A COMPARISON OF THE
COMPREHENSIBILITY OF MODIFIED AND
UNMODIFIED ESL READING MATERIALS

Ronald L. Brown
In recent years, a number of graduate students in the Department of English as a Second Language have selected the thesis option as part of their Master of Arts degree program. Their research has covered a wide range of areas in second language learning and teaching. Many of these studies have attracted interest from others in the field, and in order to make these theses more widely available, selected titles are now published in the Occasional Paper Series. This series, a supplement to the departmental publication Working Papers, may also include reports of research by members of the ESL faculty. Publication of the Occasional Paper Series is underwritten by a grant from the Ruth Crymes Scholarship Fund. A list of available titles and prices may be obtained from the department and is also included in each issue of Working Papers.

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ABSTRACT

Reading instruction for ESL students depends upon materials of modified vocabulary and syntax. The rationale is that students progress through stages of increasing complexity to the native speaker comprehension level. Research indicates the information level within text is more relevant to comprehension than structure. This study compares the reading comprehension of ESL students on separate versions of a text that had been modified at the input and interactional levels. Results indicated that modified versions of the text were of greater comprehensibility than the native speaker version. The modified texts were of almost equal comprehensibility despite levels of readability.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Review of Research

Although limited research investigating the process of reading comprehension of ESL students at the secondary level is available, reading instruction is often centered on the use of a variety of materials in which the syntax, vocabulary, and, not infrequently, content has been modified to facilitate readability. These readers, commonly based on classical literature, are structured at levels of difficulty based on the control of vocabulary and syntax. The assumption underlying these readers has been that by carefully controlling the level of vocabulary and the complexity of the sentence structure, the ESL student will develop adequate reading skills and comprehension by progressing through stages of difficulty from a basic to the advanced level of reading.

This system of text modification, commonly referred to as "simplification", usually involves not only the linguistic aspects of the material, but frequently the content (Honeyfield, 1977). An extensive modification of the vocabulary and structure of a text can so affect the content that, rather than presenting a simpler version of the text, the result becomes a retelling of the material. The greater the degree of text modification, the more affected is the
Text modification is supposed to facilitate a student's acquisition of reading skills that eventually transfer to the task of comprehending material in the original form of the language. However, the process can produce material that greatly differs from the original in areas of information, syntax, and structure.

For example, Pearl Buck's novel, *The Good Earth*, opens with these paragraphs:

It was Wang Lung's marriage day. At first, opening his eyes in the blackness of the curtains about his bed, he could not think why the dawn seemed different from any other. The house was still except for the faint, gasping cough of his old father, whose room was opposite to his own across the middle room. Every morning the old man's cough was the first sound to be heard. Wang Lung usually lay listening to it and moved only when he heard it approach nearer and when he heard the door of his father's room squeak upon its wooden hinges.

But this morning he did not wait. He sprang up and pushed aside the curtains of his bed. It was a dark, ruddy dawn, and through a small square hole of a window, where the tattered paper fluttered, a glimpse of bronze sky gleamed. He went to the hole and tore the paper away.

The modified version of this novel published by the Oxford University Press restricts the vocabulary to 3500 head words. Other vocabulary items are starred and defined at the bottom of the page on which they occur. In the Oxford version, the two original opening paragraphs of *The Good Earth* are reduced to four sentences:
It was Wang Lung's wedding day. At first, when he woke up, he could not think why it was different from any other day. Then he remembered and jumped quickly out of bed. He looked out of a small hole in the wall of the house and heard the soft wind.

In addition to reducing the vocabulary and sentence complexity of the original, the Oxford version excludes information concerning Wang Lung's father, the position of rooms, the bedding, the time of day, the paper in the window, and Wang Lung's actions. Furthermore, the Oxford version changes the representation of the dawn sky to a mention of a soft wind.

The same process of modification is present in the Longman Group’s version of Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island. Stevenson begins the story with an introduction of an old sailor who has arrived at an inn:

I remember him as if it were yesterday, as he came plodding to the inn door, his sea-chest following behind him in a handbarrow; a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man; his tarry pigtail falling over the shoulders of his soiled blue coat; his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails; and the sabre-cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid white. I remember him looking around the cove and whispering to himself as he did so, and then breaking out in that old seasong that he sang so often afterwards:

'Fifteen men on the dead man's chest--
Yo-ho-ha, and a bottle of rum!'

in the high, old tottering voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken at the capstan-bars. Then he rapped on the door with a bit of a stick like a handspike that he carried, and when my father appeared called roughly for a glass of rum. This, when it was brought to him, he drank slowly, like a connoisseur, lingering on the taste, and still looking about him
at the cliffs and up at our signboard.

"This is a handy cove," says he, at length; "and a pleasant sittyyated grog-shop. Much company, mate?"

My father told him no, very little company, the more the pity.

This lengthy description is represented in the Longman Structural Reader, Stage 6 version as:

It was September, 17--. One day an old seaman came to the inn. He was tall and strong and he had a big, brown face. There were cuts and marks on his face. A servant was pushing a little cart behind the seaman. There was a heavy chest on the cart. The seaman looked at the sea and at the inn.

"This is a nice place," he said. "I like the sea. Do a lot of people come here?"

My father replied, "No. It's sad, but true. Only a few people come here."

The Longman adaptation introduces a date that does not occur in the original, reduces the description and actions of the sailor to generalities, changes the dialogue between the sailor and the father, and excludes the sailor's song.

The higher levels of these series are supposed to approach the linguist complexities of the original texts, and thereby act as a transition from modified to unmodified materials. However, even with these levels, the modification may reduce the amount of information available to the reader. In the original translated edition of Thor Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki*, an elderly Polynesian chief is described
in some detail:

He poked the coals with a stick to keep them from going out. The old man sat thinking. He lived for ancient times and was firmly fettered to them. He worshipped his forefathers and their deeds in an unbroken line to the time of the gods. And he looked forward to being united with them. Old Tei Tetua was the sole survivor of all the extinct tribes on the east coast of Fatu Hiva. How old he was he did not know, but his wrinkled, dark-brown leathery skin looked as if it had been dried in sun and winds for a hundred years. He was one of the few on these islands that still remember and believed in his father's and his grandfather's legendary stories of the great Polynesian chief-god Tiki, son of the sun.

This paragraph is modified in the Longman Stage 6 version of the book, renamed The Kon-Tiki Expedition, to read like this:

The old man sat and thought. He liked to think about ancient times. He worshipped his early ancestors and was proud of their deeds. Old Tei Tetua came from the early races; he was the only one on the east coast of Fatu Hiva. He did not know his age, but his skin looked a hundred years old. He still believed his father's and his grandfather's stories about the great Polynesian chief and god, Tiki. Few men on these islands now believed these stories. But Tei Tetua believed that Tiki was the son of the sun.

Again changes in content can be observed. The item from the original paragraph referring to Tei Tetua being the last survivor of the extinct tribes is modified to his being the only one on the east coast of the island, and the reference to his being "reunited" with his ancestors is deleted.

Extreme examples of this type of modification are to
be observed in the lower stages of these series wherein little attempt is made to keep to the original text. The Oxford University Press version of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* presents a 112 page retelling of the primary elements of the novel's plot, and the Longman Group's edition of *The Count of Monte Cristo* includes only the first section of the novel.

Honeyfield (1977) has observed that such modification of material results in students developing reading strategies that are inappropriate for English. The modification of vocabulary, sentence complexity, and content leads not only to a reduction of the level of information, but also disrupts the ways in which information is organized by the reader.

Assuming that second language learners have not developed the necessary skills and background for comprehension of unmodified materials, is there an alternative to modification other than through reduction of vocabulary, sentence complexity, and content?

Recent research indicates that reading comprehension is less dependent on linguistic analysis than an information processing (Carroll, 1970; Goodman, 1970, 1973; Wardhaugh, 1971; Adams and Collins, 1979; Chang, 1983; Freebody and Anderson, 1983; Armbruster, 1984; Beck, McKeown, Omanson, and Pople, 1984; McConkie, 1984; Mason, 1984;
Roehler and Duffy, 1984).

This research refutes the notion that reading is a precise process which is centered primarily on exact and sequential perception of words, spelling patterns, or larger linguistic units. Instead, as information is processed, decisions about meaning are made, confirmed, rejected, or revised by the reader. Carrell (1981) has observed that reading comprehension is essentially an interactive process between the reader and text wherein the reader attempts to correlate the input with existing or available information. Comprehension involves organizing text data in terms of the information that is known or available to the reader. A higher degree of information that is available to the reader results in a higher level of comprehension. Thus, reading comprehension depends not merely on components of vocabulary and syntax, but upon the information that is made accessible to the reader.

Although a knowledge of vocabulary and linguistic structure is necessary, the crucial factor for comprehension is the level of comprehensible information that is available and can be processed by the reader (Adams and Collins, 1979). Furthermore, Adams (1982) has indicated that background information is particularly important for comprehension of texts that contain a high level of unfamiliar vocabulary.

Clarke (1980) constructed two studies, one on the reading performance in English by proficient Spanish speakers, and the second on the transfer of reading skills from one language to another. The results of the first study indicated that proficient readers use the same behaviors in reading materials from both their first and second language. The second study showed some transfer of skills between languages, but Clarke noted that limited control of language does seem to inhibit reading comprehension. Clarke recommended development of materials that include semantic clues, advanced organizers, and a degree of redundancy to facilitate comprehension.

The nature of linguistic input and interaction in second language learning and with ESL reading has been discussed in several recent studies (Cziko, 1977; Gaies, 1977; Honeyfield, 1977; Johnson, 1901; Long, 1981, 1983; Blau, 1982; Chaudron, 1983). These research findings indicate that the level of comprehensible information is important.
in developing comprehension. Yet, the objective of modified reading materials has been to reduce complexity through input modification by use of controlled vocabulary, syntax, and sentence length with no regard to interactional structure.

