

# A Textbook Evaluation of “*Active skills for Reading*”: A Coursebook for General English

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## Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate the “Active Skills for Reading” through a checklist devised by ([1]; [2]; [3]; [4]), and an interview. This book was being used at Chabahar Maritime University as a general course book for BA students. For this purpose, 84 students and 4 teachers were selected. After data collecting, the quantitative data were analyzed by SPSS version 26. The findings revealed that the appearance and content of the book was attractive and up-to-date. Generally, it indicated that the textbook had met students’ needs, and it could be a good book in the hand of a good teacher.

**Keywords:** Textbook, Evaluation, General English, Iranian EFL Learners, University

## 1. Introduction

Textbooks are the most practical materials that teachers and learners use in the process of teaching and learning. They can help teachers while they present and teach different materials in their classes. Textbooks are “visible heart of any ELT program” ([5], p. 237); “an almost universal element of teaching” ([6], p.315). In other words, textbooks are as a guidance for a teacher and students, and act as a memory aid ([7], p.1). A textbook is not only a guide to the teachers but also a textbook can present essential input through different explanations and activities [8]. [4] believes that when a textbook is interesting and learners like that, they will enjoy their course and will be active in their lesson. In other words, they will succeed in their course. [9] believes that a textbook is a source which learners without it cannot do much practice and various activities. According to [10], textbooks support the learners by providing knowledge for them. Besides, they meet the learners' needs and teaching requirements [11].

As observed, although textbooks act as an important material in teaching and learning, they have several weaknesses and strengths that if identified, can help teachers and students. Thus, they should be selected carefully for use, and they need to be evaluated regularly for different contexts. According to [12], “evaluation is a whole process which begins with determining what information to gather and ends with bringing about change in current activities or influencing future ones” (p.128). It can be concluded that teaching materials like textbooks are essential in English learning/teaching, but they may have several imperfections that can be diagnosed through textbook evaluation and resolved for the future. For this purpose, this research aimed to evaluate the “Active Skills for Reading” textbook that was used at Chabahar Maritime University for English translation students, and that was offered as a general English textbook for other fields. This research aimed to identify the weaknesses and strengths of this textbook from teachers' and students' perspectives. To do this, in this study, the researcher considered five research questions to evaluate the textbook and identified the strengths and weaknesses of this textbook:

1. To what extent is “*Active Skills for Reading*” textbook effective regarding its general appearance and design?
2. To what extent is “*Active Skills for Reading*” textbook effective regarding its objectives and supplementary materials?
3. To what extent is “*Active Skills for Reading*” textbook effective regarding its subject and content?
4. To what extent is “*Active Skills for Reading*” textbook effective regarding its activities and exercises?
5. To what extent is “*Active Skills for Reading*” textbook effective regarding its presentation of language skills?

## 2. Review of the Literature and Related Studies

According to [13], role of a textbook in one classroom is different from another classroom. [14] argued that information in the textbooks can help teachers to select the sufficient textbook for teaching based on them.