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Redefining the Meaning of EFL “Reading” in the New Digital Paradigm

Viettesol July 27, 2024. University of Economics HCMC

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Main Arguments of This Presentation

Despite endless new technologies used in our teaching, **the default notion of "reading" remains largely unchanged** and still can be defined as scanning and interacting with a block of continuous text, on either paper or a screen.

In the real world, however, **a significant portion of the English text seen or consumed by students' eyes** outside of formal education, is in a **non-traditional format**. These include **infographics** and **captions** embedded in a movie or in a video-based platform such as Youtube, Tiktok and Instagram.

Given this reality, it may be argued that both curriculum creators and instructors need to confront this new paradigm **by expanding the meaning of a "reading" source** to include these new types of text-based content in reading classes.

Teaching Situation of the Presenter

- Mid-level large university in Japan
- International Studies students taking English 5 X a week
- Students take an Intensive and Extensive Reading Class
- Extensive Reading Class based on easy Graded Readers
- Intensive Reading Class uses a lower B1-level textbook-
reports and ppt presentations are the main assessed tasks

Types of Reading Formats for Intensive Reading Class Taken by the Presenter's Students +Levels of these types of text

NGSL Level 5 1600-2000 words with 85+% coverage is the goal

Text Format or Type	Text Level
<p>1. <i>Reading Explorer 3</i> (Cengage Textbook)</p>	<p>Intensive Reading Low-Mid B1 level NGSL Level 5 1600-2000 at 87-89% coverage</p>
<p>2. Articles at reading sites for native speaker school students (increasingly have a paywall)</p>	<p>Intensive Reading at Reading Levels 6-7 (2000-2800 headwords) are common. Not easy to find the right level</p>
<p>3. Web articles simplified by a website such as NGSL or AI</p>	<p>Level can be chosen/adjusted or will be based on simplification prompt- timeconsuming</p>
<p>4. Youtube Videos with Captions</p>	<p>Wide range of levels but takes time to find appropriate length and level.</p>
<p>5. Infographics</p>	<p>Wide range of levels- difficult to find lower levels but high appeal for today's students</p>

NGSL Website (Charlie Browne, Meiji University)

<https://www.newgeneralservicelist.com>

The NGSL 1.2 is a 2809-word list of the most important words of general English and daily life for second language learners. Though this is less than 10% of the vocabulary known by native speaker college graduates, it gives an average of 92% coverage of most texts of general English and even higher coverage in other situations (93% coverage for Harry Potter, 94% coverage for TOEIC exams, and 95% coverage for many TV shows)

Coverage Recommendations by Browne et al

There is a long history of research studies on what are known as “vocabulary thresholds”. The short version is this... **If learners of English know less than 80% of the words on the page, reading comprehension is next to impossible** (Laufer, 1990). The minimum point at which there will be more readers than non-readers is 90%, and the level at which most learners will be able to read and guess from context is 95% (Laufer, 1989, Laufer, 1992, Liao & Nation, 1985). More recent research talks about another threshold, 98%, which is the level where learners can read for pleasure (Hu and Nation, 2000).

<https://www.newgeneralservicelist.com/coverage>

Connecting NGSL & CEFR to Provide Guidelines for Textbook and Supplementary Reading Choices

Roslim and Aziz (2021) used the NGSL to estimate how much L2 learners would understand of passages set at different CEFR levels. They suggest in their conclusion that the NGSL could be a tool used to select textbooks and readings but that there are many additional factors.

They found that the NGSL (2800 words) could be broken down into CEFR levels as follows

A1: 468 words (16.7%)	A2: 542 words (19.3%)
B1: 780 words (27.8%)	B2: 681 words (24.2%)

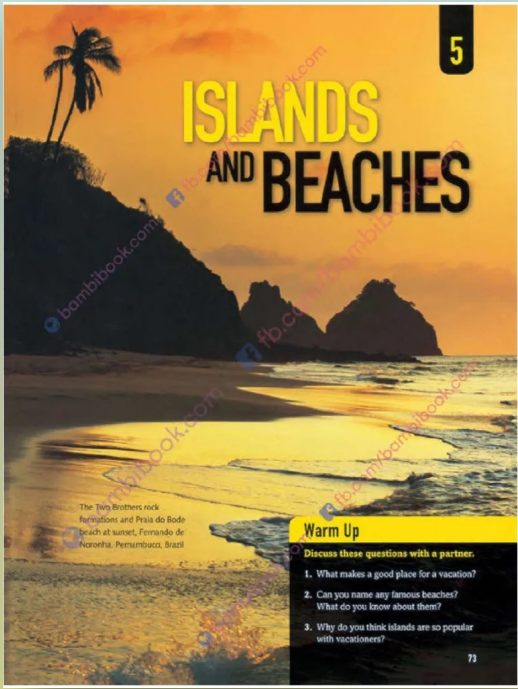
"Relevance of the new General Service List in Selecting Reading Passages for ESL Students. 2021. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*

