true or false. Correct the ones that are false.
- Write a short summary .
- Collect pairs of nouns and adjectives.
- Choose the best way to complete the statements.
- Read and answer the questions.
- Find phrases with similar meanings in the text.

Although there is variety in the questions, they do not cover all the skills needed to be acquired by 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Throughout the analysis process, it is found that these reading skills are not included:

1. Requiring students to distinguish between fact and opinion
2. Requiring students to work out answers in pairs and groups
3. Requiring students to infer the author's attitude
4. Requiring students to find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts
5. Requiring students to recognize pronoun references.

Moreover, some units do not have a variety in questions. In fact, units 1 and 9 have six exercises in SB whereas units 4, 6 and 12 have only three activities. This means that less reading skills are covered in these units than others.

The researcher agrees with Grellet (1981) that there must be variety in the range of exercises. This result goes with Barzaq's study (2007) who concluded that the exercises in the textbook analyzed are varied and challenging. This keeps students motivated and interested as they work through the textbook.

### **5.6 Focusing on pure reading**

The item "focus on pure reading" got 77.1 % with a frequency of 12.3. This indicates that most of the reading exercises are based on pure reading but still there is a place for integrated exercises where reading is integrated with other skills. Indeed Grellet (1981) suggests that reading comprehension should not be separated from other skills. The integration of the skills seems to occur naturally. This goes with Barzaq's study (2007) who concluded that in the books that were evaluated all skills including listening, reading, speaking, writing ,as well as, thinking are advocatedly integrated through out the units with specific focus on main language skill of the lesson type.

The following are more example of exercises that match different criteria in this domain:

**Example: Unit 3 Lesson 3 & 4 Ex.3**

**3 Write a short summary.** ⇨ WB 16 ①

a Match these main ideas to paragraphs 1–6.

- \_\_\_ How we have changed the way we build our houses in recent times
- \_\_\_ Our continuing need for a house that is a real home
- \_\_\_ How people around the world built to protect themselves from heat and cold
- 1 People’s need for shelter from danger and bad weather since ancient times
- \_\_\_ How important a good home remains to all of us all our lives
- \_\_\_ How they learned to build to protect themselves from dangerous animals

b Use the headings to write a summary in your Workbook.

**Activity Description:** Students are required to match the main ideas to the paragraphs 1-6 in the reading text. Then to write the summary in the workbook. Criteria (5.11) and (5.13) are clear through this activity where students are required to find the main idea through quick reading. This means that they are going to practice skimming. Then they are going to write a summary of the reading text.

**Example: Unit 7 Lesson 3 & 4 Ex.4**

**4 Find words with similar meanings in the text.** ⇨ WB 41 ②

- |                |          |       |                 |              |       |
|----------------|----------|-------|-----------------|--------------|-------|
| a (Lines 4–8)  | kind     | _____ | d (Lines 25–34) | ruler        | _____ |
| b (Lines 4–8)  | person   | _____ | e (Lines 25–34) | just         | _____ |
| c (Lines 9–19) | strength | _____ | f (Lines 25–34) | getting near | _____ |

**Activity description:** Students are going to scan the text quickly to find synonyms to these words . Students are helped by locating the lines in which they will find the synonyms. This activity emphasizes criterion (5.10) in the reading exercises where students develop their awareness of synonyms and anonyms. It also reflects criterion (5.7) where students are required to scan for specific information presented in the text.

### **Example: Unit 8 Lesson 3 & 4 Ex.4e**

#### **4 Read and answer these questions.**

- a What could the Prophet see in Abu Bakr even when both of them were very young?
- b How did Abu Bakr often use his money?
- c What was Mohammad (pbuh) doing when Abu Jahl tried to kill him?
- d Why did Abu Bakr say, 'Is the Prophet safe?' and not, for example, 'Am I dying?'
- e What do the stories in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 show us about Abu Bakr's personal qualities?

**Activity description:** Students are going to make inferences from information given in paragraphs 3,4 and 5. These conclusions help students to go beyond the literal meaning of words in the paragraph. Criterion (5.6) is embodied through this activity where students are required to draw conclusions (inferences) from information given in the text. This activity also matches criterion (5.12) where students draw lessons from the stories about Abu Bakr.

On the other hand, when analyzing the reading exercises in SB, it was found that some skills are not covered although they are very important for students. These skills are the following:

#### **5.14 Requiring students to relate the text to their personal experience**

Concerning the criterion "require students to relate the text to their personal experience", it got 14.58 % with a frequency of 2.33. This shows that exercises that require students to relate the text to their personal experience are found only twice in all the reading exercises in SB. Asking students to relate the text to the students' personal experience is important in order to get students involved personally and thus react positively. This indeed will encourage students to read with motivation as they will reflect on their personal experiences. This skill is exemplified in only two



exercises found in (Unit 3: Lesson 3, Ex.2 and Unit 4: Lesson 3, Ex.1). This is an example from (Unit.3: Lesson.3, Ex.2b P. 13)

**2 Read the title and answer these questions.** ⇨ 🗨️

- a Do you see a difference between the words *house* and *home*?
- b What makes home a special place to you?

**Activity description:** Students are going to discuss orally the difference between the words house and home and how is home a special place for students. This activity matches criterion (5.14) where students relate the text to their personal experience.

**5.17 Requiring students to infer the author's attitude**

Referring to "require students to infer the author's attitude", it got 8.33 % with a frequency of 1.33. This means that exercises that require students to infer the author's attitude are found only once in all the reading exercises in SB. Although inferring the author's attitude and mood is considered one of the main objectives of teaching reading to the 9<sup>th</sup> graders, it is neglected and not given any degree of importance.

The only example of this criterion is found in (Unit 13: Lesson 3, Ex.3b P. 79)

**3 Read the replies and complete the table.**

Tick the boxes for replies which tell 'Upset'	Replies: 1	2	3
a that the writer understands the difficult situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b about the writer's own experience of the same situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c to see things the way his parents see them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d that it is right for 'Upset' to control his feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e a way to improve the situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f that he is doing the wrong thing at the moment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Activity description:** Students are going to infer the author's attitude. This activity matches criterion (5.17) where students infer the author's attitude.

The researcher considers the results of the last two items weak if they are compared with the total percentage of the domain. It is recommended that these skills need more emphasis. The absence of these types of exercises is considered one of the weaknesses in *English for Palestine-Grade 9*. Textbook. Although these skills are considered major ones in the objectives of reading in *English for Palestine -9*, they are absent and not included. These results correspond to those of Rivas (1999) who concluded that the types of reading activities are deficient and he suggested that teachers need to supplement deficient reading activities to help learners become efficient readers.

## **6. Workbook Exercises**

### **6.1 Presenting clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders**

With regard to the criterion "present clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders", it got the highest score in a percentage of 91.6 % with a frequency of 14.6. This reveals that almost all the instructions of the reading exercises are clear and can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders. The researcher notices that the criterion of clear instructions got a very high percentage in both the SB and WB. This indicates that there is no ambiguity in the instructions and thus students can understand easily what to do. It is important to have clear instructions as understanding the rubrics of the activities helps students with meaningful activities. The researcher thinks this is one of the advantages of the reading exercises. Here are some examples of instructions used in the reading exercises in WB:

- Complete the sentences with pairs of opposites from 2.
- Match words to form pairs of nouns and adjectives.
- Use your notes on Students' Book page 33 to complete the summary paragraph.
- Make summary statements.
- Find and write the full forms of the abbreviations.

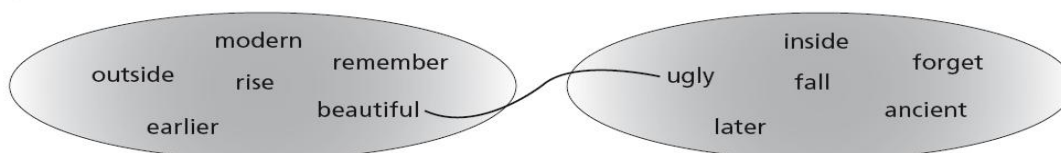
## 6.2 Using exercises that are based on (relevant) to the ones in the student book

Concerning using exercises that are based on (relevant) to the ones in the SB, this got 87.5 % with a frequency of 14. This demonstrates that in fourteen out of the sixteen units, the reading exercises are relevant to the ones in the SB.

Here are some example exercises from WB that embody this criteria:

### Example: Unit 2 Lesson 3&4 Ex.2+3

#### 2 Match words to form pairs of opposites.



#### 3 Complete the sentences with pairs of opposites from 2.

- a Istanbul is nearly 3,000 years old, and so it is a very \_\_\_\_\_ city, but at the same time, it is also an exciting \_\_\_\_\_ place.
- b There were two city tour buses. I caught the \_\_\_\_\_ one at 9.30, and Deema took the \_\_\_\_\_ one at 11.15.
- c Next, we went to the Blue Mosque. It looked wonderful from the \_\_\_\_\_ as we approached it. When we went \_\_\_\_\_, it looked even more beautiful with its thousands of blue tiles.
- d Temperatures in the early spring often \_\_\_\_\_ to about 25°, but then they also \_\_\_\_\_ quite low to less than 10° at night.
- e **A** I must \_\_\_\_\_ to take my guidebook.  
**B** And don't \_\_\_\_\_ to take your Turkish phrase book. You'll need that, too.

**Activity description:** Students are going to match words with their opposites and then to complete the sentences using these pairs of opposites.

These activities match criterion (6.6) where students develop a awareness of synonyms and antonyms. These activities also match criteria (6.2) and (6.3) as this activity is based on the reading text in the SB and so it reinforces what students learn in the SB.



## Example: Unit 3 Lesson 3&4 Ex.1

### Summary

- 1 Write out the headings from your Student's Book page 21, Activity 3 as a short summary paragraph of the text. Use these sentence beginnings.

Sentence 3: *People around the world also ...*

Sentence 4: *We have changed ...*

Sentence 5: *However, we continue to need ...*

Start like this.

People have needed shelter from danger and bad weather since ancient times. They learned

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**Activity description:** Students are going to write a summary paragraph of the reading text using these sentence beginnings. This activity reflects criterion (6.8) where students are required to make a summary of the reading text. This activity also emphasizes criteria (6.2) and (6.3) as this activity is based on the reading text in the SB and so it reinforces what students learn in the SB.

### 6.4 Including a variety of questions

As regards including a variety of questions, it got 75 % with a frequency of 12. This means that twelve out of the sixteen units have a variety in questions in the WB. This indicates that there is variety in the questions used in the reading exercises. The researcher thinks that this variety is within the unit itself and that there is no variety within all the reading exercises in the WB. Nearly the same exercises are repeated in every unit. The type of the questions used in the WB are the following :

- Complete summary with notes from your students' book.
- Match words to form pairs of opposites.
- Complete the sentences with pairs of opposites .
- Match words to form pairs of nouns and adjectives.

### 6.11 Requiring students to recognize pronoun references

With respect to "require students to recognize pronoun references", it got 4.1 % with a frequency of 0.66. This shows that only one of the exercises requires students to recognize pronoun references. This example is found in unit 13.