However, Long (1981, 1983) challenges the assumption that modified input is effective in facilitating second language acquisition (SLA). Although his research has been concerned with SLA in general, and not directly with reading, Long's observations can be applied to the area of ESL reading comprehension. Long has suggested that if linguistic adjustments promote comprehension, and if comprehension promotes language acquisition, then one may conclude that, at least indirectly, linguistic adjustments promote language acquisition. Furthermore, Long contends that research shows that modification of input, defined as the linguistic forms such as vocabulary or sentence length, is less important for non-native speakers' (NNS) comprehension than modification of the interactional structure of discourse, defined as the functions served by those forms (for example, repetition, expansion, or clarification). He concludes that SLA is possible and can be facilitated with unmodified input and modified interaction, but is not possible without modified interaction regardless of the
nature of the available input.

Chaudron (1983) has reported findings in listening comprehension that may also be relevant to reading. He discovered that scores in both recognition and recall of materials were significantly higher with the use of redundancy (a type of modified "interaction"). Chaudron investigated the effects of different types of topic reinstatements on NNS recognition and recall of sentence topics in lectures. He suggests that redundancy was the most important successful characteristic of reinstatement devices overall.

Dealing directly with the reading comprehension of ESL students, Blau (1982) challenges the assumption that short sentence length (modified input), yields better reading comprehension, and has concluded that materials with shorter sentence length possibly impede comprehension. Blau developed a series of eighteen passages in three versions in which the vocabulary and content were held constant, but the sentence structure varied. Version 1 used short simple sentences, version 2 complex sentences with information clues left intact, and version 3 used complex sentences with information clues deleted. The instrument was first administered to ESL students at the university level. The highest comprehension scores were with version
2. To determine if the readability formulae used to set levels were more accurate for younger students, the instrument was administered to a group of eighth grade students. Although the difference among the means of the three versions was not statistically significant, Blau notes that version 2 again yielded the highest comprehension scores, while version 1 yielded the lowest scores.

In summary, the evidence supports the view that modified input which reduces linguistic complexity, and often the level of content, does not necessarily facilitate development of the second language learners' reading comprehension. In addition, the evidence also supports the notion that modified interaction, which builds information into a text through extensive use of redundancy, clarification, and definition aids the second language learner's comprehension of the material. If it can be demonstrated that Long's claim (that modified interaction is more effective than modified input in facilitating comprehension) is relevant to second language reading, then alternative approaches to curriculum design and materials development would be indicated. In short, the dependence on materials utilizing modified input to the exclusion of modified interaction would not appropriately constitute the sum of reading materials in a secondary ESL program.
Purpose at the Study

Research has thus far investigated primarily the nature of reading comprehension, but has not focused on direct observation of ESL students' performance with modified input as compared with performance with modified interaction. Blau (1982) has shown that modified input itself does not facilitate reading comprehension, and Long (1981) has demonstrated that modified interaction is essential for language acquisition.

Interest in this issue is further increased through the direct experience of secondary schools that depend primarily on modified input materials, such as those published by the Longman Group and Oxford University Press, for ESL reading programs. Students who have moved into regular academic programs frequently need additional support instruction in reading skills because of a continued inability to comprehend the materials in the classroom. Recognizing that an ESL program must utilize materials that are modified to compensate for student weaknesses, the attention should focus on ways of accelerating the input, yet maintaining the comprehensibility.

The purpose of this study is to compare the performance of NNS secondary students on comprehension tests of material that has been written in three forms: native speaking 10th grade, modified input, and modified interact-
ional structure. The results of these comparisons should indicate if Long's findings (that modified interaction is more important to SLA than modified input) can be applied to the area of second language reading.

**Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized that:

1. the subjects will perform better with the modified input text and the modified interactional structure text than with the native speaker text.

   This hypothesis assumes that the native speaker materials present the least amount of background information with the least redundancy at the highest level of linguistic complexity. In short, the subjects must attempt to comprehend the material with the minimum level of available information.

2. the subjects' performance with the modified interactional structure text will be better than their performance with the modified input text.

   This hypothesis assumes that comprehension is less dependent on linguistic structure (input) than on the amount of information made available to the reader, and on the frequency with which the reader encounters the information. Thus, the text remains at a high level of linguistic complexity, but by developing modified interactional structures such as redundancy and definition, the reader is
offered more opportunity for information processing and hence a better opportunity for successful comprehension.
CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects for this study were thirty students attending Taipei American School in Taipei, Taiwan. The subjects had been placed in the ESL program as a result of their performance on the English proficiency examination tests administered prior to registration.

Taipei American School is an independent, overseas dependents school with a United States based curriculum. The student population is drawn from the international community of Taipei. The students are primarily from the upper-middle socioeconomic level that is represented by business executives and middle level employees of diplomatic and trade missions. Local citizens of Taiwan are prohibited from attending Taipei American School by the government on Taiwan; however, several students are local residents who have acquired citizenship and passports from other nations. They are thereby classified as Overseas Chinese and permitted to attend the school.

Taipei American School places heavy emphasis on college preparatory study so that students, both American and non-American, generally apply to the more competitive universities in the United States. Furthermore, the Interna
tional Baccalaureate program has been recently implemented into the curriculum with English designated as the primary language of instruction (Language A).

Although United States citizens technically make up over fifty per-cent of the student body, this statistic is misleading, as several students who are classified "American" are Chinese who have acquired United States citizenship and have reentered Taiwan with alien visas or certificates, thus being classified as "Overseas Chinese". The 'Overseas Chinese" are the largest single group of non-Americans registered at Taipei American School. A large number of Japanese and Koreans also attend the school.

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**TABLE 1**

Represented Language Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GROUP 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| GROUP 2      |        |
| Cantonese    | 1      |
| Japanese     | 3      |
| Indonesian   | 1      |
| Korean       | 3      |
| Mandarin     | 2      |

| GROUP 3      |        |
| Cantonese    | 3      |
| Japanese     | 3      |
| Indonesian   | 1      |
| Korean       | 2      |
| Thai         | 1      |
The students who participated in this study ranged from the ninth to the eleventh grade. They were divided into three groups of ten students each. Each group consisted of two ninth grade students, six tenth grade students, and two eleventh grade students. An attempt was made to balance groups with a similar number of native speakers at similar levels of reading abilities (see Table 1) which, while maintaining the equivalence of reading levels, interfered with the randomness of selection. The subjects had been informed of the nature of the test the previous day and were assigned to groups as they entered the classroom.

Measure 5

All students admitted to Taipei American School whose native language is not English are evaluated by the Department of English as a Second Language before placement into the regular academic program. The students are placed in an ESL level according to their performance on the following standardized tests:

1. Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Level D
2. Davis Diagnostic Test for Students of ESL
3. Test of Ability to Subordinate

Students must meet the minimum requirements on two out of three tests for placement at any level within the ESL program. Furthermore, the ESL department monitors and
re-evaluates students according to their classroom performance during the first two weeks in class, and recommends changes in level whenever appropriate. Thus, the students who participated in the study are quite homogeneous at their level of English reading ability and grade level.

The students who participated in the study have been placed at the intermediate level of the ESL program. The students at this level read from three to five years below grade level as measured by the Gates-MacGinitie Test and have scored between 120 and 90 points on the Davis Test. This means that a ninth grade student in this study reads at approximately the fourth grade level while an eleventh grade student reads at the seventh or eighth grade level.

Treatment

To verify the equivalence of the reading levels of the subjects, the reading scores of each group were analyzed (see Table 2). All of the subjects in the study had been participating in the ESL program for a minimum of two semesters and no more than four semesters. The figures in Table 2 indicate that there was no significant difference among the reading levels of the three groups.

Instrumentation

The measures used in the study were three texts based on the same topic and a twenty item multiple choice test.
TABLE 2
ANALYSIS OF READING SCORES OF SUBJECTS

Test used: Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Level D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 3.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 7.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 6.7</td>
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<td>4. 6.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 6.2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>6. 5.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 4.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 4.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 3.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. 3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<table>
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<th>X</th>
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<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>1.57</td>
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</table>

ANOVA FOR READING SCORES OF THE THREE GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Source of Variance</th>
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<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The first text, classified as the Native Speaker Text, was written to correspond with the tenth grade level of difficulty. The second text, called the Modified Text, was modified in both sentence structure and vocabulary. The third text, called the Modified International
Structure Text, retained the native speaker level of difficulty in both sentence structure and vocabulary, but elaborated the information through redundancy and definition.

The Dale-Chall Readability Formula was applied to each of the samples to determine a general measure of readability. This formula measures the sentence length and vocabulary complexity of a text to arrive at a readability level. Concepts and the degree of information are not factors that are considered by the formula. The results indicated that the Native Speaker Text was at the tenth grade level of readability, the Modified Input Text was at the fifth grade level, and the Modified Interactional Structure Text was at the ninth grade level of readability.

The three text5 presented the same information about the life and career of Benito Mussolini. However, in the Modified Input Text the sentence structure and vocabulary level were reduced. Thus, this selection from the Native Speaker Text,

From the beginning, it was obvious that the Duce was an incompetent war leader.

is rendered in the Modified Input Text as,

Mussolini was a poor leader in war. This was seen by everybody at the start of the war.

Selections in the Native Speaker Text that were extremely complicated both structurally and lexically were
broken down to several small units of input. For example, this sentence from the Native Speaker Text,

*During the summer of 1939, Mussolini endeavored to persuade Hitler to avoid war, but in September the Fuhrer ordered his armies into Poland, thus initiating the Second World War.*

is broken into six reduced sentences,

Mussolini did not want war in 1939. He tried to keep Hitler out of war. But Hitler did go to war. He started the war in September, 1939. He sent his army into a country called Poland. This started World War II.