Issues in Textbook Choice and Vocabulary Coverage

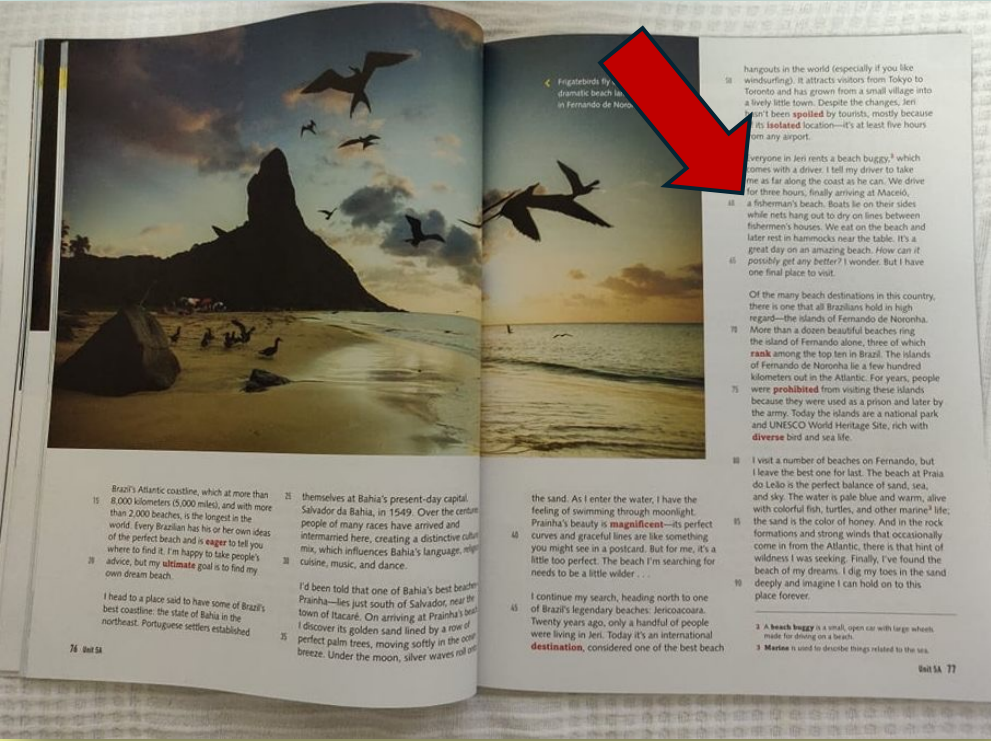
1. Students might be taking an Extensive Reading class at the same time and so choosing a challenging intensive reading book with passages at under 90% coverage for some students might be a reasonable balance.
2. Proficiency varies in each class. Even with placement tests, in the presenters 2nd year university class, the range of proficiency is quite wide, from mid-B1 to low B2. Passive vocabulary might range from 2200-3000 head words. Coverage levels for a given reading used in class might range from 84%-94%
3. The ease and speed with which students can check a vocabulary item has increased so much in recent years, requiring a redefinition of incomprehension

All of this might mean that the recommended 90% coverage guidelines does not necessarily apply in every situation and every reading.

Sample of a Reading Unit in the Presenters Intensive Reading Class for 2nd Year Students (low-mid B1 level)



Main Text



Reading Explorer 3 (National Geographic) Unit 5: Islands and Beaches

Additional Textbook Activity-video about Ha Long Bay



View of Ha Long Bay from Sim Soi Island, Vietnam

HA LONG BAY

BEFORE YOU WATCH

A. Read the information. The words and phrases in **bold** appear in the video. Match the words to their definitions.

A tourist paradise, Vietnam's Ha Long Bay is known for its jewel-like islands circled by **channels** of **emerald** water. The unusual rock formations—called karst towers—are mostly **uninhabited**—except for wildlife such as the rare golden-headed langur.

