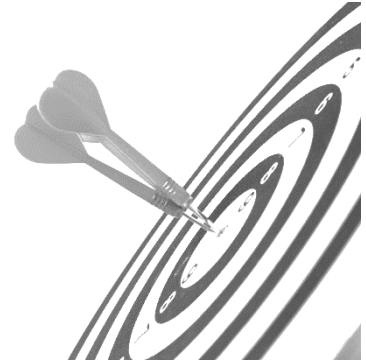


Reading / Listening: The Familiarization Protocol

Use this with: Any “tricky” Reading or Listening Topic

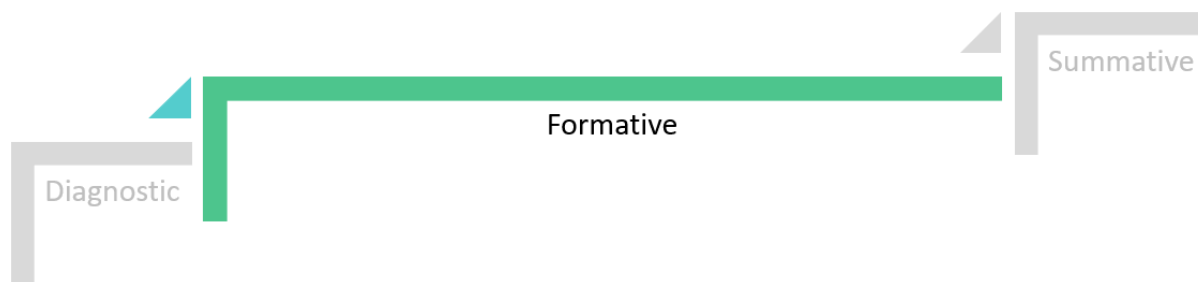
Educational research on EFL adult learners shows that familiarity with a topic significantly increases your overall comprehension *and* the number of points you get right.¹

Use this protocol to study difficult topics so that the next time you see it (or something very similar), you have the familiarity that lets you read faster and understand better.



Depending on your schedule, it may take multiple days to complete this. Many small study sessions of 15-20 minutes during a week are significantly more effective than one super-long cram session.

Remember, this is the stage of The Measurable Progress Framework where we’re currently focusing, and the reason why you’re doing this protocol is to form new skills and comfort.



First, identify “difficult” topics:

1. If you don’t already have results from previous practice sessions, then you must identify tough topics by doing a set of TPO passages. Use realistic timed conditions.

Goal: Diagnose and Target

2. Calculate your scores. Identify where you lost any points.

Goal 1: Figure out where you’ll see a result from focusing your energy and time.

Goal 2: Record a baseline score so that you can measure progress (in Steps 6-7).

¹ Alaa’ Abdul Imam and Rana Abdul Settar Abid. “The Effect of Topic Familiarity on EFL Reading Comprehension.” *Journal of the College of Arts, University of Basrah* (2011) pages 84-85

Now, familiarize yourself with the topic:

3. Turn off the timer and...
 - Read the passage or transcript and answers purely to understand.
 - Ask questions. Discuss it with someone.
 - Focus on Vocabulary: (1) Check unknown words. → (2) Make flashcards → (3) Memorize with Spaced Repetition Pouches 10-15 minutes per day
4. Type the passage title into YouTube. Explore videos under 5 minutes with animations that illustrate and bring the topic to life. Turn on CC for subtitles.

Main Goal: Activate your imagination with pictures and visuals about that topic.

Less Important Goal: Make loose connections with vocabulary.

5. Without a timer, repeat the TPO passage. Reading the passage or transcript out loud helps you process information that you might unintentionally skip if you read silently.

After 4-7 days, measure the impact of familiarizing yourself:

6. Repeat the difficult TPO passage with timed conditions.
7. Calculate your score. Compare this against the results in Step 1-2.
8. Do an autopsy of your process. Everyone is different. The more aware you are of your unique combination of issues, the faster you can find solutions and get your results.
 - “What was the ***most effective*** activity from Steps 3, 4 and 5?”
 - “What was the ***least effective*** activity from Steps 3, 4 and 5?”
 - “What do you need to **continue doing?**”
 - What do you need to **stop doing?**”