With the Modified Interactional Structure Text, the vocabulary and syntactic complexity were retained, but information was emphasized through redundancy, clarification, and definition. For example, the Native Speaker Text describes Mussolini's dismissal and arrest in one sentence,

*On July 25, Mussolini was arrested and Badoglio was installed as the Prime Minister.*

The Modified Interactional Structure Text retains the structure of the Native Speaker Text, but clarifies by elaboration, such as giving the complete date, and with redundancy by repeating the information in a follow-up sentence:

*On July 25, 1943 Mussolini was arrested and put into jail, and Badoglio was installed into office as the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister and leader of Italy was no longer Mussolini, but rather Pietro Badoglio.*

Correlation of concepts among the three texts was
established through the use of a procedure devised by Walter Kintsch (1977). Kintsch assumes that the final skill of a fluent reader is a highly developed process of acquiring information from a highly structured visual display of text. The problem with this assumption is to devise an acceptable definition for "acquiring information".

Kintsch contends that meaning within a text is the result of an ordered list of propositions, consisting of a number of word concepts, called a text base. A word concept is part of an individual's semantic lexicon, a listing of words and information about meaning and use. The meaning of a word concept is not strictly defined, but rather is related to other word concepts in the lexicon and defined according to possible uses. Kintsch refers to this process as the propositional frame. A word concept is usually expressed by a word, but may also extend to a phrase. Since a variety of meanings can be derived from any given unit, the relationship among word concepts is many to many.

A proposition consists of multiples of word concepts of which one serves as a predicator and the others as arguments. The predicator establishes a relationship among the arguments within the proposition. Predicators are usually verbs, adjectives, or sentence conjunctions. Arguments are usually nouns.

The lexicon specifies to the reader which combination...
tions of word concepts are semantically acceptable within the framework of a proposition. Kintsch uses the word **FEEL** as an example. **FEEL** possesses two primary meanings: (1) to touch, and (2) to be aware of. With the first meaning, the word may combine into propositions in the form (FEEL, AGENT, OBJECT) where AGENT is a class of word concepts which may be used in the role of agent, and OBJECT is defined within the reader's lexicon as word concepts that may used in the role of objects. In Kintsch's model, the predicator is written first in a proposition, and the arguments are separated by commas. Thus, (FEEL, JOHN, CLOTH) would be an acceptable proposition leading to the sentence "John feels the cloth." Conversely, (FEEL, CLOTH, JOHN), which becomes "The cloth feels John", is not an acceptable proposition in that "cloth" does not act in the role of an agent in the English lexicon.

The second use of **FEEL** may be found in propositions of (FEEL, EXPERIENCER, INSTRUMENT). Again, the proposition (FEEL, JOHN, DESIRE) is acceptable as the sentence "John felt a desire," but (FEEL, DESIRE, JOHN) becomes an unacceptable sentence, "The desire feels John."

The second stage of the Kintsch model is the text base, an ordered list of propositions. All text bases are structured hierarchically by the repetition rule. All propositions that share a common argument are connected, leading
to levels of propositions.

Using the Kintsch model, each text in the instrument was equivalent on the basis of propositions. Any given selection of one text had the corresponding propositions of each of the other two texts. For example, the propositions (DESPISE, FATHER ((MUSSOLINI) (TRADE, IMPOVERISHED BLACKSMITH)) ALL WEALTHY, ALL IDLE) are presented in each of the texts as follows:

(1) NATIVE SPEAKER TEXT

Mussolini’s father, by trade a somewhat impoverished blacksmith, despised all who were wealthy and idle.

(2) MODIFIED INPUT TEXT

Mussolini’s father was a BLACKSMITH. A blacksmith makes things out of metal. Mussolini’s father was poor. He hated rich people. He also hated people who did not work.

(3) MODIFIED INTERACTIONAL STRUCTURE TEXT

Mussolini’s father was by trade a poor and impoverished blacksmith who despised and hated all people who were wealthy and did not need to work.

This system was utilized throughout the three texts. Propositions were developed, then used to generate a text base for each text.

A twenty item multiple-choice test was used for each of the texts. Each item consisted of a stem and five possible responses. The test emphasized recognition of information directly from the text rather than inference.
Each question was correlated with a proposition that would be found in each of the three texts. For example, the correct response for the item:

Mussalini said he started the "March on Rome" because
a. the problems were too much for the king
*b. there was danger from the communists
  c. he wanted to be a "Man of Action"
  d. the peace settlement gained little for Italy
  e. he wanted to start the new Roman Empire

is clearly stated in each of the three texts:

**NATIVE SPEAKER TEXT**

Claiming that Italy was in danger of falling to the communists, Mussolini ordered the so-called "March on Rome" in October . . .

**MODIFIED INPUT TEXT**

Mussolini said the communists were dangerous. He said the communists wanted power and were trying to take over. So he started the "March on Rome" in October, 1922.

**MODIFIED INTERACTIONAL STRUCTURE TEXT**

Claiming that Italy was in danger of falling to the communists, Mussolini organized and started the so-called "March on Rome" in October, 1922.

To prevent pre-existing knowledge of the topic from affecting the results of the study, the subjects were surveyed on their familiarity with Mussolini and Italian Fascism. All of the subjects indicated no knowledge of the topic. In addition, the test without any text was administered to ten native speaking tenth grade students to insure that the items could not be answered without the information from the text.
To establish the instrument's reliability at the tenth grade level of difficulty, the Native Speaker Text and the test were administered to a group of native speaking students from Taipei American School. Ten students each from the eighth, ninth, and eleventh grades, and twenty-five students from the tenth grade were used for this measure. The group consisted primarily of United States citizens who had relocated temporarily to Taipei because of parental employment. Some of the students are long-term residents of Taipei, but are native English speakers and have been educated entirely within the American curriculum. Children of missionaries stationed in Taipei are examples of this group. One subject is a British citizen, but has been educated exclusively in the American system. The results of these measures are presented in Table 3.

**Procedures**

In late April, 1984, the three groups participating in the study were given the texts and test during their ESL class. The subjects were instructed to indicate their grade level and native language on the answer sheet. Fifty minutes were allotted to complete both the reading of the text and the test. The subjects were informed that the text could be used while answering the questions and were encouraged to make educated guesses if necessary, but not to
TABLE 3

COMBINED TEST SCORES OF GRADES 8, 9, 10, 11 NATIVE SPEAKING STUDENTS ON THE NATIVE SPEAKER TEXT

\[ N = 55 \]
\[ K = 20 \]
\[ \bar{X} = 16 \]
\[ SD = 3.4 \]
\[ KR = .75 \]

TEST SCORES OF NATIVE SPEAKING 10TH GRADE STUDENTS ON THE NATIVE SPEAKER TEXT

\[ N = 25 \]
\[ K = 20 \]
\[ \bar{X} = 16.7 \]
\[ SD = 3.12 \]
\[ KR = .75 \]

randomly mark answers. No questions concerning the content, pronunciation of words, or definitions were allowed. The subjects were informed of the time limitation and the time was indicated on the chalkboard in ten minute intervals during the test. The subjects were also assured that their performance on the test would not affect their grades as this study was not a part of their curriculum.
CHAPTER 3
RESULTS

Analysis

The student performance on the test after reading the Native Speaker Text was significantly lower than with either the Modified Input Text or the Modified Interactional Structure Text. Table 4 presents a summary of scores.

TABLE 4

SUMMARY OF SCORES ON THE MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST ON THE THREE TEXTS OF DISCOURSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEXT</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native Speaker</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified Input</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified Interactional Structure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results reveal a significant difference between the level of comprehension of the two modified texts and the Native Speaker Text. However, the difference in the scores between the two modified texts does not appear significantly wide. When an ANOVA was calculated with the
three groups, a significant F ratio was obtained (Table 51. The Scheffe' method of post-hoc analysis was applied to see the degree of significant difference between each of the groups. This analysis revealed that the Native Speaker Text group was significantly different from the other two groups. However, there was no significant difference between the NS text group and the Modified Interactional Structure Text group. Furthermore, there was no significant difference between the Modified Input Text group and the MIS text group.

TABLE 5
ANOVA - TEST RESULTS ON THE THREE TEXTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>11.8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post-HOC Analysis:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t obs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NS vs MI</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS vs MIS</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI vs MIS</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ t \text{ crit} = 3.32 \]

\*p < .01

These results support Hypothesis 1, that the level of comprehension would be lowest on the Native Speaker Text.
The results do not support Hypothesis 2, which stated that comprehension of the Modified Interactional Structure Text would be greater than on the Modified Input Text. However, the test scores of the subjects who were given the MIS text (written at the ninth grade level of difficulty) are almost identical to the scores of the subjects who read the Modified Input Text (written at the fifth grade level of difficulty). Thus, while the Native Speaker Text was clearly the most difficult version, the Modified Input and modified Interactional Structure Texts were almost equal in comprehensibility to the subjects despite the Modified Interactional Structure Text’s higher reading level.

Discussion

The results of the study suggest some interesting conclusions. First, the hypothesis that students in ESL perform poorly on unmodified native speaker materials has been supported. The level of syntax and vocabulary, as well as the lack of background information within the text, apparently interfered with the students’ level of comprehension.

Item analysis of the test results showed a consistency of correct responses occurring on items that were stated directly and exactly within a text. For example, Item 8, which was the only item that was correctly answered
by all the subjects regardless of the text used:

Mussolini was arrested on
   a. June 30, 1942
   *b. July 25, 1943
   c. April 27, 1945
   d. April 30, 1945
   e. May 5, 1945

The answer to this item appears explicitly in each of the texts:

**NATIVE SPEAKER TEXT**

On July 25, Mussolini was arrested, and Badoglio was installed as the Prime Minister.

**MODIFIED INPUT TEXT**

So Mussolini was put into jail on July 25, 1943.

**MODIFIED INTERACTIONAL STRUCTURE TEXT**

On July 25, 1943, Mussolini was arrested and put into jail, and Badoglio was installed into office as Prime Minister.