1. emerald	•	a narrow section of sea between two pieces of land
2. channel	•	a rich green color like the jewel
3. uninhabited	•	without any people living there

WHILE YOU WATCH

GIST A. Watch the video. Check (✓) the questions that are answered in the video.

___ a. What does "Ha Long" mean?	___ c. How many people visit the bay?
___ b. How were the rock towers formed?	___ d. Why are the rock towers unique?

TRUE OR FALSE B. Watch the video again. Circle **T** (true), **F** (false), or **NG** (not given).

1. There are over a thousand islands in Ha Long Bay.	T	F	NG
2. Most of the islands in Ha Long Bay are populated.	T	F	NG
3. According to legend, a dragon attacked the local people.	T	F	NG
4. There are two national parks in the area.	T	F	NG
5. Ha Long Bay has some of the longest caves in Vietnam.	T	F	NG

CRITICAL THINKING Evaluating Using Criteria In 1994, Ha Long Bay was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are two main categories of Heritage Sites: Natural and Cultural. To be included on UNESCO's Natural Heritage list, a site must have one of the following:

- unique natural phenomena
- exceptional natural beauty
- important wildlife habitats
- outstanding natural landforms

► Find out if there are any natural places in your country/region on UNESCO's list.

► Discuss in a small group: Are there any other natural places in your country/region that UNESCO should include? Note your ideas and share your reasons with another group.

NGSL Profiler

www.newgeneralservicelist.com

The screenshot shows the NGSL Profiler website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with social media icons and a search bar. Below this, the main heading reads "New General Service List Project Text Tools". A menu bar contains buttons for "Text Profiler", "Text Generator", "Text Rewriter", and "FAQ". The "Text Profiler" section is active, featuring a text input box and a "Go" button. Below the input box are six colored buttons: "A In Level (%)", "B Ignored (%)", "C Proper Nouns (%)", "D Out of Level (%)", "E Out of List (%)", and "A+B+C Coverage %". The "Word List" dropdown is set to "NDL 1.1 (Young Learners' English)" and the "Word Level" dropdown is set to "NDL Level 1 (words 1 to 75)". To the right, there are four summary boxes: "Out of List", "Out of Level", "Ignored", and "% Out of Level", each with a "Word" and "Frequency" column. At the bottom, a statistics table shows "Characters", "Words", "Av. Word Length", "Sentences", and "Av. Sentence Length".

The NGSL Profiler is a free online text analysis tool developed by Dr. Charles Browne which uses wordlists for ESL/ EFL learners from the NGSL Project to help analyze the difficulty of written texts and to then simplify them to the level of your students or intended audience.

NGSL Profiler used with Reading Explorer Unit 3 MainText

89% coverage for Level 5 (1601-2000)

Enter a passage of text in the box below, select the correct wordlist and level of the wordlist to check against and press the go button.

Word List: Word Level:

A In Level 289 (82%)	B Ignored 0 (0%)	C Proper Nouns 25 (7%)	D Out of Level 8 (2%)	E Out of List 29 (8%)	A + B + C Coverage 89%
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In **ursuit** of the perfect beach, travel writer **Stanley Stewart** heads to **Brazil**, where he discovers some of the world's most beautiful **sandy** escapes. I'm standing on **Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana** beach, one of **Brazil's** and the world's most famous stretches of **sand**. As I Watch life go by here in all its varied forms, I've come to realize that any understanding of **Brazil** really begins on its beaches. In this **vibrant, multicultural** country, the beach is not just a place, it's a state of mind a way of thinking and living. **Rio** alone, I'm told, has over 70 beaches, each with its **own** community: Some are for **bodybuilders**, others are for senior Citizens, **still** others are popular with **parents** and children. But **Rio's** beaches are just the starting point for my **exploration** of **Brazil's Atlantic coastline**, which at more than 8,000 kilometers, and with more than 2,000 beaches is the longest in the world. Every **Brazilian** has his or her **own** ideas of the perfect beach and is **eager** to tell you where to find it. I'm happy to take people's advice, but my **ultimate** goal is to find my **own** dream beach. I head to a place said to have some of **Brazil's best coastline**: the state of **Bahia** in the **northeast**. **Portuguese settlers** established themselves at **Bahia's present-day** capital, **Salvador da Bahia**, in 1549. Over the centuries, people of many races have arrived and **intermarried** here, creating a **distinctive** cultural mix. This mix influences **Bahia's** language, religion, **cuisine**, music, and dance. I'd been told that one of **Bahia's best beaches-Prainha-lies** just south of **Salvador**, near the town of **Itacaré**. On arriving at **Prainha's** beach, I discover its **golden sand** lined by a row of perfect **palm** trees, moving **softly** in the **ocean breeze**. Under the **moon, silver** waves roll onto the **sand**. As I enter the water, I have the feeling of swimming through **moonlight**. **Prainha's** beauty is **magnificent** perfect **curves** and **graceful** lines are like something you might see in a **postcard**. But for me, it's a little too perfect. The beach I'm searching for needs to be a little wilder...

