



Digging into the Word

Lesson Six

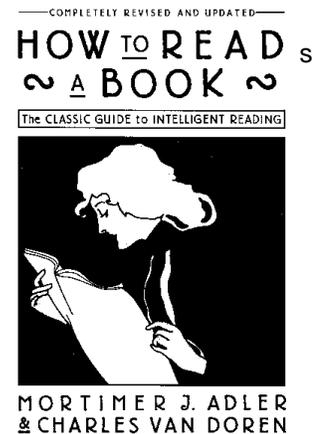
Introduction: Unambiguous Words

"We are now ready to state the fifth rule of reading. Stated roughly, it is this: You must spot the important words in a book and figure out how the author is using them..."

You cannot locate key words without making an effort to understand the passage in which they occur. This situation is somewhat paradoxical. If you do understand the passage you will not, of course, know which words in it are the most important. If you do not fully understand the passage, it's probably because you do not know the way the author is using certain words...

Spotting the important words is only the beginning of the task. It merely locates the places in the text where you have to go to work... Your procedure should be as follows, First, try to determine whether the word has one or many meanings. If it has many try to see how they are related. Finally, note the places where the word is used in one sense or another, and see if the context gives you any clue to the reason for the shift in meaning...

A term can be defined as an unambiguous word."



Mortimer Adler, *How to Read a Book*, p. 96-107.

I. Understanding Key Terms

What is the meaning of the English word "**wave**?" Write your definition below (don't use a dictionary)

What is the meaning of this same word in the following sentences...

- Bob and Jim said goodbye and parted with a **wave**.
 - Surfers are always looking for the perfect **wave**.
 - Scientists debate whether light behaves like a particle or a **wave**.
 - In response to the cheerleaders, the fans started a **wave**.
 - Mabel went to the beautician to get a new **wave**.
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Determining Specific Meaning of a Word

- [1] Determine the Greek or Hebrew word which is being translated.

<http://www.elijah.com/lexicon.html>

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/search.html>

- [2] Discover the range of meanings for the word.

Occurrences outside the Bible (advanced).

Occurrences inside the Bible.

Occurrences for this author.

Occurrences for this book or psalm.

- [3] Evaluate the range of meaning in light of this context and select the appropriate meaning.

Shortcuts:

W.E. Vine, Unger and White. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words.*



II. Figures of Speech

Anthropomorphism / Zoomorphism: *Attribution of human / animal features to God.*

Isa. 52:10 The LORD has bared His holy arm In the sight of all the nations, That all the ends of the earth may see The salvation of our God.

Psa. 63:7 For Thou hast been my help, And in the shadow of Thy wings I sing for joy.

Apostrophe: *Addressing a thing as if it were a person, or an absent or Imaginary person as if he were present.*

1 Cor. 15:55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

Euphemism: *The use of a milder expression to instead of a more offensive one.*

1 Thes. 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

Jud. 15:1 But after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it came about that Samson visited his wife with a young goat, and said, "I will go in to my wife in her room." But her father did not let him enter.

Hyperbole: *Exaggeration that says more than is literally meant.*

2 Cor. 11:8 I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to serve you;

Jn. 12:19 The Pharisees therefore said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."

Ju. 20:16 Out of all these people 700 choice men were left-handed; each one could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

Merism: *A substitution of two contrasting or opposite parts for the whole.*

Psa. 139:2 Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up...

Psa. 139:5 Thou hast enclosed me behind and before...

Metaphor & Simile: *A comparison in which one thing represents another.*

Mt. 5:13-14 "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.

Song 4:1 Your eyes are like doves behind your veil; Your hair is like a flock of goats That have descended from Mount Gilead.

Metonymy: *The use of the name of one thing for another because the two are frequently associated or because they suggest one another.*

Jer 4:29 At the sound of the horseman and bowman every city flees...

Jon. 1:2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."

Jas. 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is

set on fire by hell

Gen. 25:23 And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples shall be separated from your body..."

Paradox: *A statement that on the surface seems absurd, self-contradictory, or contrary to logical thought.*

Mt. 16:25 "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it.

Mk. 10:31 "But many who are first, will be last; and the last, first."

2 Cor. 12:10...when I am weak, then I am strong.

Personification: *Ascribing human characteristics or actions to inanimate objects or animals.*

Psa. 19: The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

Prov. 7:4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," And call understanding your intimate friend...

Rhetorical Question: *A question that requires no response, yet forces one to answer it mentally and to consider its implications.*

Psa. 2:2:1 Why are the nations in an uproar, And the peoples devising a vain thing?

Rom. 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

Synecdoche: *A part is used to indicate the whole.*

Prov. 1:11 If they say, "Come with us, Let us lie in wait for blood, Let us ambush the innocent without cause..."

Tit. 1:10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

III. Ground-Rules for Interpretation

- 1- **Interpret Normally** -- give every word the same meaning it would have in normal usage [writing, speaking & thinking]. Figures of speech and symbols should be obvious from the context.
- 2- **Clear passages** have priority over obscure passages. Final interpretation should be in harmony with the rest of Scripture.
- 3- **Realize that there is a progression of revelation** [NT adds revelation not given in the O.T., ex- Eph. 3:3-7].
- 4- **Be willing to admit** that there are some passages that are difficult to get beyond a "*possible*" or "*probable*" interpretation.
- 5- **Priority must be given to the original languages** in which the Bible was written.

Assignment:

#1 Figuring out the Figurative

For each of these verses identify the figure(s) of speech and state the meaning using non-figurative language.

Psa. 73:9 They have set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue parades through the earth.

Psa. 12:2 They speak falsehood to one another; With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak.

Isa. 41:10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Prov. 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Jer. 19:1 Oh, that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night...

Deut. 6:6-9 "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. "And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. "And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.