Although the item is poor in that the distractors were inadequate and the correct response is too obvious, it does serve to confirm that the students were able to identify information that was presented in a direct and explicit manner. Even though "1943" was absent from the NS text, the year had appeared earlier in the same paragraph. Likewise, the MI text uses the phrase "put into jail" rather than "arrested", but this was no obstacle to the subjects who read this version.
A more discriminating item was Item 1:

In 1919, the Italian government believed that economic problems would
1. go away in a short time
2. be solved by the Duce
3. continue with rising prices and unemployment
4. cause strikes and more unemployment
5. be solved with strong price controls

The information for the item is presented in this way:

**NATIVE SPEAKER TEXT**

The Italian government showed little inclination toward price control, believing that the problem would evaporate as soon as the adjustment to peace had been completed.

**MODIFIED INPUT TEXT**

The government did not do much about prices. They said that the problem will go away soon.

**MODIFIED INTERACTIONAL STRUCTURE**

The Italian government showed little inclination toward price controls, not wanting to control the cost of things, and believed the problem of high prices and unemployment would evaporate and go away as soon as the adjustment to peace had been completed.

Table 6 shows the student responses to this item. The correct response was clear to readers of both the Modified Input and Modified Interactional Structure texts, but poorly perceived by readers of the Native Speaker Text.

Probably the most difficult problem with this item for the NS text readers was the vocabulary, in particular, the word "evaporate" as it was used in this context.
phrase "go away" is used in both the MI and MIS text. Interestingly, half of the NS text readers chose the response "c", possibly being distracted by the final sentence in the paragraph in which the information was given:

Unfortunately, prices continued to rise and unemployment increased which led to a series of strikes and a concurrent rise in the popularity of the PSI.

---------------------------------------------------------------

TABLE 6
RESPONSES TO ITEM 1 BY EACH OF THE THREE GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>NS</th>
<th>MI</th>
<th>MIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---------------------------------------------------------------

Item 13 was even more discriminating to the subjects who read the NS and MI texts. This item is unusual in that it required a degree of inference to arrive at the correct response:

During the first seven years of rule, the Fascists
a. made progress in many areas
b. were successful in building a better Italy
c. were very unpopular in Italy
d. decided to attack Ethiopia to gain territory
e. gained very little in real achievement or progress

Subjects who read the NS and MI text were required to recognize that "first seven years" referred to the years
1923 to 1930 as stated in the texts. The information was more explicit in the Modified Interactional Structure Text:

**NATIVE SPEAKER TEXT**

The years from 1923 to 1930 were marked by much fanfare, but with little substantial accomplishment.

**MODIFIED INPUT TEXT**

The Fascists said many things from 1923 to 1930. They said that they did many things. This was not really true. They did not do very many things.

**MODIFIED INTERACTIONAL STRUCTURE TEXT**

The seven years from 1923 to 1930 were marked by much fanfare and publicity, but with little substantial accomplishment or real success.

The responses of the three groups to this item is given in Table 7. The readers of the NS text were for the most part baffled by the item, and it is interesting that half of the readers of the MI text also missed the correct
response. Yet only two readers of the MIS text marked the wrong response. It is not possible to determine if the cause of the responses by the readers of the NS and MI texts were the result of not inferring seven years or from some other factor in the distractors.

The study, however, did not deal with the higher levels of reading comprehension: recall, inference, and synthesis. Although six items on the test could be considered to some degree inferential, the focus was directed to recognition.

One reason Hypothesis 2 was not completely supported may be the design of the instrument which retained concepts through all three texts. Hypothesis 2 predicted that the MIS Text would produce a higher level of comprehension than the MI Text. However, the mean score of the subjects who read the MI Text was slightly higher than, although not significantly different from, that of those who read the MI Text. The basis of the assumption that the Modified Interactional Structure Text would be more comprehensible to the subjects had been that the Modified Input Text would reduce the information density and thereby the Opportunity for subjects to adequately process information in order to make correct responses.

On the other hand, the Modified Interactional Structure Text would increase the information density, thus
affording the reader more opportunity to discover the correct answer. This assumption had been further supported by Long's research indicating that modified interaction is more important to language acquisition than modified input.

However, care had been taken to assure that each concept in the Native Speaker Text was present in the other two texts so that any item on the test could be answered from any of the three texts. In effect, one factor of modified input as described by Honeyfield and Blau had been neutralized—the reduction of information.

In addition, the design specified that the subjects would be permitted to use the text to locate the information needed for the responses, thus giving a further advantage to the reader. As was previously noted, although the subjects who used the MIS text did not score significantly higher than those who used the MI text, they did score almost as well. Consideration should also be given to the fact that the MIS text was written not only at a higher readability level than the MI text, but was also significantly longer. The subjects using this text were thereby under a greater time restraint and had less opportunity to discover and verify information.

Some question concerning the randomness of the selection of subjects sample in this study may be raised as the attempt was made to balance the language distribution
and reading levels of the subjects. However, the analysis of the reading levels of the students indicated no significant difference among the three groups, thus the validity of the Study should not be compromised.

Conclusions

The performance of the subjects in this study supports the theory that information processing used for successful reading by native speakers is also utilized by ESL students. Reading comprehension of both native and non-native speakers is dependent on the presence of cues that are interpreted in the context of both the reader's previous knowledge and the availability of comprehensible supporting information within the text. To the extent that a reader lacks the necessary background information, including vocabulary and syntax structure, the level of information that is available within the text becomes crucial to comprehensibility and thus comprehension. The NS text offered the minimum level of cues for the ESL student to utilize in the reading process. The MI text offered a higher level of cues by modifying the complexity of vocabulary and syntax. However, the MIS text also offered a high level of processing cues by providing more information through redundancy and explanation without reducing the syntactic and lexical complexity.
The results of this project also support Long's conclusion that modification of interaction, in this case through redundancy and explanation, facilitates comprehension. While the test results of the MI text indicated a high level of comprehensibility, the almost equal performance by subjects who read the MIS text suggests an option for the development of ESL reading materials that may be advantageous to the upper levels of language instruction. If a similar level of comprehensibility is possible with a more complicated presentation of information, the higher levels of ESL instruction may more adequately facilitate the student's transition to materials that have a greater degree of syntactic complexity and a more extensive vocabulary.

Further research is needed to discover if comparable findings would occur with recall and inference tasks. The present study was directed toward simple recognition, which is a basic comprehension skill, but the ability of the subjects to recall information and, more importantly, draw conclusions and inferences from material also needs to be addressed. It is essential, however, that in developing a more advanced study in this area, the principle of matching concepts throughout the instrument be retained.
APPENDIX A

TEXT 1: NATIVE SPEAKER TEXT

MUSSOLINI

1 The events and personalities of the Nazi era in Germany are well known. Strange, however, is the neglect of Benito Mussolini, the Duce of Fascist Italy who provided the inspiration for the rise of Hitler's Third Reich, and who was ultimately dragged into oblivion by his loyalty to the Fuhrer. Even those who are familiar with Mussolini usually regard him as a rather comical figure. Yet at one time it was Mussolini who was the master, and Hitler the adoring follower. No one wept when Hitler was destroyed, yet Mussolini's fate prompted even the Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi to comment, "Poor Mussolini."

2 Benito Mussolini was born the eldest of three children in 1883 in the east-central region of Italy called Romagna. This area was renowned for its antagonism toward the church and state, in particular the king, and Mussolini was brought up as an anti-monarchial and anti-clerical socialist in the Italian tradition. At that time the socialists favored removal of the king and the establishment of a republic. Mussolini's father, by trade an impoverished blacksmith, despised all who were
wealthy and idle. His mother, by contrast, was a devout Catholic who earned extra income for the family by teaching in an elementary school.

At an early age Mussolini rebelled against authority. His mother had saved an adequate sum necessary to enroll him in a nearby Catholic boarding school, but because he paid the minimum rate of tuition, Mussolini was forced to sit at a segregated table during meals, and was served leftovers scraped from the plates of the more privileged students. Mussolini soon reacted to this humiliation, first by assaulting a teacher, then by attacking a wealthy student. He was expelled from the school by the second year.

Mussolini completed his education at a secular school and was graduated in 1902, receiving an elementary teaching certificate. As he had little interest in pursuing a career in education, Mussolini emigrated to Lausanne, Switzerland seeking employment. His experience there was a total failure, and he was reduced to begging in the streets, an occupation that resulted in his arrest and imprisonment for three weeks.

In desperation, he appealed to a group of Italian socialists residing in Lausanne for assistance. He was taken in by them, and for several years he worked in Switzerland and Austria on behalf of the international
socialist cause for the abolition of national states and the establishment of a unified world government. By 1908, Mussolini had returned to Italy to fill an administrative position in the Italian Socialist Party (Partito socialista italiano or PSI). He soon published a small weekly journal called La Lotta di Classe (The Class Struggle).

For the next several years, until the outbreak of the First World War, Mussolini was engaged in a frenzy of activity, organizing strikes as well as anti-government demonstrations, moving up in power in the PSI, finally receiving the editorial appointment to Avanti!, the major socialist journal in Italy. He stood for parliamentary election in 1913, but was resoundingly defeated. He then attempted a very clumsy insurrection in Milan against the civil authorities, but the effort collapsed when the police beat him to unconsciousness.

The pivotal point in Mussolini's career occurred with the outbreak of World War I. The socialist party was unequivocally opposed to the war, and Mussolini originally followed the party line by editorially denouncing Italian entry. However, a month later he unexpectedly published a series of articles in Avanti! supporting Italian participation in the conflict. This divergence from party policy resulted in Mussolini's
termination as editor of Pzantil and his expulsion from the socialist party. However, his editorials had caught the attention of a group of healthy industrialists who supported Mussolini's establishment of an independent journal called Il popoli d'Italia (The People of Italy). In 1915, he enlisted in the army and was sent to the front, but the region was seldom involved in the conflict. In 1917, Mussolini was seriously injured in an accident and convalesced for six months. Upon recovery he was discharged from military service and returned to his editorial position in July, 1917.

