NEWS LESSON

The Man Who Learnt to Read at 46



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What skill would make everyday life easier for you?
2. Why can asking for help feel harder than learning something?
3. Would you rather learn alone or with one patient teacher?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**lorry**	☐	A	a group that helps people and does not work to make money
2	**deaf**	☐	B	making you feel annoyed because something is hard
3	**allergies**	☐	C	a big truck that carries things by road
4	**cartons**	☐	D	to decide that someone is good or bad, often too fast
5	**charity**	☐	E	a person who teaches you and helps you get better
6	**coach**	☐	F	when your body reacts badly to a food or other thing
7	**frustrating**	☐	G	paper boxes that hold milk or juice
8	**judge**	☐	H	not able to hear, or not able to hear well

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Peter Lloyd could drive a lorry across Britain, but he could not read a food label. At 46, he finally asked for help.

1 Peter Lloyd could drive a lorry across Britain, remember complicated routes and look after his family. But there was one thing he could not do: read a food label. For most of his adult life, he kept this problem hidden. At the age of 46, an ordinary trip to the supermarket finally persuaded him to ask for help.

2 Peter grew up in Lancashire and was partially deaf from birth. At school, it was difficult for him to hear the teachers, especially when other children were talking. He moved to a different school, but he still struggled with reading and writing. He left education at 16 without qualifications. Finding reading hard did not mean he was not clever. Like many adults who find reading difficult, he learnt ways to manage. He remembered roads, used pictures and numbers, and asked his wife to help with letters and forms.

3 During the Covid lockdowns, Peter went shopping for milk that was safe for his wife and son, who had food allergies. In the supermarket, he realised that he could not understand the information on the cartons. He worried about buying the wrong one. Back at home, he told his wife how difficult things had become. She encouraged him to contact Read Easy, a charity that helps adults learn to read.

4 Peter started meeting a volunteer coach called Alison twice a week. They worked through simple exercises, slowly building his skills and confidence. Sometimes the work was frustrating, but this time he did not give up. He had a personal goal: to read the first Harry Potter book from beginning to end. After three years of lessons, he finished it. Reading was no longer just something he needed for shopping or work. It was something he could enjoy.

5 Today, Peter can read recipes and share books with his son. He also talks publicly about his experience to encourage other adults to seek help. Many people struggle with reading, even if they have jobs and families. Some are afraid that others will judge them. Peter's story shows why that fear can be so damaging. Learning to read has not changed his past, but it has opened up a very different future.

Sources: LiverpoolWorld. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Peter learned to read while he was still at school. T F NG
2. His son has also had reading lessons with Read Easy. T F NG
3. It took Peter about three years to read the first Harry Potter book. T F NG
4. Peter had a hearing problem from the day he was born. T F NG
5. Peter's wife was against the idea of contacting Read Easy. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

complicated	confidence	persuaded	qualifications	refused	reluctant	volunteer

1. The instructions were so _____ that nobody in the office could follow them.
2. My sister _____ me to join the gym after months of asking.
3. Good teachers build a student's _____ by praising small steps.
4. A _____ gives his time for free, so the charity does not pay him.
5. Many jobs ask for _____ such as a degree or a diploma.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. For most of his adult life, he _____ this problem hidden. (KEEP)
2. Peter _____ up in Lancashire and was partially deaf from birth. (GROW)
3. Before he learnt to read, Peter _____ a lorry across Britain. (DRIVE)
4. In the supermarket, he _____ that he could not read the labels. (REALISE)
5. Back at home, he _____ his wife how difficult things had become. (TELL)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Because gives a reason and so gives a result. Although and however show a difference. Check where the gap sits in the sentence.

although	because	but	despite	however	so	unless

1. He felt worried in the shop _____ he could not read the labels on the milk.
2. Her reading was slow, _____ she asked her teacher for more practice.
3. Learning to read is difficult for many adults. _____ , a good coach can make it easier.
4. _____ she was tired, she studied for an hour.
5. He wanted not only to read for work _____ also to enjoy books.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What would make it easier for an adult to admit they cannot read well?
2. Which everyday task do people underestimate until they struggle with it?
3. What should a good teacher do when a learner feels embarrassed?

9 Role-play: an invitation to volunteer

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the friend who volunteers

You help at a local reading group for adults. You need one more helper on Thursday evenings and you think your friend would be good at it. Persuade your friend to try one evening.

Student B · the friend who is not sure

Your friend has asked you to help adults who are learning to read. You like the idea, but you're busy and you're worried you won't know what to say. Ask questions and agree what you can offer.

Useful phrases

I'd love to help, but I'm not sure I'm the right person.

What if I say the wrong thing?

You don't need to be an expert, you just need to be patient.

I can't do Tuesdays, but I could manage Thursdays.

That's fair, let's try one session and see.

Would it help if we went together the first time?

Afterwards, tell the class what you agreed, and whether you both felt it was a fair deal.

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 C · 2 H · 3 F · 4 G · 5 A · 6 E · 7 B · 8 D

4 True, false or not given

1 F · 2 NG · 3 T · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 complicated · 2 persuaded · 3 confidence · 4 volunteer · 5 qualifications

6 Verb forms

1 kept · 2 grew · 3 drove · 4 realised · 5 told

7 Language focus

1 because · 2 so · 3 However · 4 Although · 5 but

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