Out of List

Word	Frequency
coastline	2
best	2
prainha's	2
ursuit	1
vibrant	1
multicultural	1
bodybuilders	1
exploration	1

Out of Level

Word	Level	Frequency
sand	6	3
golden	7	1
ocean	7	1
moon	7	1
silver	6	1
curves	6	1

Ignored

Word	Frequency
No words	

Words out of List

Useful words

- coastline
- pursuit
- vibrant
- multicultural
- bodybuilders
- exploration
- eager
- ultimate
- settlers
- present-day
- intermarried
- distinctive
- cuisine
- palm tree
- moonlight
- magnificent
- graceful

Screenshots from Reading Explorer 3 Video about Ha Long Bay



NGSL Profiler used with Unit 3's Video on Ha Long Bay

Only 81% coverage for Level 5 (1601-2000)

Text Profiler

Enter a passage of text in the box below, select the correct wordlist and level of the wordlist to check against and press the go button.

Word List

NGSL 1.2 (General English)

Word Level

Level 5 (words 1601 to 2000)

Go

(A)

In Level

195 (80%)

(B)

Ignored

0 (0%)

(C)

Proper Nouns

3 (1%)

(D)

Out of Level

9 (4%)

(E)

Out of List

37 (15%)

(A) + (B) + (C)

Coverage

81%

As the sun rises on Vietnam's ha long bay boats big and small leave the shore sailing over emerald waters through the maze-like channels that link the bay's sixteen hundred islands for centuries this unique seascape has inspired wonder this region of northeastern Vietnam has been home to humans for thousands of years however most of the islands remain uninhabited and largely unaffected by human hands even though the bay is very popular with tourists the name Ha Long is vietnamese for descending dragon according to one legend when the Viet people were attacked a dragon flew down from heaven to protect them the creatures sprayed not only fire but also emeralds and jade stones that formed ha long's jewel-like islands scientifically these islands are rock towers called karsts they were formed over millions of years as seashells and sand fell to the sea floor and eventually became solid limestone rain and rivers flowed over the stone carving deep channels between each tower the karst towers at Halong Bay are unique because they are half covered by sea water which has cut even further into the stone forming caves and tunnels that visitors today can explore adding to the wonder of this landscape are two national parks on Cat Ba island and by two long bay together these natural sanctuaries make up the on Cat ba archipelago which has been a protected site since 1994. and is enjoyed by visitors from all over the world

Words out of List

Useful words

- maze-like
- seascape
- uninhabited
- unaffected
- descending
- jewel-like
- scientifically
- karsts
- limestone
- carving
- sanctuaries
- archipelago

Up-to-Date Article on Issues with Ha Long Bay Tourism

Tourists turn away as Ha Long Bay full of plastic waste Tu Nguyen March 22, 2024

Many foreign tourists visiting Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Island in northern Vietnam felt disappointed and angered recently after **encountering** a large amount of plastic waste. Swiss tourist Alex Brauwaldler expressed his disappointment at the garbage during his tour of Ha Long Bay - Lan Ha Bay - Cat Ba Island in mid-February. Some floating plastic waste stretched several hundred meters long, so he could not swim in the bay, he said. Patricia Mayerhofer, an Australian tourist, visiting Ha Long Bay said that the world **heritage** site looked like a "sea of trash." She was told by tour operators that the trash came from fishing villages or was **dumped** by tourists. "I see that Vietnam doesn't really care about environmental issues," she said. Ged Kelly, a British tourist, shared a similar experience. While kayaking for 20 minutes on the afternoon of March 4, Kelly saw "countless plastic bottles, cans, gloves, even an office chair floating on the water." More plastic waste tends to appear in Ha Long- Cat Ba Island area, famous for cruise tours and kayak activities, from September to May, **coinciding** with the international tourism season. The management board of Ha Long Bay said in early March that floating trash was mainly scattered in Trong Mai, Me Cung, Sung Sot, and the Luon Caves.