After the conclusion of the war in 1919, Italy faced two major problems. The first was the rapid rise in living costs and the resultant discontent among the common people whose incomes did not increase, and among the discharged veterans who could not find employment. The second problem was the failure of the government to secure Italy's "rightful share" of the benefits of victory at the Versailles peace conferences.

The Italian government showed little inclination toward price control, believing that the problem would evaporate as soon as the adjustment to peace had been completed. Unfortunately, prices continued to rise and unemployment increased which led to a series of strikes and a concurrent rise in the popularity of the PSI.
As for the Versailles peace conference, the Italian diplomats had believed that they would receive the territory of Dalmatia along the western Adriatic coast as Italy's share of the peace settlement. However, the final agreement only defined Italy's border with Austria, awarding Dalmatia to the newly created nation of Yugoslavia.

The Italian government's failure to resolve economic problems, as well as the disappointment over the peace settlement, resulted in a total loss of popular support for the political establishment. Hoping to benefit from this lack of confidence in the government, Mussolini founded the National Fascist Party, (Partito nazionale fascista or PNF), in March, 1919. He furthermore organized a private militia called the Fasci di Combattimento, more commonly known as the Blackshirts from their uniforms.

During the first few years after the founding of the Fascist Party, Mussolini enjoyed only modest success in getting parliamentary representation. However, in late 1922 he believed his position was secure enough for him to attempt a bold coup d'etat. Claiming that Italy was in danger of falling to the communists, Mussolini organized the so called "March on Rome" in October, and demanded that the king appoint a Fascist government with
Mussolini as the Prime Minister. The king, convinced that a multitude of Blackshirts was certain to occupy Rome, quietly capitulated to the Fascists on October 29. In fact, the "Blackshirt Army" numbered fewer than 250,000 mostly unarmed civilians who camped outside the city, and Mussolini remained discreetly near the Swiss border until he had received the written proclamation appointing him Prime Minister. The "march" itself actually occurred two days later, after Mussolini had arrived by train and had assumed office.

Once in office, Mussolini set out to consolidate his power. In 1926, he declared the Fascist Party to be the majority in parliament, abolished all organized opposition to Fascism, and proclaimed himself the Duce of all Italy.

The years from 1923 to 1930 were marked by much fanfare, but with little substantial accomplishment. Fascist claims of success in building a better Italy attracted many admirers throughout the world, including a young German politician by the name of Adolph Hitler, who in the late 1920's requested an autographed photo of the Duce. The request was refused.

Mussolini himself carefully cultivated a public reputation as a man of action, expert in a multitude of skills ranging from simple farm labor to race car
driving (when, in fact, the Duce had never learned to operate a car). Each year brought exaggerated claims of triumph in industry, agriculture, and military development--factors that would accelerate Italy's immediate collapse at the beginning of World War II when the reality of low productivity became obvious in the Italian war effort.

In an attempt to have Italy recognized as a major world power, Mussolini conducted an active foreign policy. Although territorial expansion through military aggression was a policy of Fascism, Mussolini avoided direct armed conflicts until the 1930's. By that time, Adolph Hitler had assumed power in Germany and had begun his process of acquiring territory through threats and confrontation. The Duce, humiliated by Hitler's success in Europe, directed his attention to north Africa. In 1935, Italian forces overran Ethiopia, and Mussolini announced the foundation of the new Roman Empire. Despite the addition of this new territory, the Italian conquest of Ethiopia was a serious blunder.

First, the new territory had nothing to offer Italy. The Fascist government was forced to send much needed money and products into Africa while receiving nothing in return. Then an army of 250,000 men was stationed in Ethiopia to support the Italian rule, thus
placing a further unnecessary burden on the economy. Finally, Italy's reputation as an international power was irreparably damaged as the world witnessed the modern, fully equipped Italian war machine struggle to defeat horsemen armed with spears.

18 in 1938, Mussolini sought to repair the damage to his reputation by acting as a mediator between Germany and other European nations over Hitler's demand for more territory. Yet the Duce was dismayed over the Fuhrer's easy success in annexing Austria, then Czechoslovakia to the Third Reich. In 1938, Mussolini also signed the Axis Pact with Hitler. Although the agreement seemed a treaty of equal partners, in truth the pact from the beginning was under the total domination of the Fuhrer.

19 During the summer of 1939, Mussolini endeavored to persuade Hitler to avoid war, but in September the Fuhrer ordered his armies into Poland, thus initiating the Second World War. Realizing that Italy was unprepared for the conflict, Mussolini at first wisely maintained neutrality. However, by May of the following year Germany had overrun most of Europe, including half of France. The Duce, impatient for action, recklessly entered the war in June and immediately launched an attack against France. However, the French army that had been easily overwhelmed by German forces in a matter
of days quickly repulsed the Italian attack, thus leaving Mussolini with a humiliating defeat at the war's onset.

20 From the beginning it was obvious that the Duce was an incompetent war leader. Despite his reputation as a man of action, he behaved more like a timid old man, unsure of himself and capable only of rage in the face of defeat. After eighteen months, not only had Italy lost the war, but the northern third of the country had been occupied by German troops sent by Hitler to keep the Duce in power.

21 In spite of these setbacks, Mussolini insisted that victory was near, but the bombing of Italian cities in early 1943 convinced the king that the Fascist government had to be replaced. At first, the king was reluctant to move directly against the Duce, but the July 19th bombing of Rome spurred him into action. He ordered the arrest of Mussolini and planned to appoint Pietro Badoglio, a military leader, as Prime Minister. Fascist leaders in Rome, hearing of the king's action, convened and dismissed the Duce from the Fascist party. On July 25, Mussolini was arrested and Badoglio was installed as the Prime Minister.

22 Taking advantage of the situation, Hitler ordered German troops deeper into Italy. By September, the
Germans controlled two-thirds of the peninsula, and had established Mussolini, who had been rescued from imprisonment by German-commandos, as the president of the Italian Social Republic. This "republic" was merely a Nazi puppet state that quickly collapsed a few months after its establishment as the Germans withdrew from Italy in 1945.

In April, the Duce attempted an escape into Germany by posing as a German corporal, but he was captured by a group of Italian communists on the twenty-seventh. The next morning Mussolini and a few of his followers were executed by a firing squad and their bodies dumped in a town square in Milan.

When some citizens discovered the bodies and recognized the Duce, they hung his body by the feet in the town center while hundreds of people, angered by the misery the Fascists had caused, threw filth and hollered insults.

So ended the new Roman Empire.
Most people know what happened in Nazi Germany, and they also know about the people in Nazi Germany. But many people do not know about Benito Mussolini. Mussolini was a leader in Italy. He called himself "Duce". "Duce" is an Italian word, and it means "leader". Hitler used many of Mussolini's ideas. Hitler called himself Fuhrer", and this word also means "leader". Mussolini joined Hitler in World War II. Both Hitler and Mussolini lost the war, and they were both killed at the end of the war. Some people do know about Mussolini. But they often think that he was just a funny man. Once Mussolini was the leader, and Hitler was his follower. Hitler was killed, and no one was sorry. Mussolini was also killed, and some people were sorry. Mahatma Gandhi was a leader in India. Somebody told Gandhi that Mussolini died. Gandhi just said, "Poor Mussolini".

Benito Mussolini was born in 1883. He was the oldest child. There were two other children in his family. He was born in east-central Italy. This place is called Romagna. The people in Romagna did not like the Catholic
Church. They did not like the leaders of Italy. The leader of Italy was a king. Mussolini also did not like the Catholic Church nor the king. He became a SOCIALIST. Many people in Italy were socialists. The socialists were against the king. They wanted a republic in Italy.

Mussolini's father was a BLACKSMITH. A blacksmith makes things out of metal. Mussolini's father was poor. He hated rich people. He also hated people who did not work.

Mussolini's mother was different. She was a good Catholic, and she worked in a school. She was a teacher of small children. She made extra money for her family.

Mussolini did not like to obey people. He was still a young boy, but he did not obey his teachers. Mussalini's mother saved some money, so Mussolini was able to go to a boy's school. The school was near his town. It was a Catholic school, and the boys lived at the school. Mussolini was able to pay only a little money to the school. He did not pay for the best food, so he sat at a different table. The rich boys did not eat all of their food. So Mussolini ate it. He was very unhappy about this. One time he hit a teacher. Later he hit one of the rich boys. The school did not let him come back to school. Mussolini studied at that school for one year,
4 Mussolini did not go back to the Catholic school. He went to a public school. He finished school in 1902, and he got an elementary teaching certificate. This was a paper from the government. It said that Mussolini was now a teacher. He could teach small children.

Mussolini did not want to be a teacher. So he went to a town named Lausanne. This town is in Switzerland. Mussolini wanted to work in Lausanne, but he could not find a job. He became a beggar. A beggar asks people to give him money or food. The police in Lausanne took Mussolini away and they put him in jail. He was in jail far three weeks.

5 Mussolini was very worried and unhappy. He asked for help. Same socialists from Italy lived in Lausanne. Mussolini asked them for help. They did help him, so he worked for them. These people were INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS. They did not like different countries. They wanted a world with no countries. They also wanted the world to have only one government.

Mussolini worked for these people for six years. Sometimes he stayed in Switzerland, and sometimes he was in Austria. He finally went back to Italy in 1908. He became a leader in the socialist party in Italy. This party was called PARTITO SOCIALISTA ITALIANA in Italian. Sometimes people just said PSI.
Then Mussolini started a newspaper. He printed this newspaper one time every week. He called this newspaper LA LOTTE DI CLASSE. This means THE CLASS STRUGGLE.

6 Mussolini was busy for many years. He did many things in Italy until World War I started. He started STRIKES. A strike means that people do not go to work, and do not let other people work. Mussolini also started DEMONSTRATIONS against the government. This means a lot of people marched and carried signs. These people did not like the government. Mussolini also became very important in the socialist party, and he got POWER. This means he told other people do things.