#### Example : Unit 13 Lesson 3&4 Ex.1

#### Vocabulary

- 1 Understand what pronouns and other words refer to. Choose and write the correct reference – (a) or (b).
- a Upset's letter / Line 5: Although I love my family very much, I feel bad about **this**.  
(= \_\_\_\_\_).  
(a) (= my family) (b) (= the situation)
- b Fuad's letter / Line 9: ... and now they pay me just as much attention as they give **the little ones**. (= \_\_\_\_\_)  
(a) (= their other small problems.) (b) (= the young children.)
- c Rosa's letter / Line 3: ... I don't agree that your parents are the whole of it.  
(= \_\_\_\_\_).  
(a) (= the problem) (b) (= the family)
- d Rosa's letter /Line 10: If you do that, I'm sure **they'll** (= \_\_\_\_\_) be really happy ...  
(a) (= the children) (b) (= your parents)

**Activity description:** Students are going to refer to the reading text in the SB to understand what the pronouns and other words refer to. This is the only activity in both the SB and WB that matches the criterion (6.11) where students are required to recognize pronoun references. As well it matches criteria (6.2) and (6.3) in that it is based on the what students learn in the reading text in the SB so it reinforces what students learn in the SB.

### 6.13 Requiring students to infer the author's attitude

Referring to requiring students to infer the author's attitude, it got 0 % with a frequency of 0. This illustrates that none of the reading exercises require students to infer the author's attitude. This implies that these criteria are nearly absent in the WB exercises. The researcher thinks that these are important reading skills although they got this low score. The researcher thinks they should be focused on and not neglected

as they are essential skills in reading. As is suggested in the previous domain, these skills need to be emphasized through preparing an enrichment material that covers all these necessary skills.

### **3- Discussion of the areas of weaknesses in the reading texts & exercises in SB & WB**

The third question is trying to find out the areas of weaknesses in the reading texts & exercises in SB & WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*, in terms of the suggested criteria for the reading texts and exercises. Through the analysis process, the researcher found out the following weaknesses in the reading texts and exercises of *English for Palestine-Grade 9*.

#### **1. No authentic reading texts**

All the reading texts are not authentic. This is confirmed through contacting Gavin McLean, a publisher in Macmillan Education and Michael Macfarlane, the author of the books who declare that the reading texts in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* are not authentic. It is declared by Lee (1995:324) and Ur (1996 :150) that authentic texts are often regarded as more interesting than textbook materials because they can be more up-to-date, and related to everyday issues and activities.

The researcher believes that most textbooks make use of non-authentic texts as they are supposed to be easier than authentic ones and to be better suited to the students' language proficiency level. Although the researcher agrees with Lee (1995), Nunan (1988), Nuttal (1996) Cunningsworth (1984), Ur (1996) and Berardo (2006) who suggest that authentic texts can be motivating and more interesting than textbook materials as said before on P.(35-36), she also believes that beginners might be

frustrated if they have to tackle an authentic text because it might turn out to be far more difficult than the ones they can understand properly,

So the researcher agrees with the idea of Al-Masri (1993) who emphasized the need to expose the learners to authentic language input that deals with a variety of topics, which are relevant to the learners' interests, reality and ability. He adds that this can be done through exposing students to authentic learning materials written for native children. Such materials would be simple and related to students' interest and level

## **2. Not including extensive reading**

It is found that extensive reading is not included in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* as the main objective of teaching reading is intensive reading and vocabulary expansion as stated in ETB (2008:21). Extensive reading is introduced in grade 11. This result goes on with the results of Barzaq (2007) who found that extensive reading is lacked in *English for Palestine grade six and seven*. She recommends supportive materials and resources such as supplementary reading levels and library books.

The researcher agrees with Nuttal (1996), Day & Bamford (1980) and Hafiz and Tudor (1985) who declare that extensive reading not only can improve reading ability, it can also enhance learners' overall language proficiency (e.g. spelling, grammar, vocabulary and writing).

## **3. Unrelated reading texts to the Palestinian culture and reality**

Through the analysis process, it is found that only four reading texts are related to the Palestinian culture and reality so, more culturally-related topics should be added. This is also confirmed by the results of the interview. Most of 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers declare that Units 1,7,8, and 12 are the only four units that are related to the students' culture and reality and thus they are motivating to read and suitable for the students'



comprehension level. As this textbook is entitled *English for Palestine*, the researcher as well as the 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers agree that more related topics to the Palestinian culture and reality should be added. The topics that are not related to the Palestinian culture and reality can be replaced by more related ones for example: instead of talking about Istanbul or China, these texts can be replaced by ones about Jerusalem, Ramallah and other Palestinian cities.

The researcher believes that cultural background is an important factor in comprehension as declared by Pang (2004) and Williams (1999) on P.(39-40). The texts that are not related to the students' culture and reality are not motivating and thus more difficult to comprehend than the culturally related ones.

This result contradicts with the results of Mahmoud (2007) who finds out that textbooks overlooked the local environment and the country and thus they do not help students in aiding their nation and improving their country but this result goes with the result of Barzaq (2007) who indicates that the reading texts are mainly sensitive to the cultural background of learners .

#### **4. The absence of some reading skills in the reading exercises in SB and WB**

There is no employment of exercises that require students to infer the author's attitude, distinguish between fact and opinion, recognize pronoun references, find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts, relate the text to their personal experience and to work out answers in pairs and groups. These reading skills are not included in the reading exercises in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* in both SB and WB.

The researcher thinks that these are important reading skills however they are not included. The researcher thinks they should be focused on and not neglected as they

are essential skills in reading. It is suggested that these skills need to be emphasized through preparing an enrichment material that covers all these necessary skills.

## Discussion of the results of interviews

### 1. Interesting reading texts

The teachers were asked: "Throughout your experience as a teacher, which reading texts do you think are interesting for students? Mention 2-3 texts". It is clear from the table below that fourteen teachers point out that the reading text in Unit 7 is very interesting. The reading text in Unit 8 is also considered very interesting as ten teachers declare. Eight teachers declare that the reading text in Unit 12 is very interesting. Seven teachers declare that the reading texts in Units 1 and 10 are very interesting. These texts were identified by most teachers as very interesting for students for different reasons as shown in Table (5.6):

**Table (5.6)**

**The most interesting Reading Texts in *English for Palestine Grade-9***

Unit	Title of the Reading Text	No. of Teachers	Reasons given by teachers
1	Gaza, ancient and future city of trade	7	-About Gaza in the past and its future as a city of trade. -A topic related to the students' culture, society, tradition and history
7	Salah Al-Din: a leader ahead of his time.	14	-About a great leader who is Salah Al-Din. -A topic related to the students' history and religion. -Students have a previous background knowledge about it .
8	A great man and a great Muslim	10	-About Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq. -A familiar topic that students have background knowledge about. -The text is full of values and good manners

10	Quiz: Could you look after your home and family	7	-About how students react if some problems happened. -It deals with everyday activities and problems. -Related to Students' daily life routine.
12	The United Nations art work	8	- About the aims of the UN and its services in Palestine. -A related topic to the students' situation in Palestine.

It is noticed from the above table that these reading texts are considered very interesting for students because of one common reason, i.e. these reading texts are related to students' culture, society and history. This indicates the importance of having reading texts which have cultural elements related to the target group of students.

This result confirms what Williams (1999) points out that successful reading is affected by the way the subject matter relates to the pupils' existing cultural and general knowledge or to subject-specific knowledge. It also goes with Al-Masri (1993:58) who declares that a lack of immediate connection between the learning materials and the learners' contemporary reality, interests and purposes is likely to weaken their drive for learning English and slow their achievement. This result goes with the result of Barzaq (2007) who indicates that the reading texts are mainly sensitive to the cultural background of learners.

Among the reasons, given by teachers, for considering reading texts very interesting is having a previous background knowledge about them. This is a very important factor that affects comprehension. The importance of prior knowledge in the comprehension process is summarized by Grabe (1997:115) and Yin (1985:375) on P.(47). The researcher agrees with Savage and Mooney (1979:31) who declare that

comprehension is difficult sometimes impossible, if one lacks essential information that the writer assumes the reader has.

To sum up, it is obvious that the results of the interviews with teachers of 9<sup>th</sup> grade concerning interesting and not interesting reading texts go with the results of the content analysis card in the current study. The analysis process shows that Units 1,7,8 and 12 are the reading texts which are related to the students' culture and reality.

## 2. Not interesting reading texts

The teachers were asked: "Throughout your experience as a teacher, which reading texts do you think are not interesting for students? Mention 2-3 texts." It is clear from the results that eleven teachers say that the reading text in Unit 5 is not interesting for students. The reading texts in Units 2, 6 & 15 are considered not interesting too as seven teachers declare. These reading texts were considered as not interesting for students by most teachers for different reasons. Table (5.7) shows these reading texts and the reasons given by the teachers.

**Table (5.7)**

### **Not interesting Reading Texts in *English for Palestine Grade-9***

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Title of the Reading Text</b>	<b>No. of Teachers</b>	<b>Reasons given by teachers</b>
2	Introducing Istanbul	7	-About Istanbul and its history -Not related to the students' culture, society or history. -Full of unfamiliar names of places in Istanbul.
5	Finding the way	11	-About GPS which is modern technology. - Pure scientific text. -Some figures used in the text are very complicated. -Unfamiliar topic that students do not

			have previous background about.
6	Building a modern city	7	-It talks about Manchester, a city in the north of England . -Not related to the students' society or culture.
15	Science Magazine Talks to	7	-It talks about the new developments in medicine. -A pure scientific text. -Not related to the students' culture or society.

Studying Table (5.7), it can be concluded that these four units are considered not interesting for students as they are about topics not related to the students' culture and history. This again indicates the degree of importance of having, on the part of students, a culture similar to that presented in the reading texts in order to comprehend it.

### **3. Suitable texts to students' comprehension level**

The teachers were asked: "Throughout your experience as a teacher, which reading texts do you think are suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders comprehension levels? Mention 2-3 texts." Throughout interviewing 9<sup>th</sup> graders, the reading texts in Units 1, 7, 8, 10 are considered suitable for students' comprehension level. Table (5.8) shows these reading texts together with the reasons given by the teachers:

**Table (5.8)****Suitable Reading Texts to students' comprehension level**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Title of the Reading Text</b>	<b>No. of Teachers</b>	<b>Reasons given by teachers</b>
1	Gaza, ancient and future city of trade	7	-An interesting topic for students. -A topic related to the students' culture, society, tradition and history. -It contains easy and guessable vocabulary.
7	Salah Al-Din: a leader ahead of his time.	11	-A topic related to the students' history and religion. -Students have a previous background knowledge about it . -A few and easy new vocabulary are introduced in these texts.
8	A great man and a great Muslim	9	-A familiar topic that are related to the students' culture, religion and history. -A few, easy and guessable new vocabulary are introduced in these texts.
10	Quiz: Could you look after your home and family	7	-A few and easy new vocabulary are introduced. -A topic that is very easy and related to the students' daily activities. -It contains easy and guessable vocabulary.

It is clear that these reading texts that are considered suitable to students' comprehension level are the same texts that are considered as very interesting for students as mentioned before on P.159. This proves that whenever the topic of the reading texts is of interest to the students, it will be easy to read and suitable to students' comprehension level and vice versa. So the most important reason for considering these texts suitable to students' comprehension level is that they are interesting and thus motivate students to read them. As Williams (1986:42) claims:

"in the absence of interesting texts, very little is possible." This also goes with what Cunningsworth (1984:59) states as mentioned previously on P.(31). In this regard, the researcher agrees with Al-Masri (1993:37) in that providing the learners with content, carrying interesting facts and information about various aspects of life is more likely to attract the learners' interest, especially if content has unfamiliar information.

Moreover, these texts are considered suitable to the students' comprehension level as they have a few and easy new vocabulary. This is a very important factor to consider in the reading texts. This goes with Carter and McCarthy (1988:104) who declare that there is evidence that too high a density of unknown words in a text has a negative effect on comprehension and vocabulary learning. This result goes with the result of Al-Momani (1998) who stated that the vocabulary items were selected to suit the students' level and to facilitate communication.