NGSL Profiler of Article on ha Long Bay

Tourists turn away as Ha Long Bay full of plastic waste Tu Nguyen March 22, 2024

Text Profiler

Enter a passage of text in the box below, select the correct wordlist and level of the wordlist to check against and press the go button.

Word List: Word Level:

A In Level 152 (79%)	B Ignored 0 (0%)	C Proper Nouns 6 (3%)	D <u>Out of Level</u> 6 (3%)	E Out of List 29 (15%)	A + B + C Coverage 82%
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Many foreign tourists visiting Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Island in northern Vietnam felt disappointed and angered recently after encountering a large amount of plastic waste. Swiss tourist expressed his disappointment at the garbage during his tour of Ha Long Bay - Lan Ha Bay - Cat Ba Island in February. Some floating plastic waste stretched several hundred meters long, so he could not swim in the bay, he said. an Australian tourist, visiting Ha Long Bay said that the world heritage site looked like a "sea of trash." She was told by tour operators that the trash came from fishing villages or was dumped by tourists. "I see that Vietnam doesn't really care about environmental issues," she said. a British tourist, shared a similar experience. While kayaking for 20 minutes on the afternoon of March 4, Kelly saw "countless plastic bottles, cans, gloves, even an office chair floating on the water." More plastic waste tends to appear in Ha Long- sland area, famous for cruise tours and activities, from September to May, coinciding with the international tourism season. The management board of Ha Long Bay said in early March that floating trash was mainly scattered

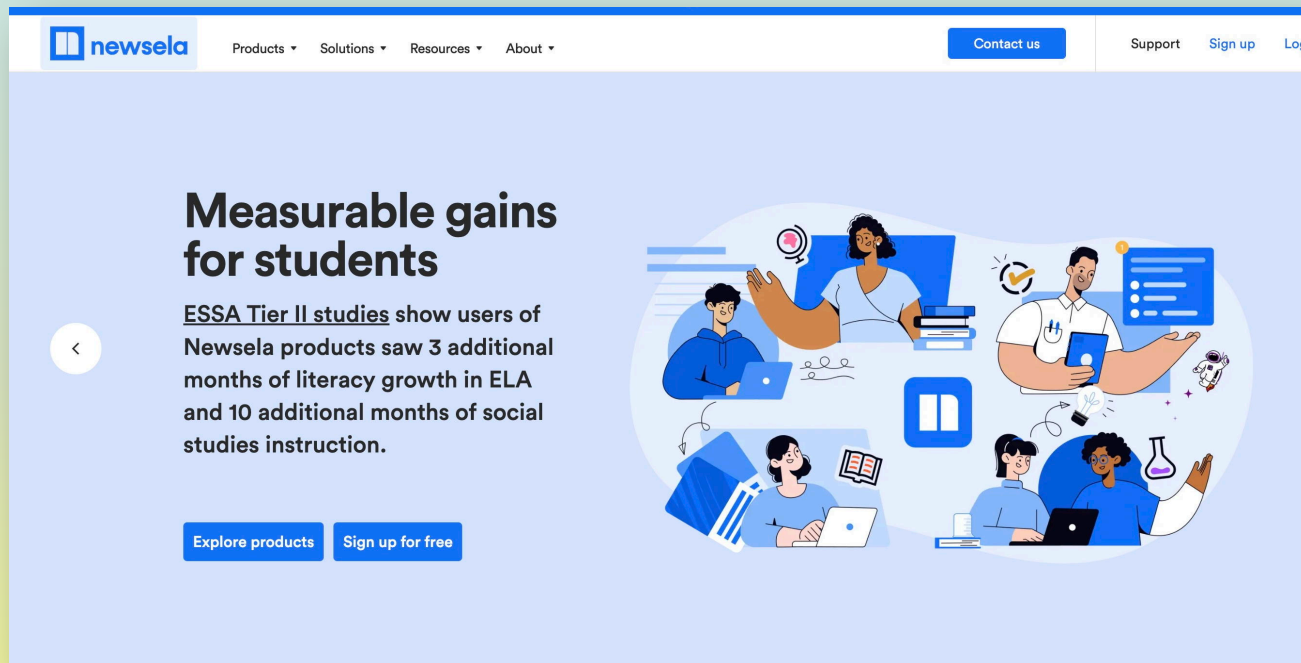
Despite this low coverage score, due to technical words and names, this article is well within the range of my students and only a handful of lexical items would present a problem.