He also became the EDITOR of AVANTI!. This was the biggest socialist newspaper in Italy. An editor is the leader of a newspaper. Mussolini tried to get into the PARLIAMENT of Italy in 1913. The parliament makes the laws of a country. But few people wanted him to be in parliament, so he lost. Then he tried to take over the government of the city of Milan. He did not do this very well, and the police in Milan hit and beat him until he did not move.

7 World War I started, and this was most important to Mussolini. The start of this war changed him. The socialist party was against the war. At first, Mussolini was against the war, too. He said that Italy must not
fight in this war. But one month later he wrote some very different stories. He put these stories in AVANTI!. He said Italy must join the war.

The socialist party was very angry. They said he was no longer the editor of AVANTI!. They also said that he was not a member of the socialist party. But some men read Mussolini's stories. These men were very rich, and they owned many factories. These men were INDUSTRIALISTS, and they liked Mussolini's stories. So they helped him. He was able to start a new newspaper. This newspaper was called IL POPOLI D'ITALIA. This means THE PEOPLE OF ITALY.

Mussolini joined the army in 1915. The army sent him to the war area, but this area did not have much fighting. However, Mussolini had an accident in 1917. He was hurt very badly. He had to stay in a hospital for six months. He did get well, but did not go back to the army. The army did not need him, so he went back to his job in July, 1917.

World War I ended in 1919. Then Italy had two big problems. The first problem was money. Everything cost too much and soon became more costly. Common people were not happy about this. Things cost more money. Yet people did not get more money from their jobs. VETERANS also had a problem. A veteran is a person who is no longer in
the army. These men could not get jobs. This made them very unhappy.

The other problem was about the war. Italy and some other countries won the war. These countries had a meeting. They met in a small town in France. This town was called Versailles, and they talked about peace. The government of Italy sent men to this meeting. These men were called DIPLOMATS. The Italian diplomats did not do a good job at the meeting. They did not get the things they wanted. They did not get a "rightful share". This means other countries got more than Italy.

The government did not do much about prices. They said that the problem will go away soon. They said that people will change back to peace and forget the war. They said that prices will go down very soon. But this did not happen. The prices did not go down. The cost of everything went up. So more people did not have jobs. This made people start many strikes, and more people liked the Italian Socialist Party (PSI).

The Italian diplomats did not get many things at Versailles. The Italians wanted a place named Dalmatia. This place is near Italy. It is on the west shore of an ocean. This ocean is named the Adriatic Sea. The Italians said that Dalmatia was a part of Italy. But Italy did not get Dalmatia. Italy only got a new border
with Austria. The other countries made a new country. This new country was called Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia got the place named Dalmatia.

11 The government did not solve the money problems. People were not happy about the peace meetings in Versailles. So the Italian people did not like the government at all. Mussolini was happy about this. He hoped this could help him. He started his own PARTY in March, 1919. A party is a group of people, and these people like the same things. So they try to get into the government. Mussolini called his party the NATIONAL FASCIST PARTY. This is called PARTITO NATIONALE FASCISTA in Italian. People sometimes called the party the PNF. People in this party were called FASCISTS.

Mussolini also started his own small army. This army was named FASCI DI COMBATTIMENTO. All the men in this army always wore black shirts. So people usually called them the BLACKSHIRTS.

12 Mussolini did not do well at first. Only a few Fascists got into parliament. But Mussolini thought the party was strong. He decided to take over the government in 1922. This is called a COUP D'ETAT. Mussolini said the communists were dangerous. He said the communists wanted power and were trying to take over. So he started the "March on Rome" in October, 1922.
The king of Italy thought many Blackshirts were near Rome. So he chose the Fascists for the government. This happened on October 29, 1922.

But the king was wrong. The "Blackshirt Army" was very small. It was not really an army at all. It had only 25,000 men. These men were not real soldiers, and they did not have guns. They just stayed outside the city of Rome. Mussolini was not in Rome that day. He stayed near Switzerland. The king sent Mussolini a letter. This letter said Mussolini was the Prime Minister. So Mussolini went to Rome on a train. The real March on Rome was on October 31, 1922. Mussolini arrived in Rome and he became the Prime Minister that day.

Mussolini was now the leader of the government, and he wanted all the power. So he did three things in 1926. First, he said the Fascists were the largest party in the parliament. Then he said there were no other parties in Italy. There was only the Fascist Party. Finally, he said he was the "Duce" of all Italy. "Duce" means "Leader".

The Fascists said many things from 1923 to 1930. They said that they did many things. This was not really true. They did not do very many things. But many people believed the Fascists. They believed the Fascists did
these things, and they liked the Fascists. One man who liked the Fascists was Adolph Hitler. He was a young man in Germany then. He wanted to be the leader of Germany. He asked Mussolini for a picture. He wanted Mussolini to write his name on this picture. But the Fascists did not send one to him.

Mussolini wanted to be famous. He said he was a MAN OF ACTION, and he said he could do many things. He said that he was a simple farmer, but he was not. He said he could drive fast cars in races. But he did not know how to drive a car. He said every year Italy had done many things. He said farms, factories, and soldiers were much better. But this was not true. This made big problems later. World War II started in 1939, and Italy could not fight. Italy did not have enough things to fight the war.

Mussolini wanted Italy to be a great country. He wanted Italy to be a power. He tried to make the world know about Italy, so he had meetings with other leaders. The Fascists wanted more land for Italy. The Fascists said that it was good to use the MILITARY. The military is the army and the navy of a country. The military could take land for Italy.

But Mussolini did not use the military at first. He waited until after 1935. Then Hitler was the leader of
Germany. Hitler got land for Germany. He did this by scaring other countries. Hitler said he would use his military to get land. So the other countries gave him what he wanted. This made Mussolini very unhappy. So he looked at north Africa. In 1935, he sent his army to ETHIOPIA. Ethiopia is a country. It is in north Africa. The army took Ethiopia. Mussolini said this was the new Roman Empire. Italy got much land in Ethiopia. But Mussolini made a big mistake.

First, Ethiopia was a very poor country. Italy did not get anything from Ethiopia. But the Italian government had to spend a lot of money in Ethiopia. And the government also had to send things there. Second, Italy sent a big army to Ethiopia. This army had 230,000 men. The army helped Italy keep Ethiopia. But this army cost a lot of money, and Italy did not have much money.

Third, Italy had a hard time beating the Ethiopian army. Italy's army was big and strong. The soldiers had new guns. But the Ethiopian army fought very hard. They used spears and rode on horses. The Italians used guns and rode in big trucks. At last the Italian army won. But it was not very easy. This made Italy seem very weak.

Mussolini tried to make Italy great and famous again in 1938. Hitler wanted more land. He met the
leaders of other countries in Europe. Mussolini was there too. He helped everyone talk at the meeting. But Mussolini was not really happy. Hitler got more land for Germany. First, he got Austria. Then he got another country. This country was named CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

In 1938, Mussolini also made a TREATY with Hitler. A treaty is an agreement between two countries. This agreement was called the "Axis Pact". The treaty said that Hitler and Mussolini had the same power. This was not true. Hitler had more power than Mussolini.

Mussolini did not want war in 1939. He tried to keep Hitler out of war. But Hitler died and went to war. He started the war in September, 1939. He sent his army into a country called Poland. This started World War II. Mussolini knew that Italy could not fight. Italy was not ready for war. So Mussolini stayed out of the war at first. This was very smart. But Germany was very strong. Germany has taken most of Europe by May, 1940.

Now Mussolini wanted to fight. So he attacked France in June, 1940. This was very foolish. The Germans beat the French army very easily. They beat the French army in just a few days. But the Italian army could not beat the French army. Mussolini lost the first battle very quickly.
Mussolini was a poor leader in war. This was seen by everybody at the start of the war. Mussolini said that he was a man of action. But he acted like an old man. He looked scared. He did not know what to do. Italy kept losing, but Mussolini only became angry. Italy lost the war in eighteen months. Italy also lost one-third of its land. The Germans took over northern Italy. Hitler did this to help Mussolini. This helped keep Mussolini the leader of Italy.

Italy lost the war, but Mussolini said this was not true. He said he was winning the war. Airplanes dropped bombs on cities in Italy in 1944. This made the king unhappy and angry. He wanted to get rid of the Fascists.

At first, the king was afraid of Mussolini. He did not do anything. Airplanes dropped bombs on the city of Rome on July 19, 1944. The king did something then. He told his people to find Mussolini and to put him into jail.

The king said a new man was the leader of Italy. This man was Pietro Badoglio. He was an army leader. Now he was the Prime Minister. But many Fascist leaders were in Rome. Someone told them about the king. So the Fascists had a meeting. They said that Mussolini was not the leader of the Fascist Party. So Mussolini
was out into jail on July 25, 1943. Pietro Badoglio became the new Prime Minister.

Hitler wanted to do something now. He sent an army into Italy. The Germans had most of Italy in September, 1944.

The Germans also got Mussolini out of jail. Some special soldiers called commandos got him out of jail. Hitler made a new country in northern Italy. This country was called the ITALIAN SOCIAL REPUBLIC. Mussolini was the president of this new country. But this was not really a country. It was really owned by the Nazis of Germany. This kind of country is called a PUPPET STATE.

The Italian Social Republic did not last for a long time. It lasted only a few months. Then the Germans left Italy in 1945. The Italian Social Republic ended then.

Mussolini tried to go to Germany in April, 1945. He dressed like a German soldier. But some Italian men saw him and took him away. This happened on April 27, 1943. These men were communists. The next morning these men killed Mussolini. They also killed some of his followers. The communists shot all of them. Then they took the bodies to the city of Milan. They put the bodies in the middle of the town. This place is called the town square.
Some people found the bodies. They saw one body and knew that it was Mussolini. So they took his body and hung it in the middle of town. Then the people yelled at the body. They also threw dirt and garbage at it. They were angry. The Fascists had made them poor and unhappy.