#### **4. Not suitable texts to students' comprehension level**

The teachers were asked: "Throughout your experience as a teacher, which reading texts do you think are not suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders comprehension levels? Mention 2-3 texts." During the interview, ten teachers of 9<sup>th</sup> grade confirm that the reading text in Unit 5 is not suitable for students' comprehension. Moreover, seven teachers say that the reading text in Unit 6 is not suitable for students' comprehension level. The reading text in Unit 15 is defined as not suitable for students' comprehension level by six teachers. Table (5.9) shows these reading texts together with the reasons given by the teachers:

**Table (5.9)**

**Not suitable Reading Texts to students' comprehension level**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>No. of Teachers</b>	<b>Title of the Reading Text</b>	<b>Reasons given by teachers</b>
5	10	Finding the way	-Not interesting text. About GPS which is modern technology. - Pure scientific text. -Unfamiliar topic that students do not have previous background about.
6	7	Building a modern city	-Its topic which is not related to the students' culture or reality. -It talks about Manchester, a city in the north of England .
15	6	Science Magazine Talks to...	-A pure scientific text. -Some the vocabulary used are difficult. -Not related to the students' culture or society.

It is obvious that Units 5,6 and 15 are considered not suitable to students' comprehension level as well as not interesting for students as mentioned previously on P.(161). This is because of the reasons given by 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers as shown in Table (5.9). The most important reason is that because they are not interesting for students. Also these texts deal with unfamiliar topics that students do not have previous knowledge about.

As mentioned in the previous point, being an interesting reading text means being suitable to students' comprehension level and vice versa. Also the reading texts in Units 5,6 and 15 are not suitable to students' level as they are about topics not related to their culture or topics that they have no previous background knowledge



about. These are important factors that affect reading comprehension. The importance of these factors are discussed before on P.(39-40).

### **5. Not purposeful visuals**

The teachers were asked "Throughout your experience as a teacher, which visuals do you think are not purposeful ?". It is obvious that most of the visuals used are purposeful. They are colourful, attractive and relevant to the reading texts with the exception of two pictures. In Unit 2, nine teachers with the percentage of 60 % declare that the visuals used are not purposeful as it did not show where the Blue Mosque and Aya Sofya clearly are. In fact, students are asked to look at the picture and guess which building is the Blue Mosque while the picture did not show any marks and it is a very small picture. Colours are not clear in this picture although they are important for determining the places in it. Also in Unit 6, eight teachers with the percentage of 53.3 % declare that the visuals used are not purposeful. In fact, they are neither colourful nor attractive. It is a very old picture of the old city of Manchester which is not clear at all.

These results go with the results of the analysis in the current study. The analysis process indicates that fourteen out of the sixteen reading texts' visuals are colourful and attractive. They are also related to the topics of the reading texts. Also the analysis results show that only in two units the visuals used are neither colourful nor attractive. The researcher agrees with Griffiths (1995) who points out that pictures and other visual materials can activate students' prior knowledge. Students usually react more favorably to bright, colourful, interesting and well-illustrated material.

These results meet with the results of Jahangard's study (2007), Barzaq's study (2007) and Atkin's study (2001) who point out that the graphics used are colourful and interesting. As well there is wide variety of authentic, up-to-date visual images.

## **6. Font type and size**

When the 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers were asked "Throughout your experience as a teacher, in which reading texts do you face any problems concerning the font type & size used in the reading texts?". All the fifteen 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers point out that the font type and size used in the reading texts in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* are suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. They declared that they never face any problems in the font type and size. This proves that the layout of the reading texts has no problems at all. The font size in the reading texts is 12-point and the font type is Times New Romans in all the reading texts.

This result goes with the results of the content analysis which indicate that the reading texts have sufficient margins on sides and spaces between lines. Also they are divided into paragraphs and use indentation. The layout of the reading texts is well-done and no problems in the font type/size are found.

The researcher agrees with Berardo (2006:62-63) who states that the appearance of any text is the first thing that the student notices. An attractive looking text is more likely to grab the reader's attention rather than a page full of type. Throughout her experience as a teacher, the researcher thinks that having sufficient spaces between lines and having sufficient margins on both sides of the reading texts have a significant effect on students' ability to read. Students will read easily when there are spaces between lines as they will be able to follow lines and to know where to stop. Also whenever the texts are divided into paragraphs, it means they are divided into sub-topics. Every paragraph is usually about one topic. This is confirmed by Lunzer and Gardner (1979) who declare that the layout of the reading text is very beneficial for students' motivation to read. If the text is attractive and well-designed, it will be more motivating than sloppy-hard-to read texts.

These results correspond to those of Ranalli (2003), Al-Madany (2005), Mu'men (1992), Atkins (2001) , Masri (2003) and Al-Momani (1998) whose results showed that the textbooks they analyzed are well-designed, paginated correctly, clearly typed and free of misprints.

### **7. Time for teaching the reading texts and exercises**

The 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers were asked "Which reading texts do you think need more time than is allocated?" It is clear that all the teachers agree that the reading lesson need more than the allocated time (two teaching periods) in order to cover all the needed skills and all the exercises in the SB and WB. In fact, the allocated time for teaching the reading texts and all the related exercises in SB and WB is two teaching periods which 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers indicate as not enough to complete teaching them. They need more time even more than three teaching periods for some reading texts.

This result is similar to the results of Al-Momani (1998) and Mahmoud (2007) who stated that the number of allocated periods per week is not suitable to cover the material.

## Conclusions

On the basis of the study results, these final conclusions were reached. They are divided into two main categories: conclusions of the content analysis card which are divided into the six main domains mentioned below and the conclusions of interviews.

- **Conclusions Related to the Content Analysis Card**

This category is divided into the six main domains of the content analysis card as follows:

### **1. The Reading Texts:**

- 1.1 The textbook employs a wide variety of topics .
- 1.2 The textbook employs many values and good manners through the reading texts.
- 1.3 No authentic reading texts are found in this textbook.
- 1.4 Extensive reading is not included in *English for Palestine-Grade 9* as the main objective of teaching reading is intensive reading and vocabulary expansion.
- 1.5 Only four reading texts are related to the Palestinian culture and reality so, more culturally-related topics should be added.

### **2. Reading Text Vocabulary:**

- 2.1 In all the reading texts, colours are used to highlight new vocabulary which is helpful for both teachers and learners.
- 2.2 The number of new (unknown) vocabulary is between 2%-5% which is suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders.
- 2.3 All the new(unknown) vocabulary are easy to learn by 9<sup>th</sup> graders .
- 2.4 Approximately all the new (unknown) vocabulary are abstract ones but they are all easy to learn and are guessable by 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **3. Reading Text Visuals:**

3.1 Almost all the visuals accompanying the reading texts are relevant to them with the exception of two found in units 2 & 6.

3.2 Approximately, all of the used visuals are colourful, attractive and clear.

3.3 Only half of the visuals (especially pictures) used are authentic and the other half are painted (drawn) ones.

### **4. Reading Text Layout:**

4.1 All the reading texts have sufficient margins on sides and spaces between lines.

4.2 Approximately all the reading texts are divided into paragraphs and use indentation.

### **5. Reading Exercises in SB:**

5.1 All the instructions in the reading texts are clear and can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

5.2 In all the reading texts, students' background knowledge is activated before reading the text through questioning, picture reading and word clustering.

5.3 A great variety in questions is found within the questions of each reading text but throughout the textbook, the same types of questions are repeated.

5.4 There is no employment of exercises that require students to infer the author's attitude, distinguish between fact and opinion, recognize pronoun references, find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts, relate the text to their personal experience and to work out answers in pairs and groups.

## **6. Workbook Exercises:**

- 6.1 Almost all the reading exercises in the workbook present clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders.
- 6.2 Almost all the exercises in the WB are based on ( relevant) to the ones in the student book and they reinforce them.
- 6.3 A great variety in questions is found in the reading exercises in WB but throughout the textbook, the same types of questions are repeated.
- 6.4 Some skills are not included completely in the workbook exercises such as exercises that require students to recognize pronoun references, distinguish between cause and effect, distinguish between fact and opinion, infer the author's attitude and find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts.

### **• Conclusions Related to the Interviews**

1. Only five reading texts out of the sixteen are very interesting for students as they are about topics related to the students' culture , society, tradition and history. Also they are about familiar topics that students have previous background knowledge about.
2. Only three texts lack students' interest (from teachers' perspectives) as they are about unfamiliar topics that students do not have previous background about and they are not related to the students' culture, society or history.
3. Almost all the reading texts that were mentioned as very interesting are those that are suitable for students' comprehension level and vice versa.
4. Almost all the visuals used in the reading texts are purposeful (relevant-clear- attractive) with the exception of two as the teachers declare.
5. The font type and size in the reading texts are suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

## Recommendations

The researcher gives her recommendations in the light of the results of analyzing the reading texts and exercises in of *English for Palestine*-grade 9 textbook.

1. Curriculum Development Centres in UNRWA and the Ministry of Education are recommended to hold workshops in order to evaluate the newly implemented English textbooks. These workshops should focus on the reading texts and exercises in the textbooks of *English for Palestine*. It is advisable to evaluate them in terms of the suggested criteria developed by the researcher in the current study. Such kind of evaluation can lead to development and effective modification and thus lead to effective learning. The workshops about textbook evaluation hold by Al-Masri (2008) with UNRWA can be taken as a practical model for similar future workshops. This workshop is attached in Appendix (3)
2. Curriculum Development Centres in UNRWA and the Ministry of Education are recommended to increase English language teaching periods to help learners and teachers as well. In fact, the curricula are too long and have too many activities. So, teachers were obliged for the lack of time to concentrate on quality in order to be able to cover the syllabi in the due time. As a result, students do not grasp knowledge properly in their classes and when they go home most parents can not help their kids because they are not educated enough. So the researcher recommended increasing the number of teaching periods at least to six teaching periods a week instead of five.

3. Supervisors and teachers of English are recommended to prepare an enrichment material for the reading exercises which cover all the reading skills that are not included such as: exercises that require students to infer the author's attitude, distinguish between fact and opinion, recognize pronoun references, find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts, relate the text to their personal experience and to work out answers in pairs and groups. Al-Masri (2008), in his workshop, with the help of 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and English supervisors in UNRWA schools, evaluated the textbooks of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* and they prepared an enrichment material to overcome some of the weakness points found in these textbooks. It is advisable to prepare a similar enrichment material but it should be only for the reading exercises. It should be comprehensive enough so as to cover all the lacked skills mentioned above. In fact, Al-Masri (2009) evaluated, with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, *English for Palestine-Grade 9* textbooks; the SB, WB and TB in order to identify the weakness points in these textbooks while the current researcher evaluated in depth only one skill and in terms of suggested criteria built by the researcher.
4. Teachers are recommended to employ the semi-dictionary notebook in which students write down every new vocabulary accompanied with its spelling, definition, antonyms, synonyms, example sentence (usage) and the picture that this word calls for the students' mind which will help learners learn the new vocabulary better as well as recall them easily. In fact the teacher employed this notebook with 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. The researcher found it very useful and motivating for students to recall new vocabulary and help students in learning them very easily.



5. Teachers are recommended to introduce extensive reading into the classroom through encouraging students to read about other topics related to the ones dealt with in the curriculum. For example, in unit 14 students read a reading text about the American and the Chinese cultures, their way of life, what they do in their festivals and how people behave. The teacher can, in this lesson, encourage students to read about other topics, such as the Palestinian culture, the way of life in Palestine, the traditional events in Palestine and what people do during these events. Students should be encouraged to search for such topics in the internet or the teacher can provide students with useful websites for reading valuable topics.

