

'Tadoku' extensive reading: Aim for a million words!

始めよう「多読」 目指せ年間100万語

楽しみながらたくさんさんの英文を読むことで、本物の英語力をつけることを目指す「多読」。その方法と成果を挙げるコツは何か、英語多読指導の専門家、古川昭夫先生に話を聞いた。



■ 易しくて面白い本を

Extensive reading, or “tadoku,” is a way to obtain language skills through reading numerous texts. Furukawa Akio, an English tadoku-teaching expert, explained how to do this most effectively.

To benefit from extensive reading, high schoolers at Furukawa's cram school, SEG, are recommended to read a million words per year. He says that this figure — the average word count that U.S. elementary school kids read yearly — can enable non-native English speakers to read children's books and relatively easy paperbacks.

For perspective, an issue of the Mainichi Weekly includes about 6,000 English words — or roughly 300,000 a year.

If you start with a thick and complicated book, you're likely to feel distress and give up after the first few pages. It's important, therefore, to start with books written in easy English, such as “graded readers” (for English learners) and “leveled readers” (for children in English-speaking countries). Such series include Penguin Readers and Oxford Reading Tree.

SEG outlines the following three principles for extensive reading:

- 1) Read what you can enjoy without a dictionary.
- 2) Skip the words you don't understand.
- 3) Read books of interest.

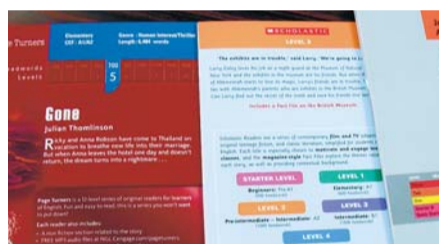
While schools recommend intensive reading — using dictionaries and translating each word — rather than extensive reading, the repeated use of dictionaries interrupts reading, which can make the experience unenjoyable. Furukawa says, “You can enjoy reading if the number of un-



各自で多読に取り組む高校生のクラス



古川昭夫先生。東京都新宿区で学習塾「SEG」を主宰している www.seg.co.jp



graded readers や leveled readers には英語のレベルが記載されている

No.	日付	タイトル	シリーズ/出版社	Y.L.	単語数	単語	感想	レベル
1	4/1	The Man of the Hour	DOZ	41-42	1,200	1,200	1	1
2	4/2	The Wolf of the East	DOZ	43-44	1,200	1,200	1	1
3	4/3	The King of the Sea	DOZ	45-46	1,200	1,200	1	1
4	4/4	Johnny!	DOZ	47-48	1,200	1,200	1	1
5	4/5	Johnny!	DOZ	49-50	1,200	1,200	1	1
6	4/6	Johnny!	DOZ	51-52	1,200	1,200	1	1
7	4/7	Johnny!	DOZ	53-54	1,200	1,200	1	1
8	4/8	Johnny!	DOZ	55-56	1,200	1,200	1	1
9	4/9	Johnny!	DOZ	57-58	1,200	1,200	1	1
10	4/10	Johnny!	DOZ	59-60	1,200	1,200	1	1

ある生徒の多読記録手帳。日付、書名、語数、感想程度のメモでも、目標に向けての励みになる

known words where you do not need to use a dictionary is less than 5 percent — in other words, one or fewer words out of 20.”

When you encounter parts of books that you don't understand, it's also important to guess the meaning from the context. “It's OK if you understand 70 or 80 percent of the context during extensive reading,” says Furukawa. “As you repeatedly encounter the same expressions, you'll naturally learn their meaning. The easier the text is, the more basic English skills you'll obtain.”

He adds, however, “It's also true that interesting stories tend to be written with more difficult expressions. If your comprehension is just 50 percent, you may enjoy the story — but you probably won't get basic English skills.”

Lastly, unless the book you're

reading is about a favorite topic or genre, you'll get bored and are likely to give up. Reading boring text is both painful and a waste of time. Trade books, as well as graded readers and leveled readers, offer various choices — from fantasy to romance to nonfiction — enabling you to find interesting English books at any level.

■ アウトプット力も強化

As cost might be a concern, Furukawa explains that public libraries increasingly now have graded readers and leveled readers for tadoku readers. Another affordable option is to read stories on websites for young people in easy English, including “Time for Kids” and “National Geographic Kids.”

Furukawa also advises that you measure your reading speed. First-year junior high school stu-

dents at SEG start with 60 to 80 words per minute, while some high schoolers exceed 300 words per minute. He says that if you can read at 200 words or more per minute, “You can comfortably read some thick books.” For reference, the speed of 200 words per minute means reading this article in about 3 1/2 minutes.

When you start extensive reading, you should write down the date, word count, and simple impressions from the book to help you reach your goal. You can check the word count for major children's books on such websites as “AR BookFinder.” As for general books, you'll get a rough idea of the word count by multiplying the number of words on a page by the number of pages.

Extensive reading is one method to improve so-called “input” skills — and Furukawa insists that it also helps improve “output” skills. “Extensive reading accumulates sample sentences and sentence patterns in your mind,” he says. “With enough such accumulation, you'll become able to speak and write.”

Furukawa explains, however, that it takes longer to notice improvement of output skills. “You may not notice after one year, but I'm sure you'll be different after three years,” he says.

Once again, in order to engage in extensive reading, throw away boring books, and keep reading what you like at a proper English level.

“Please remember that when learning a language,” Furukawa says, “many a little makes a mickle.”

graded readers や leveled readers など多読用図書を置く図書館は各地にあり、コスモピア社のウェブサイト (www.cosmopier.com/library) に主な図書館のリストが載っている。また、本文中で紹介した AR Book-Finder (www.arbookfind.com) では、主要な児童書の総語数が確認できる。

KEYWORDS

extensive reading 多読
benefit (ここでは) 成果を挙げる
cram school 学習塾

word count 総単語数
for perspective (ここでは) 比較してみると
feel distress 苦痛を感じる
Penguin Readers 英出版社ピアンソンが出しているシリーズ。英

語のレベルは7段階
Oxford Reading Tree 英オックスフォード大学出版局が出しているシリーズ。英語のレベルは10段階
outline (ここでは) 示す

principle 原則
of interest 興味・関心のある
intensive reading 精読
interrupt 遮る、中断する
encounter 出合う
context 文脈

comprehension 理解
trade book 一般書(後出 general book も同意)
affordable 手ごろな
for reference 参考までに
multiply ~ by ... ~と...を掛

ける
accumulate 蓄積する(後出 accumulation は名詞)
engage in ~ ~に取り組む
many a little makes a mickle 継続は力なり(mickleは多量)