This is how the new Roman Empire ended.
The events and happenings, and the personalities of the leaders of the Nazi era in Germany are well known by most people. However, it is strange that Benito Mussolini has been neglected. Mussolini was the "Duce", the leader who provided Hitler (who called himself the "Fuhrer") with the inspiration and ideas to rise to power in Germany. Mussolini became so loyal to Hitler that he was dragged into oblivion and destruction along with the Fuhrer during World War II.

Both the German Fuhrer and the Italian Duce were destroyed at the end of the war. However, even those who are familiar with Mussolini regard and think of him as a rather comical figure and a funny man. Yet at one time Mussolini was the master and teacher, and Hitler was the follower who adored and learned from the Duce. No one wept when Hitler was destroyed; no one wanted to cry at all. But Mussolini’s fate and final end prompted a different response. Even Mahatma Gandhi, who was a leader in India, commented: "Poor
Benito Mussolini, who was the eldest of three children, was born in 1883 in the east-central region of Italy, an area that is called Romagna. East central Italy and Romagna were renowned and famous for antagonism and hatred against the state, in particular the king of Italy who lived in Rome, and for a dislike of the Catholic Church. Because Mussolini was born and raised in Romagna, he was brought up to be anti-monarchial (against the king) and anti-clerical (against the Catholic Church). Mussolini became a socialist in the Italian tradition. The socialists at that time favored the removal of the king, and the establishment of a republic.

Mussolini's father was by trade a poor and impoverished blacksmith who despised and hated all people who were wealthy and did not need to work. His mother, by contrast, was a devout and sincere Catholic, loyal to the Catholic Church. She earned an extra income of money for the family by teaching the small children at a nearby elementary school.

Mussolini rebelled against authority at an early age, when he still a young boy. His mother had saved an adequate sum of money that was necessary to enroll him as a student in a nearby Catholic boarding school.
Mussolini paid the minimum rate of tuition money to the school, so during meals he was forced to sit at a segregated table, away from the other students who paid more money. He was served the leftover food that was scraped from the plates of the more privileged and rich students who could pay the extra fees of money. Mussolini felt ashamed, and soon reacted to this embarrassing humiliation. First, he assaulted and hit a teacher, and then he attacked a wealthy student. The school expelled him by the second year, and he was not allowed to return to that school.

Mussolini completed his education at a secular public school and graduated in 1902. He received an elementary teaching certificate that allowed him to teach children in the public school. He had little interest in pursuing a career in education, and did not want to teach, so he emigrated to Lausanne, a city in Switzerland, to seek employment. He moved to Lausanne to find work, but his experience there was a total failure. He was reduced to begging in the streets, asking people for money or food. This occupation was a job that resulted in Mussolini's arrest by the police and he was imprisoned in jail for three weeks.

Mussolini, desperate and worried, appealed for
assistance to a group of Italian socialists who were living in Lausanne, asking them to help him. He was taken in and helped by these socialists, and worked several years for the cause of international socialism. International Socialism favored one unified government for the world with no separate countries. For six years Mussolini worked in Switzerland and Austria (the country that is next to Switzerland) for the socialists. He returned to Italy in 1908 and filled an administrative position in the socialist party in Italy, becoming a leader in the Partito Socialista Italiana (or PSI, as the Italian Socialist Party was called). He soon founded a small weekly news journal called La Lotte di Classe, which means The Class Struggle.

For the next several years, until the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Mussolini was engaged in a frenzy of activity. He was busy organizing and starting strikes (in which the workers refused to do their jobs), as well as leading anti-government demonstrations (in which people marched in parades against the government). Mussolini also moved up in power in the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), and finally received the editorship of the news journal Avanti!, the largest major socialist news journal in Italy.
He stood for parliamentary election in 1913, hoping to become a member of the law-making part of government. However, he was resoundingly defeated and received very few votes from the people. He then attempted a clumsy insurrection to take over the city of Milan, but this effort collapsed into failure when the police in Milan beat him to unconsciousness and left him on the street.

The pivotal turning point in Mussolini's career occurred with the outbreak of World War I in 1914. The socialist party (PSI) was unequivocally and completely opposed to the war, and Mussolini followed the party line and ideas at first by editorially denouncing and disagreeing with Italian entry into the war. However, a month later he unexpectedly published a series of articles that were printed in the socialist news journal, *Avanti*. These articles and stories all supported the Italian entry and participation in the conflict. This divergence (a major disagreement with socialist opinion and policy) resulted in Mussolini's termination as editor of *Avanti*, and in his expulsion from the Italian Socialist Party.

He was forced to quit his job as editor of *Avanti*, and give up his membership in the Italian
Socialist Party. However, his editorials and articles caught the attention of a group of wealthy industrialists (owners of several factories) who supported Mussolini by helping him establish a new independent news journal called *Il popoli d'Italia* (The People of Italy).

Mussolini enlisted in the Italian army in 1915, and was sent to the front (close to the war), but this area was seldom involved in any conflict or fighting. Mussolini was seriously injured in an accident in 1917 and convalesced in a hospital for six months until he was well. Upon recovery from his injuries, he was dismissed from military service since the army no longer needed him. He returned to his editorial position with *Il popoli d'Italia* in July, 1917.

After the conclusion of the war, which ended in 1919, Italy faced two major problems. The first problem was the rapid rise and increase in living costs as the prices quickly became more expensive. This resulted in discontent and unhappiness among the common people whose income (the money from jobs) did not increase. The discharged veterans of the army (those men who were no longer soldiers) could not find employment or jobs, and were also discontent and
angry.

The second problem that Italy faced after the war was the failure of the Italian government to secure Italy's "rightful share" of the benefits from victory at the peace conference held in the city of Versailles in France.

The Italian government showed little inclination toward price controls, not wanting to control the cost of things, and believed the problem of high prices and unemployment would evaporate and 90 away as soon as the adjustment to peace had been completed. Unfortunately, prices continued to rise, and unemployment continued to increase which resulted not only in a series of strikes, but also caused a rise in the popularity of the Italian Socialist Party.

As for the Versailles peace conference, Italian diplomats and representatives failed to gain any substantial concessions that would give Italy any territory. The Italians had believed that they would receive the territory called Dalmatia (which is along the western coast of the Adriatic Sea near Italy) as their share of the peace settlement and agreements. However, the final agreement awarded Dalmatia to the new nation of Yugoslavia (which was created and established on the west coast of the Adriatic Sea by the
The Italian government’s failure to resolve and end the economic problems of high prices and unemployment, as well as the disappointment over not getting Dalmatia from the Versailles peace settlement, resulted in a total and complete loss of popular support for the political establishment. The people no longer liked nor trusted the government.

Hoping to benefit from this lack of trust and confidence in the government, Mussolini founded a new political party called the National Fascist Party, or Partito nazionale fascista (PNF), in March, 1919. Mussolini furthermore organized and started a private militia called Fasci di Combattimento. This personal army of Mussolini’s was more commonly known as the "Blackshirts" from their uniforms of black colored shirts.

During the first few years after the founding of the Fascist Party, Mussolini enjoyed only small and modest success in getting parliamentary representation by having people his party elected to parliament. However, in late 1922 he decided that his position and power were strong and secure enough for him to attempt a bold coup d'état to take over the government by force.
Claiming that Italy was in danger of falling to the communists, Mussolini organized and started the so-called "March on Rome" in October, 1922. He demanded and ordered the king to choose and appoint a Fascist government with Mussolini as the Prime Minister (the leader of the government). The king, who was certain and convinced that a multitude of Blackshirts was certain to occupy and take over Rome, quietly capitulated and agreed to the Fascists' demands on October 29, 1922.

In fact, the "Blackshirt Army" numbered fewer than 25,000 mostly unarmed civilians who had few guns and just camped outside the city of Rome. Mussolini remained carefully and discreetly near the border of Switzerland until he received a written proclamation (a letter from the king appointing him to be the Prime Minister). The "March" itself occurred two days later on October 30, 1922 after Mussolini had arrived in Rome on a train and had assumed (or taken over) the office of Prime Minister.

Once in office as Prime Minister, Mussolini set out to consolidate and keep his power. In 1926, he declared the Fascist party to be the majority in parliament (saying that the Fascists had the most people in parliament). He abolished all organized
opposition to Fascism by not allowing other parties to disagree with the Fascists, and he proclaimed himself to be the "Duce", and said that he was the leader of all Italy.

14 The seven years from 1923 to 1930 were marked by much fanfare and publicity, but with little substantial accomplishment or real success. Fascist claims of success in building a better Italy attracted many admirers who liked the Fascist ideas, including a young German politician named Adolph Hitler. In the late 1920's Hitler, who was not yet famous, requested an autographed photo of the Duce, but this request for a signed picture was refused.

15 Mussolini, himself, carefully cultivated and presented a public reputation as a "Man of Action" who was expert in a multitude of many skills ranging from simple farm labor (working on a farm) to race car driving (when, in fact, the Duce had never learned how to operate or drive a car). Each year brought large and exaggerated claims of triumph and success in industry, agriculture, and military development.

Each year the Fascists said that they had built better factories, improved farming, and made the army and navy much stronger, but they really had done
little. These were factors that would accelerate and cause the immediate collapse into failure by Italy at the beginning of World War II. Then the truth and reality of Italy's low productivity became obvious to everyone (that Italy really did not have enough factories and farms),  

16 In an attempt to have Italy recognized as a major world power, Mussolini conducted an active foreign policy. He tried to have the world see Italy as a great and powerful country by doing much with other countries. Although territorial expansion through military aggression was a policy of Fascism, Mussolini avoided direct armed conflict until the middle of the 1930's. 

One of the ideas of Fascism was to get more land by the use of the army, but Mussolini did not go to war until the middle of the 1930's. By that time, Adolph Hitler had gained and assumed power in Germany and had begun his process of acquiring territory through threats and confrontation. Hitler was able to get land for Germany by saying that he would go to war if his demands were not accepted. 