**Recommendations for Further Studies:**

1. Conducting other studies similar to this study in evaluating the reading texts and exercises in other textbooks of *English for Palestine Series* to see to what extent the reading texts and exercises meet the developed criteria in the current study.
2. Carrying out other studies of evaluating other skills like writing, speaking or listening in *English for Palestine-Grade 9*.
3. Conducting studies on measuring to what extent the goals of teaching reading stated by the Ministry of Education have been accomplished by teachers.

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## Appendix (1)

### Consultation Form of an Analysis Card

Dear colleagues,

The researcher **Nai'ma M. S. Ali** is carrying out an *M.ED dissertation* entitled

**An Evaluation of the Reading Texts & Exercises in the SB & WB of *English for Palestine - Grade 9***

The purpose of the study is to find out if the Reading Texts & Exercises in SB & WB of *English for Palestine-Grade 9* meet the following criteria for reading instructional materials.

You are kindly invited to examine and referee the attached criteria list to survey and collect data on the issues mentioned above in the light of this list .

I would be so grateful if you could offer comments on:

- 1- the suitability of the units, elements and limitations of the analysis.
- 2- the comprehensiveness of the dimensions of all the needed criteria.
- 3- the relevance of the items to the general dimensions.
- 4- the clarity of the criteria for analysis.
- 5- the correctness of the criteria linguistically.

Any modifications, additions, or omissions will be taken into consideration when processing this analysis card.

*Many thanks for your kind cooperation*

The researcher

Nai'ma Mosa Ali

## **The Content Analysis Card**

### **Purpose of the Analysis:**

The analysis aims at identifying the extent to which the reading texts and exercises in SB & WB of *English for Palestine - Grade 9* match the standard criteria of English instructional reading materials.

### **Sample of the Analysis:**

All the reading texts and exercises in SB & WB *English for Palestine - Grade 9*.

### **Elements of Analysis:**

The researcher built the criteria for evaluation after reviewing 6 textbook evaluation checklists. And these criteria are the elements of analysis.

### **Units of Analysis:**

The researcher considers the reading text as a unit for analyzing reading texts and the exercise as a unit for analyzing reading exercises.

### **Limitations of the Analysis:**

- The analysis is for all the reading texts and exercises in SB & WB of *English for Palestine - Grade 9*.
- The analysis includes text pictures, vocabulary and layout and the exercises in SB & WB .
- The analysis doesn't include the teacher's book.
- The analysis doesn't include other language skills.

## **1. The Reading Texts**

1. are easy to read and understand (skill)
2. help students to read extensively. (skill)
3. help students read intensively. (skill)
4. use authentic texts. (skill)
5. present topics related to the Palestinian culture (knowledge)
6. discuss topics related to the Palestinian reality (knowledge)
7. enrich students' general knowledge about different topics (knowledge)
8. have a reasonable length: contain a suitable number of words ( between 200-300 words)
9. present values and good manners. (values)
- 10.
- 11.

## **2. Text Vocabulary:**

1. contain suitable number of new (unknown) vocabulary (not more than 3% -5% from the whole number of the text words)
2. employ new (unknown) vocabulary that are concrete and abstract.
3. use colours to highlight new (unknown) vocabulary.
4. are easy to learn (know their meaning and to pronounce) by 9<sup>th</sup> graders
- 5.
- 6.

## **3. Text visuals** (pictures, diagrams, charts, tables and figures)

1. are relevant to the reading text.
2. are clear to 9<sup>th</sup> graders.
3. are colourful and attractive.
4. introduced effectively
5. Are authentic (especially pictures).
- 6.

#### **4. Text Layout:**

1. use suitable font size/type for 9<sup>th</sup> graders (between **12-14 font size**)
2. Sufficient margins on sides
3. Sufficient spaces between text lines
4. use indentation
5. is divided into paragraphs.
- 6.
- 7.

#### **5. Reading Exercises:**

1. include a variety of questions (wh-questions, multiple-choice, factual questions, thinking & guessing questions, hypothetical questions, etc.).
2. present clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders..
3. focus on pure reading. ( based on reading)
4. activate students' background knowledge before reading the text through questioning , picture reading , word clustering .
5. require students to relate the text to their personal experience.
6. require students to find the main idea. ( skimming)
7. require students to scan for specific information presented in the text .( scanning)
8. require students to find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts.
9. require students to develop awareness about synonyms and antonyms.
10. require students to develop awareness of semantic fields (word mapping)
11. require students to recognize pronoun references.
12. require student s to distinguish between cause and effect.
13. require students to distinguish between fact and opinion.
14. require students to infer the author's attitude .
15. require students to make predictions( guessings , inferences) about the reading text.
16. require students to draw conclusions from information given in the text.
17. require students to make a summary of the reading text.
- 18.
- 19.

## **6. Workbook Exercises:**

1. include a variety of questions (wh-questions, multiple-choice, factual questions, thinking & guessing questions, hypothetical questions, etc.).
2. present clear instructions that can be understood by 9<sup>th</sup> graders..
3. focus on pure reading. ( based on reading)
4. use exercises that are based on ( relevant) to the ones in the student book.
5. use exercises that reinforce the ones in the student book.
6. require students to find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts.
7. require students to develop awareness of synonyms and antonyms.
8. require students to develop awareness of semantic fields ( word mapping)
9. require students to recognize pronoun references.
10. require student s to distinguish between cause and effect.
11. require students to distinguish between fact and opinion.
12. require students to make a summary of the reading text.
13. require students to infer the author's attitude .
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.

## Appendix (2)

### MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

#### Recommended Criteria for Evaluating Instructional Materials and Programs in Reading

Rating	Strongly Agree	Agree	Cannot Judge	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>I. reading Content</b>					
Reflect the learning standards in the English Language Arts					
Include quality literary/non-literary selections					
Include science and history selections					
Highlight works of authors suggested in Appendix A of the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework					
Highlight works of authors suggested in Appendix B of the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework					
Contain selections with an appropriately challenging vocabulary of English words					
Contain selections with all non-English words italicized and footnoted					
Include predictable texts, leveled texts, and both fictional and non-fictional trade books					
Include reading materials in which approximately 75% of the words are decodable, for practicing phonic elements already taught					
Include biographical information on authors represented in the selections					
<b>II. Pedagogical Features</b>					
<b>A. Phonological Awareness</b>					
Provide ways to identify and work with individual phonemes in spoken words: isolating, identifying, blending, segmenting, deleting, adding, substituting					
Provide ways to identify and produce oral rhymes					
Provide ways to identify and work with onsets and rhymes in spoken syllables					
Provide ways to identify and work with syllables in spoken words					

<b>B. Systematic Phonics</b>					
Provide a clearly identified, logically coordinated and sequenced set of letter-sound relationships					
Provide explicit and systematic teaching of these letter-sound relationships					
Provide for application of knowledge of letter-sound relationships in decodable texts					
<b>C. Fluency</b>					
Explain how to model fluent oral reading followed by student rereading					
Explain how to assess student oral reading rate					
Explain how to promote student oral reading with expression					
Explain how to enhance student comprehension while reading aloud					
Explain how to direct and monitor repeated oral reading					
Include guidance in providing students with opportunities for supplemental, independent silent reading					
<b>D. Vocabulary</b>					
Provide for direct instruction of important words in a text before reading it					
Provide for direct instruction of frequently used words in a text before reading it					
Provide for direct instruction of difficult words such as compound words, homographs, homophones before reading text					
Provide direct instruction in using word parts (prefixes, suffixes, base words, and Greek and Latin roots)					
Provide direct instruction in using dictionaries and other references					
Provide direct instruction in ways to use context to understand word meaning: definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions					
<b>E. Text Comprehension</b>					
Provide guidelines for teaching comprehension strategies: direct explanation; modeling; guided practice; application; using prior knowledge; using					



mental imagery					
Provide explicit instruction on skills or to promote their use					
Cumulatively build a repertoire of skills and strategies					
Explain how to promote and monitor student use of active comprehension strategies before, during, and/or after independent silent reading: using graphic and semantic					
<b>III. Learning Activities</b>					
Fit into a research-based, conceptual framework for the concepts and skills taught					
Fit into coherent units that build conceptual understanding					
Use a variety of pedagogical strategies: e.g., open-ended questioning, direct instruction, practice, discussion and flexible grouping patterns					
Are developmentally appropriate					
Encourage student discussion and reflection					
Enrich and reinforce skills and strategies for extended learning					
Provide explicit strategies for students reading significantly below grade level					
Provide enrichment and acceleration for advanced readers					
Involve students in active learning and problem solving					
Offer multiple ways for students to explore, analyze, and communicate concepts and ideas					
<b>IV. Teacher Support Materials</b>					
Provide complete, useful teacher manuals					
Provide supplemental materials for the full range of students, from those with reading difficulties to those reading above grade level					
Provide a master list of materials and resources					
Provide adequate skill practice					
Reference resources (software, laser disks, Internet sites, videos)					
Suggest how to adapt materials and instruction for students with differing levels of achievement					
Suggest a variety of assessment approaches: portfolios, projects and informal and formal assignments and tests					

Draw on a variety of resources (e.g., trade manuals, literature, Internet, visuals)					
<b>V. Student Assessment Materials</b>					
Are free of inappropriate or derogatory material					
Occur throughout, not merely at the end of a unit					
Focus on the acquisition of skills and concepts as well as on the learning process					
Provide for assessment of major reading skills and strategies					
Incorporate multiple forms of assessment: oral presentations, written reports, compositions, teacher observations, performance assessments, quizzes and pre- and post tests					
<b>VI. Program Development and Implementation</b>					
Provide field tests data showing positive effects on student learning for similar population					
Are adaptable to local curriculum and school					
Offer professional development training and long-term follow up for teachers					

**Massachusetts department of education  
September 30,2002**

## Appendix (3)

### Workshop (1) Textbook Evaluation Criteria for specifying sources of difficulties

March – July 2008

#### Trainer

Dr. Nazmi Al-Masri

#### Aims

12. To familiarize participants with a wide variety of appropriate criteria for evaluating English language textbooks
13. To apply specific and contextually appropriate criteria for evaluating the Palestinian textbooks and other pertinent concerns.
14. To help teachers move beyond impressionistic evaluation and be more aware of the most important features of the textbooks.

#### Outcomes

By the end of the training workshop, participants will have been presented with practical opportunity to be able to:

1. identify specific sources of difficulties in the SB, WB, TB for grades 1-8 as well as in other pertinent aspects.
2. cite the weaknesses identified accurately and systematically
3. justify their choice of the shortcomings pedagogically and professionally
4. offer practical and effective suggestions to the problematic areas specified.

#### Components of *English for Palestine* to be evaluated

1. Students books- Grades 1- 8
2. Work Book (WB) Grades 1- 8
3. Teacher Book (TB) Grades 1 – 8
4. Practical concerns pertinent to the above three books.

**Procedures** Includes 3 sessions as follows

Session	Title	Time
One	Why, What and How do evaluate a textbook	7.30 – 09.00
Two	Specifying & finalising criteria for evaluation SB,WB & other practical concerns	09.15 – 10.45
Three	Specifying & finalising criteria for evaluating TB	11.00 – 12.30

**Methodology:** pair and group discussion, questioning and making judgment.

**Resources:** LCD, handouts.

**Session (1) - Task sheet**  
**Why, What and How shall we evaluate a textbook?**

**A) In pairs, try to list 3 reasons (purposes) for evaluating a textbook. (15Min)**

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....

