

BOOK REVIEWS

ENQUIRIES, Longman Group Limited, London, 1977.
(W.J. Hanson. "Communication")

NEWBURY HOUSE READER, Newbury House Publishers, Inc.,
Rowley, Massachusetts,
(Linda Bosson. "Soap and Water")

Two readers, one dramatic with photographic impact and the other calmly academic, are pleasing additions to those already available for ESL students in the 14 to 17 age category. Although Enquiries, a series of topical books published by Longman, was written as a high school supplementary text, it could reinforce the basic skills for the ESL student. Discretion, however, should be exercised in using it until the teacher screens the level of structure and vocabulary and determines it appropriate for class use. The Newbury House Reader, on the other hand, is carefully graded from the beginning to advanced level in vocabulary and grammar. Its appeal is cognitive--"learn while enjoying what you're reading."

Taking a brief look at the titles of the Enquiries series, one finds "Courtship", "Aggression", "Drugs", "Learning", "Pollution and Conservation", and "Communication"; all very obviously timely subjects. "Communication" introduces means of communication--masks, gestures, mime, visual signals, Morse code, cryptology--and shows how communication has been and is recorded through the eye: hieroglyphics and Roman script; the ear: poetry and talking drums; and, current means: ESP, mass media, propaganda, and advertising. (What student isn't fired up by these mind twisters!) Therefore, from the standpoint of timeliness, modern themes, active discussion points, and visual impact, this series would leave the student motivated as the final cover page states to "read on" from the list of related classics. Congratulations, W.J. Hanson. You've got the student hooked with "Communication."

The Newbury House Reader, with graded grammatical structures (Levels 1-6) and vocabulary (a vocabulary estimate and pictographic

index), in contrast to the Enquiries series, on first impression appears impersonal and rather esoteric; the "Soap and Water" reader especially. A student might be left cold, turned off when he reads the first few lines: "How do you bathe? Do you have a bathroom?" I was. I found, however, as I read on I became engrossed with subject. Roman baths, Turkish, Medieval, and European fascinate the reader who wants to trace bathing customs. One even learns that there were couches converted into tubs, a Franklin shoe tub, baths for the sick, bathtub cushions which when filled with water, placed in a tub, and sat upon, gradually deflate, filling the tub; even bathtub races are included. "Soap and Water" offers the inquisitive reader a systematic historical look at bathing. The level of proficiency, in this book is intermediate (Level 3). It has a vocabulary level of 750-1000 words and a structural level of present perfect, the simple present, past and future, and the progressive tenses. Other books in the series are also graded from beginners to advanced. One might add a footnote to the "Soap and Water" reader. It maintains a high interest level, especially for anyone who enjoys drinking a cup of coffee while soaking in a hot tub in the morning.

To say that one series is superior to the other is foolish. Each challenges the teenage reader to become involved. Enquiries visually through discussion, timely subjects and problem solving; the Newbury House Reader, slick, academic treatment.

Phyllis Ryan
Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano
de Relaciones Culturales, A.C.
Mexico City