The Duce, as Mussolini called himself, was embarrassed and humiliated by Hitler's success in gaining territory in Europe, so he directed his atten-
ion to north Africa. In 1935, Italian forces overran Ethiopia, a country in north Africa, and Mussolini announced the foundation and beginning of the new Roman Empire.

Despite the addition of this new territory of Ethiopia to Italy, the Italian conquest and takeover of Ethiopia was a serious blunder and a major mistake due to three reasons.

First, the poor and impoverished territory had nothing to offer Italy. The Fascist government was forced to send much needed money and products into Africa, while receiving nothing in return. Although the Italians sent things into Ethiopia, they got nothing back.

Then, an army of 250,000 men was stationed in Ethiopia to support the Italian rule, thus placing a further unnecessary burden on the economy. The army was needed to keep the country for the Italians, but this caused more problems for the economy of Italy.

Finally, Italy's reputation as an international power was irreparably damaged as the world witnessed the modern, fully equipped Italian war machine struggle to defeat horsemen armed with spears. Italy's fame as a powerful country was ruined as the world watched the new Italian army, using new equipment,
have problems beating the Ethiopian army that was made up of men riding horses and carrying spears.

In 1938 Mussolini sought to repair the damage to his reputation by acting as a mediator between Germany and other European nations over Hitler's demand for more territory. Mussolini hoped he could get his fame back by helping Hitler talk with the leaders of other countries in Europe about Hitler's desire for more land. Yet the Duce was dismayed over Hitler's easy success in annexing (taking over) Austria and Czechoslovakia to the Third Reich (which is what Hitler called Germany). Mussolini was rather unhappy over Hitler getting Austria and Czechoslovakia for Germany.

In 1938, Mussolini also signed the Axis Pact with Hitler, an agreement that Germany and Italy would help each other in war. Although the agreement seemed to be a treaty of equal partners, in truth the pact was from the beginning under the total control and domination of the German Fuhrer, Adolph Hitler.

During the summer of 1939 Mussolini endeavored and tried to persuade Hitler to avoid going to war, but in September the Fuhrer ordered his armies into Poland, thus initiating World War II. Although Mussolini tried to keep Hitler from going to war,
Hitler started World War II in September, 1939 by sending his armies into the country of Poland. Mussolini at first wisely maintained neutrality (he did not join the war). However, by May of the following year (1940) Germany had overrun most of Europe, including half of France. The Duce, impatient for action, recklessly entered the war in June, 1940, and immediately launched an attack against France. Mussolini wanted to join in the war and he foolishly sent his armies into France.

However, the same French army that had been easily overwhelmed and beaten by German forces in a matter of days quickly repulsed the Italian attack, thus leaving Mussolini with a humiliating defeat at the war's onset. Although the French army had been easily beaten by the Germans, it had no problem beating Italy's army. Mussolini had lost a battle at the beginning of the war.

From the beginning of the war it was obvious and clear that the Duce was a poor and incompetent war leader. Despite his reputation and fame as a man of action, Mussolini behaved and acted more like a scared, timid old man, unsure of himself, and capable only of anger and rage in the face of defeat and losing. After eighteen months, not only had Italy
lost the war, but northern third of Italy had been occupied and taken over by German troops who had been sent in by Hitler to keep the Duce in power.

21 In spite of these setbacks (the loss of the war and the takeover of northern Italy by the German troops), Mussolini insisted that victory was near and that Italy was winning. But the bombing of Italian cities by airplanes in early 1943 convinced the king that the Fascist government had to be replaced by another type of government.

At first the king feared to move directly against the Duce, and he was afraid to do anything against Mussolini. But the July 19, 1943 bombing of Rome spurred him into action, and made him decide to do something immediately. The king ordered the arrest of Mussolini, and planned to appoint Pietro Badoglio, a military leader in the Italian army, as Prime Minister.

Fascist leaders in Rome, hearing of the king's action, convened a meeting and dismissed the Duce from the Fascist party, claiming that Mussolini was no longer a member of the National Fascist Party. On July 25, 1943 Mussolini was arrested and put into jail, and Badoglio was installed into office as the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister and leader of
Italy was no longer Mussolini, but rather Pietro Badoglio.

22 Taking advantage of the situation and problems in Italy, Hitler ordered German troops deeper into Italy. By September, 1943 the Germans controlled two-thirds of the Italian peninsula, which was most of the country. Hitler had established Mussolini, who had been rescued from imprisonment by special German troops called commandos, as president of the Italian Social Republic.

This "republic" was not a real country but merely a Nazi puppet state (a place controlled by the Germans) that quickly collapsed a few months after its establishment when the Germans withdrew from Italy. When the German army left Italy in 1945 the Italian Social Republic fell apart.

23 In April, 1945 the Duce attempted to escape into Germany by posing as a German corporal, but he was captured by a group of Italian communists on the April 27. (He was caught by these communists as he tried to get into Germany by wearing the clothes of a German soldier). The next morning (April 28, 1945) Mussolini, and a few of his followers, were executed by a firing squad, and their bodies dumped in a town square in Milan. The communists shot Mussolini and
then dropped his body in the center of the city of Milan.

When some citizens of the city discovered and found the bodies, and recognized the Duce, they hung Mussolini’s body by the feet in the town center as hundreds of people, who were angry about the misery and unhappiness the Fascists had caused, threw filth at the bodies, and hollered insults. The people threw mud and yelled at Mussolini and his dead followers.

Thus ended the new Roman Empire that Mussolini had started in 1935.
APPENDIX D

QUESTIONS

1. In 1919 the Italian government believed that economic problems would
   a. go away in a short time
   b. be solved by the Duce
   c. continue with rising prices and unemployment
   d. cause strikes and more unemployment
   e. be solved with strong price controls

2. At the peace meetings, the Italian diplomats wanted
   a. territory on the eastern Adriatic coast
   b. a new border with Austria
   c. a solution to the problem of jobs
   d. a border with the country of Yugoslavia
   e. the area called Dalmatia

3. Mussolini took complete power in Italy in
   a. 1919  c. 1926  e. 1935
   b. 1922  d. 1930

4. Mussolini's fame as a "Man of Action" was due to
   a. his leadership in World War II
   b. his ability to drive racing cars
   c. stories that were not true
   d. his leadership of the Blackshirts
   e. his meetings with other leaders

5. Ethiopia was a problem for Italy because
   a. an army of 25,000 men were kept there
   b. the Ethiopian army defeated the Italian army
   c. it cost too much to support
   d. Mussolini wanted territory in Europe
   e. Hitler would not support the Duce

6. Early in the war, Mussolini proved that he was
   a. a man of action
   b. a man who was sure of himself
   c. certain of victory
   d. an poor leader
   e. sorry to have attacked France
7. The king decided to remove Mussolini from office because
   a. the Germans took most of Italy
   b. the Italian army was beaten by France
   c. Fascists removed Mussolini as the leader
   d. he did want Mussolini to get into the war
   e. Italian cities were being bombed

8. Mussolini was arrested on
   b. July 25, 1943   d. April 30, 1945

9. Mussolini was killed on
   a. April 21, 1944
   b. April 24, 1944
   c. April 26, 1945
   d. April 28, 1945
   e. April 30, 1945

10. One of the problems faced by Italy after World War I was
    a. the failure to get a final border with Austria
    b. a rise in popularity for the socialists
    c. a quick adjustment to peace
    d. a rise in unemployment
    e. the creation of Yugoslavia on the eastern Adriatic

11. Mussolini was in jail for three .... for begging.
    a. hours   c. weeks   e. years
    b. days   d. months

12. In 1926, by Mussolini’s order, the Fascist Party
    a. became the largest party in the parliament
    b. lost some of its power to Mussolini
    c. was elected over all other parties
    d. chose Mussolini to be the "Duce"
    e. abolished all opposition to Mussolini

13. During the first seven years of rule, the Fascists
    a. made progress in many areas
    b. were successful in building a better Italy
    c. were very unpopular in Italy
    d. decided to attack Ethiopia to gain territory
    e. gained very little in real achievement or progress
14. Mussolini tried to show that he was a "Man of Action" by 
   a. working as a farmer 
   b. driving racing cars 
   c. learning how to do many different things 
   d. saying a lot, but doing little 
   e. making the lives of the people better 

15. Mussolini said he started the "March on Rome" because 
   a. the problems were too much for the king 
   b. there was danger from the communists 
   c. he wanted to be a "Man of Action" 
   d. the peace settlement gained little for Italy 
   e. he wanted to start the new Roman Empire 

16. Mussolini tried to make Italy a power by 
   a. forming the Italian Social Republic 
   b. doing much with foreign policy 
   c. taking territory for Italy without using the army 
   d. helping Hitler take over Austria and Czechoslovakia 
   e. going to war with France in 1941 

17. After Hitler sent his armies into Poland, Mussolini 
   a. tried to keep Hitler from going to war 
   b. joined the war by attacking Austria 
   c. knew that Hitler was the real power in the Axis Pact 
   d. let Hitler send the German army into southern Italy 
   e. tried to stay out of the war 

18. Mussolini moved to Switzerland in order to 
   a. find a teaching job 
   b. work for international socialism 
   c. find a different job 
   d. start a socialist newspaper 
   e. escape from the king if necessary 

19. From the article, it seems that Mahatma Gandhi 
   a. admired Mussolini and Hitler 
   b. was happy that Hitler had died 
   c. agreed with the ideas of Fascism 
   d. understood and liked Fascism 
   e. believe Mussolini's end was unfortunate 

20. Before 1922, Mussolini mostly worked as a 
   a. soldier in the Italian army 
   b. newspaper editor 
   c. socialist leader in Austria and Switzerland 
   d. teacher in an elementary school 
   e. politician in Milan
REFERENCES


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