**B) Try to list 3 elements you expect to evaluate. (10 Min)**

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

**C) Try to list 3 practical concerns pertinent to textbook evaluation (Practical considerations) (10 Min)**

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

**D) Try to list 4 scientific methods of evaluating a textbook (10 Min)**

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....

**E) In groups of threes, try to list 5 criteria for evaluating a textbook. (10 Min)**

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

**In groups of threes, try to find out which of the following textbook evaluation criteria are not acceptable? Why?** (20 Min)

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

**Textbook evaluation criteria**

1. Does the **content (SB)** serve as a window into learning about the target language culture (American, British, etc.)?
2. Does the **content** have enough variety and range of topics?
3. Are the **reading** selections authentic pieces of language?
4. Are **grammar** items presented in an increasing order of difficulty?
5. Do the **exercises** promote critical thinking of the text?
6. How is **content** organized (e. g. according to structures, functions, topics, skills, etc)?
7. How is **content** sequenced (e. g. on the basis of complexity, learnability, usefulness)?
8. Are the **four language skills** introduced equally?
9. Are **girls and boys** portrayed and presented equally?
10. Does the **TB** help teachers understand the objectives and methodology of the text?
11. Are teachers proficient enough in English to use **TB**?
12. Is there adequate **guidance** for the teachers on how to teach the four language skills?
13. Is the **TB** comprehensive and supportive?
14. Are **grammar** and **vocabulary** items introduced in motivating & realistic contexts?

**F) In groups of threes, choose any 5 criteria from the above ones and make them more acceptable.**  
(15Min)

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....

## **Notes: Why and how shall we evaluate a textbook?**

### **Purposes of evaluating a textbook**

According to Richards (2001: 270), “The information collected can serve the following purposes:

1. to document effective ways of using materials
2. to provide feedback on how materials work [effectively]
3. to keep a record of additions, deletions, and supplementary materials teachers may have used with the materials
4. to assist other teachers in using the materials”

### **Current evaluation purpose**

To identify the main and most serious sources of language difficulties (problematic areas) in the SB, WB & TB that lead to unlearnability.

This purpose becomes a means to another end which is offering practical and applicable suggestions to overcome these difficulties.

### **How can we evaluate a textbook?**

According to Richards (2001: 270), “Monitoring may take the following forms:

1. *Observation*: classroom visits to see how teachers use materials and to find out how materials influence the quality of teaching and interaction that occurs in a lesson
2. *Feedback sessions*: group meetings in which teachers discuss their experience with materials
3. *Written reports*: the use of reflection sheets or other forms of written feedback in which teachers make brief notes about what worked well and what did not work well, or give suggestions on using the materials
4. *Reviews*: written reviews by a teacher or group of teachers on their experiences with a set of materials and what they liked or disliked about them
5. *Students’ reviews*: comments from students on their experience with the materials

**Session (2) - Task sheet**  
**Specific criteria for evaluating SB & WB**

A) Evaluating any SB & WB may follow one of the various checklists or criteria which are categorized differently. Below are 9 points developed to suit the Palestinian context. **In groups of threes, try to do the following:**

1. Look at the 9 language points listed in the table below and try to suggest one more point (your group think it is necessary).
2. Think and add 2 **specific criteria** related to each of these points listed in the table below. You need to give one criterion under SB and another under WB. An example is given for you.

	<b>Language</b>	<b>SB</b>	<b>WB</b>
<b>1.</b>	Reading	1. Which texts or parts of texts are not interesting (stimulating, motivating)? 2.	
<b>2.</b>	Writing		
<b>3.</b>	Listening		
<b>4.</b>	Speaking		
<b>5.</b>	Vocabulary		

<b>6.</b>	Grammar		
<b>7.</b>	Pronunciation		
<b>8.</b>	Spelling		
<b>9.</b>	Practical considerations		



## Session (2)

### Specific criteria for identifying sources of difficulties SB & WB

#### B) Look at the following list of criteria for identifying sources of difficulties in both SB & WB and do the following:

1. **Individually**, make sure that you fully understand all the points under each of the nine aspects and you can **apply** them professionally.
2. **In groups of threes**, try to add **one** additional useful question under each aspect.

#### 1) Reading texts and exercises

1. Which texts or parts of texts are **not interesting** (stimulating, motivating) enough that students do not enjoy reading them? (irrelevant)
2. Which texts or parts of texts are **too difficult** to understand by students?  
Which texts or parts of texts include **too many unfamiliar vocabularies**?
3. Which texts or parts of texts are **too long** that cannot be taught in one lesson?
4. Which exercises are **too complex** to do?
5. Which texts are not followed by **a variety of questions**? (critical reading & literal comprehension; subjective & objective questions)
6. Which reading exercises do not develop students' **comprehension and thinking skills**? (copy & paste answer)
7. Which lessons have **impure** reading exercises?
8. Which reading exercises in the WB **are not based** on (relevant to) the ones in SB?
9. Which reading exercises in the WB do not **match (reinforce)** the ones in SB?

#### 2) Writing

1. Which writing exercises do not show any **examples (models)** of different types of sentences, compositions and letters?
2. Which writing exercises are not introduced **gradually**?
3. Which writing exercises do not have clear and easy **instructions**?
4. Which exercises ask students to write about not **interesting points** (topics)?  
Why
5. Which exercises are **too difficult** (complex) for students to accomplish? Why?
6. Which writing exercises are not practiced in **a variety** of suitable situations?
7. Which writing exercises are practiced in **insufficient exercises**?
8. Which writing exercises in the WB do not **match (reinforce)** the ones in SB?
9. Which writing exercises in the WB are not **based** on (relevant to) the ones in SB?

#### 3) Listening

1. Which listening materials are **not interesting** (irrelevant & thus not motivating)?
2. Which listening materials are **too difficult**?
3. Which listening materials include **too many unfamiliar expressions**?
4. Which listening materials are **too long**?

5. Which listening materials do not have **quality sound**?
6. Which listening materials are not followed by **a variety of questions**? (critical reading & literal comprehension; subjective & objective questions)
7. Which listening exercises do not develop students' **comprehension and thinking skills**? (copy & paste answer)
8. Which lessons have **impure** listening exercises?
9. Which listening exercises **cannot be taught**? Why? (lack of time, no equipment, teacher unfamiliarity, not included in exams, no sufficient model listening tests)
10. Do the listening exercises in the WB **match** the ones in SB?

#### 4) Speaking

1. Which dialogues, conversations or role-plays are not interesting (stimulating)?
2. Which dialogues or role-plays are **too difficult** & above students' level?
3. Which speaking exercises consume a lot of lesson **time**?
4. Which dialogues, conversations or role-plays are **irrelevant** to the preceding listening, reading materials or exercises?
5. Which dialogues or role-plays are **irrelevant to the theme** of the lesson or unit?
6. Which exercises need clearer explanations?
7. Do the speaking exercises in the WB **match** the ones in SB?

#### 5) Vocabulary

1. Which lessons **have too many** unfamiliar vocabularies?
2. What vocabularies are considered **too difficult** for learners?
3. Which vocabularies are not practiced in **several contexts**?
4. Which new words are not **recycled** in subsequent lessons in the same unit?
5. Which new words are not **recycled** in subsequent units?
6. Which new words are not practiced in sufficient **personalized** contexts?
7. Does the SB or WB include an adequate vocabulary **list or glossary**?
8. Which lessons (exercises) in the WB do not practice the **same** new vocabularies introduced in the SB?

#### 6) Grammar

1. Which grammar items are not presented or explained clearly?
2. Which grammar items are presented in un-pleasurable way?
3. Which grammar items are presented with insufficient examples?
4. Which grammar items are unlearnable & above learners' level?
5. Which grammar points are not introduced in context?
6. In which lessons does introducing more than one grammar point confuse students?
7. Which grammar points are given insufficient practice opportunities (situations)?
8. Which grammar points need more varied practice situations?
9. Which grammar points require relevant (personalized) practice contexts?
10. Which grammar practice exercises are unsuitable for students' level?
11. Which grammar points can be practiced in an amusing (fun, game like) way?

12. Which lessons (exercises) in the WB do not practice the same grammar points introduced in the SB?

### 7) Pronunciation

1. Which items are not presented or **explained clearly**?
2. Which items are presented with **insufficient examples**?
3. Which are **unlearnable** & above learners' level?
4. Which lessons **have too many** pronunciation items?
5. Which items are not introduced in **contexts**?
6. Which items are not practiced in **several contexts**?
7. Which items are not **recycled** in subsequent lessons or exercises in the same unit?
8. Which pronunciation exercises need **more explanations** for students?
9. Which pronunciation exercises are **difficult** to learn?
10. Which pronunciation exercises need **more practice** exercises?
11. Do the pronunciation exercises in the WB **match** the ones in SB?

### 8) Spelling

1. Which lessons do not have **spelling exercises** to practice new words & expressions?
2. Which lessons in the SB & WB have **insufficient** spelling practice exercises?
3. Which lessons in the SB & WB do not have **a variety** of spelling practice exercises?
4. Which spelling items are not practiced in **contexts**?
5. Which lessons have traditional (non fun) spelling exercises?

### 9) Practical considerations

1. Do teachers receive cassettes on time
2. Does every school have sufficient cassette players?
3. Are the cassette players reliable?
4. Are the cassettes reliable and durable?
5. Do all teachers receive SB, WB and TB on time?
6. Do all students receive SB and WB on time?
7. Do all students receive new or used SB and WB?
8. Do pupils have to pay for the TB & WB?
9. Do teachers have sufficient training to use the new textbooks?
10. To what extent do teachers use the TB?

### Session (3)

## Specific criteria for identifying sources of difficulties in TB

A) Look at the following list of 8 language aspects for identifying sources of difficulties in the TB and do these 2 tasks:

- a. **Individually**, make sure that you fully understand all the questions below and you can **apply** them professionally.
- b. **In groups of threes**, try to add **one** more useful question.

Reading  
Writing  
Listening  
Speaking  
Vocabulary  
Grammar  
Pronunciation  
Spelling

1. What specific areas in TB do not offer sufficient **practical techniques** that illustrate to teacher how to teach students the language points listed above?
2. What specific areas in TB do not offer **examples** for teaching students some of the aspects above?
3. What specific areas in TB do not offer sufficient **model tests**?
4. What specific areas in TB do not offer adequate **guidance** for the teacher on how to review language items (vocabulary & grammar)?
5. Which language items (grammar) need reference sections in the TB?
6. Which exercises in the SB & WB need key answers in the TB?
7. What specific areas in TB include insufficient instructions on how to incorporate **audio-visual** material (cassette, pictures, diagrams, etc.)?
8. What specific areas in TB include insufficient cultural notes?
- 9.

## Pedagogical beliefs & principles for evaluating SB, WB & TB

**B)** The above chosen criteria for identifying weaknesses in SB, WB, & WB are based on 21 pedagogical beliefs & principles that should be taken into consideration when any textbook is designed or evaluated.

Work in groups to guess these alphabetically sequenced beliefs. The first belief is done and first letter of the others is given for you. Can you add one more?

	beliefs & principles		beliefs & principles
1.	Comprehensibility	12	P
2.	C	13	P
3.	E	14	P
4.	F	15	Q
5.	G	16	R
6.	I	17	R
7.	L	18	S
8.	L	19	S
9.	M	20	S
10.	M	21	V
11.	P	22	

*Please document specific details*

### Sample Form for Specifying & justifying sources of difficulties in SB

Grade .....

