BEYOND WORDS

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In 2017 I wrote a collection of texts entitled ***Beyond words*** that will offer intermediate and advanced level EFL students practice in reading.

The *anticipation exercise* is a task students are required to perform before reading the text. They should skim the text only to extract the information which the questions demand. This exercise encourages students to anticipate the content of the text and motivates them to read it.

The *organization exercise* requires the students to get the gist or the central idea of a text. Readers are suggested to focus on what they understand and to pass over unknown vocabulary items, so that they could identify the main idea of each paragraph.

The *scanning for facts exercise* is meant to teach students an important skill: to read a text in order to extract specific information. There are many possible follow-up tasks: students could write their own ideas about the facts presented in the excerpts.

Students need to understand the importance of meaning in context; that's why i conceived a set of tasks called *checking for meaning*: students are required to find the paragraph in which certain words and phrases occur and to explain the meaning of these items in their own words.

The section entitled *Usage* contains exercises of filling in sentences by selecting a suitable item, of finding synonymous pairs, of building word families and so on.

Each unit contains *an optional activity*: a follow-up exercise meant to stimulate discussion.

The last section offers *the keys* to the exercises, except the follow-up ones.

Apart from its language development activities, *Beyond words* is a collection of texts that introduces students to the vast domain of the contemporary English and American literature. The fragments I chose are rich, symbolic, entertaining and appealing. Students are encouraged to use their imagination and creativity, to discover and think more deeply of things and facts they had never tackled before.

I want to share the first chapter of the book and I hope it will be of much use to you!

UNIT 1
Michael Faber, *Under the Skin*

"Isserley always drove straight past a hitch-hiker when she first saw him, to give herself time to **size him up**. She was **looking for** big muscles: **a hunk** on legs. **Puny, scrawny** specimens were no use to her.

At first **glance**, though, it could be **surprisingly** difficult to tell the difference. You'd think a **lone** hitcher on a country road would **stand out** a mile, like a **distant** monument or a **grain** silo; you'd think you would be **able** to **appraise** him **calmly** as you drove, undress him

and **turn him over** in your mind well in advance. But Isserly had found it didn't happen that way.

Driving through the Highlands of Scotland was an **absorbing** task in itself; there was always more **going on** than picture postcards allowed. Even in the **nacreous hush** of a winter dawn, when the **mists** were still **dossed** down in the fields on either side, the A9 could not be trusted to stay **empty** for long. Furry carcasses of unidentifiable forest creatures littered the asphalt, **fresh** every morning, each of them a frozen moment in time when some **living** thing had **mistaken** the road **for** its **natural** habitat.

Isserly, too, often **ventured** out at hours of such **prehistoric** stillness that her vehicle might have been the first ever. It was as if she had been **set down** on a world so newly finished that the mountains might still have some **shifting** to do and the wooded valleys might yet be **recast as** seas."

1. Find in the text above words that match to the following definitions:

    a. to form a judgement of =
    b. an attractive and usually well-built man =
    c. slight or inferior in power, size, or importance =
    d. exceptionally thin and slight or meager in body or size =
    e. a quick look at something =
    f. having no company =
    g. to appear as if in relief =
    h. a seed or fruit of a cereal grass =
    i. to estimate the amount of =
    j. having a pearly appearance =
    k. calmness, quietness =
    l. water in the form of particles floating or falling in the atmosphere at or near the surface of the earth and approaching the form of rain =
    m. to sleep or bed down in a convenient place =
    n. risked going somewhere or doing something that might be dangerous or unpleasant =
    o. movement or changing =
    p. changed in form of =

2. Find synonyms for the following phrasal verbs:

a. Size (somebody) up
b. Look for
c. Stand out
d. Turn (somebody) over
e. Go on
f. Mistake for
g. Set down

3. Find the antonyms and the synonyms of the following adjectives:

   - Puny -
   - Scrawny -
   - Surprising -
   - Lone -
   - Distant -
   - Able -
   - Calm -
   - Absorbing -
   - Empty -
   - Fresh -
   - Living -
   - Natural -
   - Prehistoric –

4. Find in the text words related to:

   a. Forms of relief
   b. Weather
   c. Physical appearance

5. Answer the questions:

   a. What kind of men was Isserly looking for?
   b. Was it an easy task? Why/why not?
   c. Was it easy for Isserly to drive through the Highlands of Scotland? Why/why not?
   d. What is the metaphor used by the author for the animals killed by cars on the road?
   e. What metaphor does the author use to describe the landscape at the dawn of a winter day in the Highlands of Scotland?

6. Are the sentences below true or false? Correct the false ones, using the information in the text:

   a. Isserly immediately gave a lift to any hitchhiker she saw on the road.
   b. It is easy to size up a hitchhiker from the distance while driving the car.
   c. Forest animals never leave their natural habitat and cross the highway.
   d. The Highlands of Scotland look exactly as they are depicted in the postcards.
   e. Isserly used to drive along A9 only in the afternoon.

f. The traffic on A9 road is always busy and quite noisy.

7. Find words in the text that look almost the same as the equivalent Romanian words.