Evaluation Team..... Date:.....

	Problem	Justification	Unit	page	Exercise No
Reading					
Writing					
Listening					
Speaking					
Vocabulary					
Grammar					
Pronunciation					
Spelling					
Illustrations					
Practical considerations					

Variety- suitability -Sufficiency - Simplicity – relevance – recycling –quality –  
 Purity practicality - personalization - Mentality – Matching – length learnability  
 interest - gradualism - Familiarity - Exemplification - Contextualization -  
 Comprehensibility

### Appendix (4)

<p><b>Al-Qattan Centre for Educational Research and Development Gaza– Palestine</b></p>		<p>مركز القطان للبحوث والتطوير التربوي غزة</p>
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#### General Description of Reading Texts of Grade six & seven

No	Item	Unit --	Unit --	Unit -	Unit ---
<b>A</b>	<b>Presentation and lay out</b>				
1	Theme of the unit				
2	Title of reading comprehension				
3	Number of tasks				
4	Number of items				
5	Suggested time allocated (if any )				
6	Is the title clearly presented to the learner?				
7	Is the objective clearly presented to the learner?				
8	Is the general appearance of the text appealing?				
9	Are photographs and accompanying ancillaries used attractive and				
10	Is colour printing used?				
11	Are visuals realistic?				
12	Units are well organized and offer easy progression				
	Comment:				

<b>B</b>	<b>Guidance &amp; instructions:</b>				
13	Clear instructions supported				
14	Instructions are easy to understand				
15	Instructions are adequate				
<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Unit --</b>	<b>Unit --</b>	<b>Unit -</b>	<b>Unit ---</b>
16	Instructions are relevant				
17	Instructions are consistent				
	Comment:				
<b>C</b>	<b>Type of reading texts</b>				
18	(Adapted) written for young adults				
19	(Specially written)for young adults				
20	Newspaper article				
21	Advertisement				
20	Prose				
23	Poetry				
24	Novel				
25	Story				
26	Dialogue				
27	Instructional leaflet				
28	Other				

	Specify:				
	Comment:				
<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Unit --</b>	<b>Unit --</b>	<b>Unit -</b>	<b>Unit ---</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Tasks</b>				
29	Number of tasks in relation to the text				
30	Number of items per task				
31	Tasks are clear and unambiguous				
32	The language of the texts is at appropriate level				
33	The language of the rubric is at appropriate level				
34	The language of the txt is at appropriate level				
35	The number of new vocabulary is at appropriate level				
36	Items are sequenced in relation to the text				
37	Multi level response is required according to the items				
38	Type of responses relate to” Find it” (literal level)				
39	Type of response relate to “Connect it” (analytical level)				
40	Type of response relate to “Add to it” (inferential level)				
41	Type of response relate to “Go beyond it”(critical level)				
42	Type of response relate to “Go beyond it”(creative level)				
43	Reading the text requires finding the main idea strategy				
44	Reading the text requires recalling facts and details				
45	Reading the text requires understanding sequence				
46	Reading the text requires recognizing cause and effect				
47	Reading the text requires making prediction				



48	Reading the text requires finding word meaning in context				
49	Reading the text requires drawing conclusions/inferences				
50	Reading the text requires comparing and contrasting				
51	Reading the text requires distinguishing fact from opinion				
52	Reading the text requires identifying author's purpose				
<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Unit --</b>	<b>Unit --</b>	<b>Unit -</b>	<b>Unit ---</b>
53	Reading the text requires interpreting figurative language				
54	Reading the text requires reading pictures				
55	Reading the text requires distinguishing real from make –believe				
56	Reading the text requires summarizing				
57	Grammatical concepts presented in a meaningful manner				
58	Activities move from controlled to communicative				
59	There is balance between listening ,speaking ,reading ,and writing.				
60	Students are introduced to appropriate vocabulary				
61	Vocabulary items are functional ,thematic ,authentic and practical				
62	There are variety of meaningful activities				
63	Activities provide opportunities for individual ,paired and cooperative learning				
64	Students are introduced to appropriate information gap activities				
65	Activities are set in an age appropriate context				
66	There are themes that encourage projects outside the classroom				
	Comment:				
<b>E</b>	<b>Language ability</b>				

67	Main focus skimming for overall gist				
68	Demonstrating understanding of text as a whole				
69	Identifying topic of text				
70	Identifying function of text				
71	Distinguishing main points of text from subsidiary ones				
No	Item	Unit --	Unit --	Unit -- -	Unit ---
72	Retrieving specific information by scanning text				
73	Locating and selecting relevant factual information to perform task				
74	Demonstrating understanding of how text structure works				
75	Distinguishing fact from opinion				
76	Deducing meaning from context				
78	Interpreting text for author's attitude ,style				
79	Making inferences from information given in the text				
80	Recognizing numbers ,letters etc.				
81	Making use of clues as subtitles illustrations				
	Comment:				
<b>F</b>	<b>Contextual expected response</b>				
82	Comprehension of texts assumes cultural knowledge				
83	Comprehension of the text depends on particular prerequisite				
84	Comprehension of texts depend on prior knowledge				
85	Supported pictures required to comprehend text				

86	Information required to answer a particular item				
87	Localization required to comprehend a particular item				
88	Learners are referred to specific areas of the text				
89	Items can be answered by taking words and phrases directly from the text				
90	Words in tasks repeat words already used in the text				
91	Items can be answered by modifying words in text slightly				
No	Item	Unit --	Unit --	Unit -	Unit ---
92	Items can be answered by rephrasing text to a significant extent				
93	Non -linguistic skills are included in tasks				
94	There are an over lap with measuring linguistic skill areas				
95	There are references of interests and needs of the grade level				
96	Personal language included in reproduction				
	Comment:				
<b>G</b>	<b>Comparison</b>				
97	Students are asked to look at their own native language and compare it to L2				
98	Students are asked to compare their own culture and make comparison to other cultures.				
<b>H</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>				
99	There is sufficient oral and written practice of the grammar concepts that lead to meaningful usage of L2.				

100	The cultural readings are interesting ,significant and appropriate for age level .				
101	Texts provide the learners with strategies at point of use to help them be successful listeners ,speakers ,readers and writers of L2.				
102	Pair and co operative learning activities are plentiful and meaningful				
103	Multiple intelligences utilized so as to support the variety of learner types in the classroom				
No	Item	Unit --	Unit --	Unit -	Unit ---
104	Students are asked to do more than rote memorization and recall				
105	Students are asked to utilize the higher order thinking skills				
106	The reading lessons have a recorded material that is integrated with the text				
	Comment:  <b>QCERD 2007</b>				

## Appendix (5)

**The Reading Matrix**  
**Vol. 5, No. 2, September 2005**

### ESL TEXTBOOK EVALUATION CHECKLIST

**Joshua Miekley**  
[mieklejp@email.uc.edu](mailto:mieklejp@email.uc.edu)

Textbook Evaluation Checklist							
Not Applicable	Optional	Mandatory	Totally Lacking	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
<b>I. Textbook</b>							
<b>A. Content</b>							
							i. Is the subject matter presented either topically or functionally in a logical, organized manner? (1,2,3) <sup>ii</sup>
							ii. Does the content serve as a window into learning about the target language culture (American, British, ect.)? (2,18)
							iii. Are the reading selections authentic pieces of language? (5,10)
							iv. Compared to texts for native speakers, does the content contain real-life issues that challenge the reader to think critically about his/her worldview? (1,2,3,7,21)
							v. Are the text selections representative of the variety of literary genres, and do they contain multiple sentence structures? (1,13)
<b>B. Vocabulary and Grammar</b>							
							i. Are the grammar rules presented in a logical manner and in increasing order of difficulty? (1,2,3)
							ii. Are the new vocabulary words presented in a variety of ways (e.g. glosses, multi-glosses, appositives)? (2,3,12)
							iii. Are the new vocabulary words presented at an appropriate rate so that the text is understandable and so that students are able to retain new vocabulary? (1,2,3,5)
							iv. Are the new vocabulary words repeated in subsequent lessons to reinforce their meaning and use? (1,2,3,)
							v. Are students taught top-down techniques for learning new vocabulary words? (7,8,9,11)
<b>C. Exercises and Activities</b>							
							i. Are there interactive and task-based activities that require students to use new vocabulary to communicate? (1,2,3,5)
							ii. Do instructions in the textbook tell students to read for comprehension? (6)
							iii. Are top-down and bottom-up reading strategies used? (17)
							iv. Are students given sufficient examples to learn top-down techniques for reading comprehension? (7,8,9,10)
							v. Do the activities facilitate students' use of grammar rules by creating situations in which these rules are needed? (1,2,3)
							vi. Does the text make comprehension easier by addressing one new concept at a time instead of multiple new concepts? (2,3)
							vii. Do the exercises promote critical thinking of the text? (2)

<b>D. Attractiveness of the Text and Physical Make-up</b>											
										i. Is the cover of the book appealing? (1,2,3)	
										ii. Is the visual imagery of high aesthetic quality? (1,2,3,14)	
										iii. Are the illustrations simple enough and close enough to the text that they add to its meaning rather than detracting from it? (1)	
										iv. Is the text interesting enough that students will enjoy reading it? (15)	
<b>II Teacher's Manual</b>											
<b>A. General Features</b>											
										i. Does the manual help teachers understand the objectives and methodology of the text? (1,2,3)	
										ii. Are correct or suggested answers given for the exercises in the textbook? (1,2,3,4)	
<b>B. Background Information</b>											
										i. Are teachers shown how to teach students to use cues from morphology, cognates, rhetorical relationships, and context to assist them in lexical inferencing? (7)	
										ii. Is there a list of true and false cognates for vocabulary words? (1,2,3)	
<b>C. Methodological Guidance</b>											
										i. Are teachers given techniques for activating students' background knowledge before reading the text? (8,9,22)	
										ii. Are teachers given adequate examples for teaching students to preview, skim, scan, summarize, and to find the main idea? (8,11,6)	
										iii. Does the manual suggest a clear, concise method for teaching each lesson? (1,2,3)	
<b>D. Supplementary Exercises and Materials</b>											
										i. Does the manual give instructions on how to incorporate audio-visual material produced for the textbook? (2)	
										ii. Does the manual provide teachers with exercises to practice, test, and review vocabulary words? (1,2,3)	
										iii. Does the manual provide additional exercises for reinforcing grammar points in the text? (1,2,3)	
<b>III. Context</b>											
										A. Is the textbook appropriate for the curriculum? (1,2,19,20)	
										i. Does the text coincide with the course goals? (1,2,3,19,20)	
										B. Is the textbook appropriate for the students who will be using it? (1,2)	
										i. Is the text free of material that might be offensive? (1,6,16)	
										ii. Are the examples and explanations understandable? (1)	
										iii. Will students enjoy reading the text selections? (1,2,3,15)	
										iv. Will the content meet students' felt needs for learning English or can it be adapted for this purpose? (2,3)	
										C. Are the textbook and teacher's manual appropriate for the teacher who will be teaching from them? (1,2,4)	
										i. Is the teacher proficient enough in English to use the teacher's manual? (1)	

## Appendix (6)

### Checklist For Evaluating EFL Reading Textbook Design

Dr Reima Al-Jarf (2007)

#### PLANNING OF PAGES

number of pages in the textbook number of pages of text  
proportion of text space  
frequency of illustrations  
proportion of photograph  
space margins and column width

Text divisions: # of columns, consistency within single text, consistency across texts  
paragraphs: indenting, line numbering, paragraph form, emphasized material, word-spacing, line-to-line spacing

#### portrait vs landscape

typefaces & typesizes: word-spacing, line-to-line  
spacing typestyle:  
typefaces = character style, chs firm in line, open and even in

spacing, have idiosyncratic features

#### line and interword spacing

space between the heading and the remaining text, consistency typographic setting  
(unjustified text, vertical spacing, horizontal spacing)

typographic detailing (primary, secondary and tertiary headings)

chapter #: position, color, typesize, typestyle, typeface, consistency  
chapter heading: position, color, typesize, typestyle, typeface, consistency  
subheadings: position, color, typesize, typestyle, typeface

**typographic cueing** (underlining, italics, boldface, capital letters, color, multiple cueing)

**illustrative material** (frequency, positioning, caption)

illustrations: # per text, type, caption, position, relation to text, color,  
familiarity of objects, details

**relation of illustrations to reading text:** background experience, concept, support text

Which of the following is inappropriate: planning of pages, formal specification or plan, size and position of component parts

### **Spatial organization of text**

- standardization in unit organization
- standardization in the structure of reading passages
- lack of standardization
- poor organization of information
- vertical and horizontal spacing
- sequencing of columns
- use space systematically to indicate which blocks of material go together

### **typography of text:**

- titles of units
- titles of sections
- titles of sub-sections
- space between heading and remaining text
- indenting of the first line indicates the start of a new paragraph
- paragraphs having different levels of rank
- items having different levels of rank

### **PAGE-SIZE:**

- page-sizes:
- margins:
- layout of page
- divisions of the page
- interline spacing
- line-length of the text
- position of illustrations
- information area

### **photocomposition= formatting and make-up of the text:**

- type font and body,
- line spacing,
- type-size
- spacing
- means of emphasis
- changes from the norm in letter-size, size, boldness, color or position

### **Illustrations**

- Are illustrations interesting
- Do illustrations attract attention
- Do illustrations provide support material
- production of printed words and pictures
- type of illustrations used (line drawings, pictorial illustrations, tables, graphs, diagrams, and symbols)
- How detailed are pictures (highly detailed, excessive unnecessary detail, deletion of detail)
- What pictures illustrate (unfamiliar objects)
- Can students interpret the conventions of illustrations



- background knowledge of students
- are illustrations realistic,
- location of illustrations (at the top, at the bottom)
- use of color (use of too many colors, too few colors, make correct discrimination, use color consistently,
- is code understood by students
- are graphic aids positioned with regard for their dependence on statements made in the text.
- the illustration of a process involving separate steps or actions
- amount of text supported by illustrations
- way in which illustrations and the text are arranged.
- conventions of illustrations
- position of picture in relation to text
- relation of picture to printed words
- sequencing and the functional grouping of parts.
- dimensions and position of parts
- differentiation of sub-items a, b, c,
- differentiation of the question indicators 1, 2,3
- the centered arrangement of the text
- the haphazard use of space
- typefaces of ill-considered size and weight.
- space between the heading and the remaining text.
- vertical and horizontal spacing.
- captions

#### **layout of bibliographies, references and indexes**

#### **layout of exercises**

#### **layout of pre-reading material**

number of pages in the textbook

number of pages of text

proportion of text space

frequency of illustrations

proportion of photograph space

margins and column width

portrait vs landscape

typefaces & typesizes

line and interword spacing

typographic setting (unjustified text, vertical spacing, horizontal spacing)

typographic detailing (primary, secondary and tertiary headings)

typographic cueing (underlining, italics, boldface, capital letters, color, multiple cueing)

illustrative material (frequency, positioning, caption, )

#### **components of an instructional text:**

listed information

programmatically developed statements

numbered items

diagrammatic presentations

explanatory notes

pictorial features of many kinds

headings, lists, questions, exercises, tables, figures, captions

## Appendix (7)

### Textbook Evaluation Form

<b>Book Title</b>	<b>Ratings</b>			
<b>Author(s):</b> <b>Publisher</b>	<b>1</b> <b>(poor)</b>	<b>2</b> <b>(fair)</b>	<b>3</b> <b>(Good)</b>	<b>4</b> <b>(Excellent)</b>
<b>Table of contents:</b> Material is presented in an order that makes sense for teaching. For example, a building approach is used with math and science subjects; new material is based on previously taught skills or already defined/discussed information.				
<b>Glossary:</b> Unfamiliar or specialized terms are well-defined and their pronunciation are included.				
<b>Bibliography:</b> List of books and other reference works used by author(s) is comprehensive and up to date.				
<b>Recommended reading:</b> Includes works that enable the reader to pursue further information.				
<b>Web sites:</b> Include direct links to pertinent information. ( randomly check a sampling of sites for current availability and to see if they indicate how recently they were updated.)				
<b>Index</b> Index is thorough and easy to use, and consists of entries that are detailed and cross-referenced.				

<b>Book Title</b>	<b>Ratings</b>			
<b>Author(s):</b> <b>Publisher</b>	<b>1</b> <b>(poor)</b>	<b>2</b> <b>(fair)</b>	<b>3</b> <b>(Good)</b>	<b>4</b> <b>(Excellent)</b>
<b>Writing Style:</b> Writing is descriptive and thought-provoking, and fosters visualization, sparking the reader's imagination on many levels. Vocabulary consists of words that are both familiar and challenging, and words the reader may not know are clearly defined. Main ideas are explicit, not imbedded in the text.				
<b>Headings/subheadings:</b> Headings and subheadings support the content and preview what is coming so that the reader gets a clear idea about the section and can make predictions and read for purpose-helpful with before-reading activities. Wording is explicit				

rather that vague or ambiguous.				
<b>Captions and labels:</b> Captions and labels are accurate and informative, and supplement the text or main ideas in that part of the book.				
<b>Sidebars:</b> Sidebars augment the text by highlighting incident or little-known information, or by expanding upon points or ideas mentioned in the text.				
<b>Topic sentences and section/ chapter previews:</b> These communicate what is being discussed/ developed in the paragraph or section/chapter; allow the reader to establish, identify, and absorb main ideas; and provide helpful information for before-reading activities.				
<b>Section/Chapter Summaries:</b> Key ideas and main points supporting the topic discussed in the section/chapter are clear and accurately restated.				
<b>Extension Activities:</b> Includes relevant activities offering sufficient practice so that the student can reinforce and retain what has been taught. Activities focus on different ways in which students might continue their study on various learning styles.				
<b>Page layout:</b> The text is complemented/supported by graphic elements (illustrations, photographs, maps, charts, etc.)that follow the less-is-more rule: they do not crowd the page or overwhelm the student with too much textual or visual information.				

<b>Book Title</b>	<b>Ratings</b>			
	<b>1</b> <b>(poor)</b>	<b>2</b> <b>(fair)</b>	<b>3</b> <b>(Good)</b>	<b>4</b> <b>(Excellent)</b>
<b>Author(s):</b> _____ <b>Publisher</b> _____				
<b>End-of-Section/Chapter Comprehension and Critical-Thinking Questions:</b> The questions make connections between the learned content, allow the reader to reflect on main ideas, and extend critical thinking about past and future vents. Questions also are multi-leveled, i.e., there are questions that the reader can answer by looking in a specific place in the text, some that require the reader to look in several places to find the answer, and others that require the reader to look for clues in what they have read and combine these with their prior knowledge. The number of questions included				

provides ample practice for students.				
Type style, Line Length, and Leading: The point size of the type, length of the line of the type, and space between each line all work together, producing a page that is not only visually appealing but also readable and accessible.				
<b>Graphic Elements (Photographs, illustrations, maps, charts, etc.):</b> Graphics are located with the text that they reader to rather than pages before or after it.				
Graphics are consistently identified with call outs, such as Figure 1, Figure2 , etc.				
Maps and charts include keys or legends that explain what the symbols mean.				
Each photograph includes a caption that succinctly identifies it and makes a direct connection between it and the text.				
At least half of the graphics are in colour.				
<b>Total Each Column</b>				

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## Appendix (8)

### The List of Juries

- |                             |                                 |                                   |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Dr. Sana Abu-Dagga       | PhD. in Research and Evaluation | The Islamic University            |
| 2. Dr. Akram Habib          | PhD. in TEFL                    | The Islamic University            |
| 3. Dr. Sami El Breem        | PhD. in TEFL                    | The Islamic University            |
| 4. Dr. Ayman Al-Hallaq      | PhD. in TEFL                    | The Islamic University            |
| 5. Dr. Awad Keshta          | PhD. in TEFL                    | The Islamic University            |
| 6. Mr. Bassam Al Aswad      | M.A. in TEFL                    | The Islamic University            |
| 7. Mr. Suhail Murtaja       | M.A. in TEFL                    | Ministry of Education             |
| 8. Mr. Alaa' Harb           | M.A. in TEFL                    | Supervisor at UNRWA Schools       |
| 9. Mrs. Maha Barzaq         | M.A. in TEFL                    | A researcher at (QCERD)           |
| 10. Mrs. Zulfa Bard El-Deen | M.A. in TEFL                    | The Islamic University            |
| 11. Mr. Mohammed Attia      | PhD. in TEFL                    | Al-Aqsa University                |
| 12. Mrs. Inas Hammad        | PhD. Candidate                  | Al-Aqsa university                |
| 13. Dr. Walid Amer          | PhD. in Linguistics             | The Islamic University            |
| 14. Mrs. Rana Al Najjar     | M.A. Student                    | A teacher of English Language     |
| 15. Mr. Haider Abu-Shaweesh | B.A. in English                 | Supervisor at Governmental School |
| 16. Mrs. Najjat Nasser      | B.A. in English                 | Supervisor at Governmental School |
| 17. Mr. Mohammed Abu Nada   | B. A. in English                | Supervisor in Governmental School |

**Appendix 9**  
**The Final Version of the Criteria of Evaluation**

No.	Criteria	U.1	U. 2	U. 3	U.4	U.5	U. 6	U.7	U. 8	U. 9	U.10	U.11	U.12	U.13	U.14	U.15	U.16	Total
<b>1. The Reading Texts</b>																		
1.	help students to read extensively. (skill)																	
2.	help students to read intensively . (skill)																	
3.	use authentic texts. (skill)																	
4.	present topics related to the Palestinian culture (knowledge)																	
5.	discuss topics related to the Palestinian reality (knowledge)																	
6.	enrich students' general knowledge about different topics (knowledge)																	
7.	present values and good manners. (values)																	
<b>2. Text Vocabulary</b>																		
8.	contain suitable number of new (unknown) vocabulary (not more than 3% -5% from the whole number of the text words)																	
9.	employ new (unknown) vocabulary that are concrete and abstract.																	
10.	use colours to highlight new (unknown) vocabulary.																	

No.	Criteria	U.1	U. 2	U. 3	U.4	U.5	U. 6	U.7	U. 8	U. 9	U.10	U.11	U.12	U.13	U.14	U.15	U.16	Total	
11.	are easy to learn (know their meaning and to pronounce) by 9 <sup>th</sup> graders																		
12.	Include guessable words																		
<b>3. Text visuals</b>																			
13.	are relevant to the reading text.																		
14.	are clear to 9 <sup>th</sup> graders.																		
15.	are colourful and attractive.																		
16.	are authentic (especially pictures).																		
<b>4. Text Layout:</b>																			
17.	sufficient margins on sides.																		
18.	sufficient spaces between text lines																		
19.	is divided into paragraphs.																		
20.	use indentation.																		
<b>5. Reading Exercises</b>																			
21.	include a variety of questions.																		
22.	present clear instructions that can be understood by 9 <sup>th</sup> graders..																		

No.	Criteria	U.1	U. 2	U. 3	U.4	U.5	U. 6	U.7	U. 8	U. 9	U.10	U.11	U.12	U.13	U.14	U.15	U.16	Total
23.	focus on pure reading. ( based on reading)																	
24.	activate students' background knowledge before reading the text through questioning , picture reading , word clustering .																	
25.	require students to relate the text to their personal experience.																	
26.	require students to find the main idea. ( skimming)																	
27.	require students to scan for specific information presented in the text .( scanning)																	
28.	require students to find meanings of new vocabulary in contexts.																	
29.	require students to develop awareness about synonyms and antonyms.																	
30.	require students to develop awareness of semantically related words.																	
31.	require students to recognize pronoun references.																	



No	Criteria	U.1	U. 2	U. 3	U.4	U.5	U. 6	U.7	U. 8	U. 9	U.10	U.11	U.12	U.13	U.14	U.15	U.16	Total
32.	require students to distinguish between cause and effect.																	
33.	require students to distinguish between fact and opinion.																	
34.	require students to infer the author's attitude .																	
35.	require students to make predictions (guessings) about the reading text.																	
36.	require students to draw conclusions (inferences)from information given in the text.																	
37.	require students to make a summary of the reading text.																	
38.	require students to draw lessons.																	
39.	require students to work out answers in pairs and groups.																	

No	Criteria	U.1	U. 2	U. 3	U.4	U.5	U. 6	U.7	U. 8	U. 9	U.10	U.11	U.12	U.13	U.14	U.15	U.16	Total
<b>6. Workbook Exercises:</b>																		
40.	include a variety of questions .																	
41.	present clear instructions that can be understood by 9 <sup>th</sup> graders.																	
42.	focus on pure reading. (based on reading)																	
43.	use exercises that are based on (relevant) to the ones in the student book.																	
44.	use exercises that reinforce the ones in the student book.																	
45.	require students to practice finding meanings of new vocabulary in contexts.																	
46.	require students to develop awareness of synonyms and antonyms.																	
47.	require students to develop awareness of semantically related words.																	
48.	require students to recognize pronoun references.																	

<b>No</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>U.1</b>	<b>U. 2</b>	<b>U. 3</b>	<b>U.4</b>	<b>U.5</b>	<b>U. 6</b>	<b>U.7</b>	<b>U. 8</b>	<b>U. 9</b>	<b>U.10</b>	<b>U.11</b>	<b>U.12</b>	<b>U.13</b>	<b>U.14</b>	<b>U.15</b>	<b>U.16</b>	<b>Total</b>
49.	require students to distinguish between cause and effect.																	
50.	require students to distinguish between fact and opinion.																	
51.	require students to make a summary of the reading text.																	
52.	require students to infer the author's attitude																	

**Appendix (10)**  
**Consultation Form of an Interview Card**

**Dear colleagues,**

The researcher **Nai'ma M. S. Ali** is carrying out an *M.ED dissertation* entitled

**" An Evaluation of the Reading Texts & Exercises in the SB & WB of  
*English for Palestine - Grade 9* "**

The purpose of the interview is to find out the problematic areas in the reading texts and exercises in English for Palestine -Grade 9 .

You are kindly invited to examine and referee the attached questions that are intended to collect data related on the issues mentioned above .

I would be so grateful if you could offer comments on:

- 1- the suitability of the questions to the purpose of the interview.
- 2- the comprehensiveness of the questions of all the needed data.
- 3- the clarity of the questions.

Any modifications, additions, or omissions will be taken into consideration when processing this interview card.

*Many thanks for your kind cooperation*

The researcher

Nai'ma Mosa Ali

**1- Throughout your experience as a teacher, which reading texts do you think are interesting for students?**

No.	Unit	Why
1-		
2-		
3-		

**2- Throughout your experience as a teacher, which reading texts do you think are not interesting for students?**

No.	Unit	Why
1-		
2-		
3-		

**3- Throughout your experience as a teacher , which reading texts do you think are suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders comprehension levels?**

No.	Unit	Why
1-		
2-		
3-		

**4- Throughout your experience as a teacher, which reading texts do you think are not suitable for 9<sup>th</sup> graders comprehension levels?**

No.	Unit	Why
1-		
2-		
3-		

**5- Throughout your experience as a teacher, which visuals do you think are not purposeful?**

No.	Unit	Why
1-		
2-		
3-		

**6- Throughout your experience as a teacher , in which reading texts do you face any problems concerning the font type & size used in the reading texts?**

No.	Unit	Why
1-		
2-		
3-		

**7-Which reading texts do you think need more time than is allocated?**

No.	Unit	Reason
1-		
2-		
3-		

**8- Any other comments related to the reading texts.**

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

**9- Any other comments related to the reading exercises .**

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

Appendix (11)  
Permission for applying the Interviews

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



الجامعة الإسلامية - غزة  
The Islamic University - Gaza

هاتف داخلي: 1150

عمادة الدراسات العليا

ج س ع/35

الرقم. ....2009/10/12 Rcf

التاريخ ..... Date

الأخ الدكتور/ رئيس برنامج التربية والتعليم العالي بوكالة الغوث حفظه الله،  
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،

**الموضوع/ تسهيل مهمة طالبة ماجستير**

تهديكم عمادة الدراسات العليا أعطر تحياتها، وترجو من سيادتكم التكرم بتسهيل مهمة  
الطالبة/ نعيمة موسى سليمان علي برقم جامعي 2007/0080 المسجلة في برنامج الماجستير  
بكلية التربية تخصص المناهج وطرق التدريس/اللغة الإنجليزية، وذلك بهدف إجراء مقابلة  
تخص دراستها مع مدرسي ومشرفي اللغة الإنجليزية بمدارس محافظة رفح والحصول على  
المعلومات التي تساعد في إعداد رسالة الماجستير والمعنونة بـ.

**An Evaluation of the reading Texts & Exercises in  
SB & WB of English for palestine**

والله ولي التوفيق،،،

عميد الدراسات العليا

د. زياد إبراهيم مقداد



صورة إلى:-  
❖ الملف.

السادة/ عمادة الدراسات العليا  
بإيماءة  
مهمته

السيد/ زياد إبراهيم مقداد  
110

**Appendix (12)**  
**Email from a publisher in Macmillan Education**

**Dear Nai'ma:**

**Thank you very much for your enquiry.**

**The texts in English for Palestine 9 are not 'authentic' in the sense that they are original unedited texts from different fiction and non-fiction sources. The texts have been created to act as stimuli for the key structures and vocabulary of the syllabus at this level. They are, however, designed to appear authentic to the reader, in the sense that they are stylistically identical to authentic texts.**

**You might be interested in exploring this further with the author of the books, Michael Macfarlane. I am sure he would be happy to assist you.**

**Good luck with your research.**

**Best wishes**

**Gavin**

**Gavin McLean**

**Publisher**

**Macmillan Education**



## ملخص الدراسة

### تقويم نصوص القراءة و تمارينها في كتاب الطالب و كتاب التدريبات للصف التاسع مبحث اللغة الإنجليزية

هدفت الدراسة إلي تقويم نصوص القراءة و تمارينها في كتاب الطالب و كتاب التدريبات للصف التاسع في مبحث اللغة الإنجليزية ليتم إيجاد درجة التطابق بين نصوص القراءة و تمارينها في الكتب المذكورة و المعايير و هدفت الدراسة أيضا إلي تحديد مواطن الضعف في هذه النصوص و التمارين .

ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة اتبعت الباحثة طريقة البحث الوصف التحليلي و قد استخدمت الباحثة أداتين لجمع المعلومات و هما بطاقة تحليل المحتوى و مقابلة منظمة .

قامت الباحثة ببناء معايير التقويم والتي شكلت بطاقة تحليل المحتوى بعد مراجعة الدراسات السابقة و الأدب التربوي و الكتب و منشورات المؤسسات و قد تم عرض بطاقة التحليل على اثني عشر محكما للاستفادة من تعليقاتهم بشأن أية تعديلات أو حذف أو إضافة للتحقق من صدق البطاقة ، كما أن ثبات البطاقة تم اختباره من خلال تعاون باحثين حيث قامتا بتحليل دروس القراءة و تمارينها ومن ثم قامت الباحثة بمقابلة خمس عشرة مدرسة و مدرس من مدرسي و مدرسات اللغة الإنجليزية للصف التاسع في مدينة رفح و ذلك من أجل أخذ رأيهم في نصوص القراءة و تمارينها من أجل إثبات أو رفض النتائج التي حصلت عليها الباحثة من خلال عملية التحليل .

و لقد أظهرت نتائج التحليل الآتي :-

1. يوظف الكتاب مواضيع متنوعة في دروس القراءة بالإضافة إلي قيم و أخلاق جيدة و علي العكس لا يوجد أي نص أصلي في نصوص القراءة كما أن القراءة الموسعة غير موظفة أبدا في الكتاب أيضا يوجد أربعة دروس القراءة متعلقة بالثقافة الفلسطينية و هي من أكثر الدروس إمتاعا للطلبة
2. فيما يتعلق بمفردات النصوص : في جميع دروس القراءة تم استخدام الألوان لإبراز المفردات الجديدة كما أن عدد المفردات الجديدة مناسب لطلاب الصف التاسع .
3. إن جميع الوسائل المتعلقة بالنصوص تقريبا ذات علاقة بموضوع النص و جذابة و ملونة و واضحة لطلاب الصف التاسع .
4. فيما يتعلق بالإطار العام للنصوص : فإن جميع النصوص ذات حواشي كافية علي الجوانب و مسافات مناسبة بين الأسطر كما أن النصوص مقسمة إلي فقرات.
5. فيما يتعلق بتمارين القراءة في كتاب الطالب و كتاب التدريبات : اتضح أن جميع التعليمات كانت واضحة و يوجد تنوع في الأسئلة داخل كل وحدة و لكن خلال الكتاب بشكل عام فإن نفس الأنماط من الأسئلة تتكرر في جميع الوحدات.

و اتضح أيضا أن بعض المهارات غير موظفة أبدا في تمارين القراءة مثل ( التمييز بين الحقيقة و استنتاج رأي الكاتب و المقارنة بين معرفة إشارة الضمير و إيجاد معنى المفردات الجديدة من خلال السياق و ربط النص بخبراتهم الشخصية و مهارة الإجابة عن الأسئلة بالعمل الثنائي و الجماعي).  
6. إن معظم النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من المقابلات دعمت جميع نتائج بطاقة تحليل المحتوى.

بناء على نتائج الدراسة أوصت الباحثة بتعديل تمارين القراءة عن طريق إعداد مادة اثرائية تغطي المهارات المهمة في الكتاب و أيضا أوصت الباحثة بالعمل على تنفيذ دراسات مشابهة لهذه الدراسة في مهارات أخرى كمهارة الكتابة و المحادثة و الاستماع في كتب أخرى من سلسلة كتب مبحث اللغة الإنجليزية.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم



الجامعة الإسلامية- غزة  
عمادة الدراسات العليا  
كلية التربية  
قسم المناهج وطرق التدريس

تقويم نصوص القراءة و تمارينها في كتاب الطالب و كتاب التدريبات للصف  
التاسع مبحث اللغة الإنجليزية

إعداد الطالبة  
نعيمة موسى سليمان علي

إشراف

د. فتحية صبحي اللولو

د. نظمي عبد السلام المصري

رسالة مقدمة لكلية التربية بالجامعة الإسلامية- غزة استكمال لمتطلبات الحصول  
على درجة الماجستير

يونيو 2010