Reading Resource 2: Articles at reading sites for native speaker school students

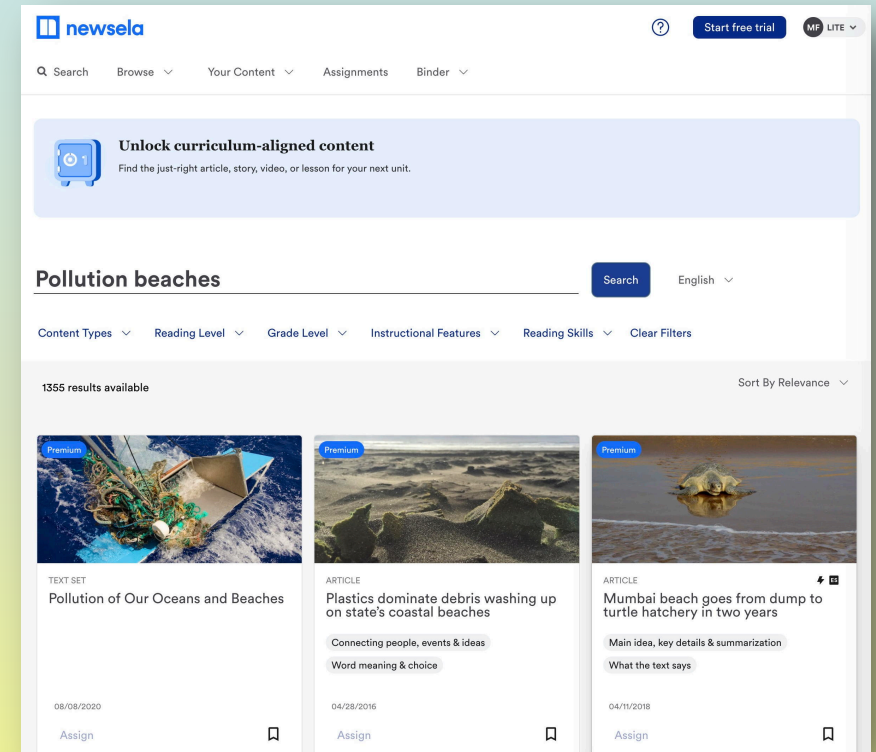
2. Articles at reading sites for native speaker school students (increasingly have a paywall)

Intensive Reading at Reading Levels 6-7 (2000-2800 headwords) are common. Not easy to find the right level

2. **Web-based articles** with useful content (designed for native speakers in grades 4-7 and usable by EFL teachers increasingly have a paywall and lack adequate articles.



Newsela



A search for articles about pollution of beaches and over tourism produced mostly unrelated articles that were 4-10 years out of date

3. Web articles simplified by NGSL Profiler or a Chatbot. Note that most sites that do this are not free

Text Format or Type

Text Level

3. Web articles simplified by a website such as NGSL or AI

Level can be chosen or adjusted, or will be based on the prompt used requesting simplification- timeconsuming

Textbook Article on Beaches rewritten by NGS� Profiler

Text Profiler

Enter a passage of text in the box below, select the correct wordlist and level of the wordlist to check against and press the go button.

Word List: Word Level:

A In Level 159 (81%)	B Ignored 0 (0%)	C Proper Nouns 22 (11%)	D <u>Out of Level</u> 3 (2%)	E Out of List 12 (6%)	A + B + C Coverage 92%
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To find the perfect beach, travel writer **Stanley Stewart** goes to **Brazil**. He finds some of the world's most beautiful beaches. He is standing on **Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana** beach. He says any understanding of **Brazil** begins on its beaches. In this **multicultural** country, the beach is not just a place, it's a state of mind. **Rio** has over 70 beaches. Some are for **bodybuilders**, others are for senior citizens. **Rio's** beaches are just the start of **Stewart's exploration** of **Brazil's 8,000-kilometer Atlantic coastline**. Every **Brazilian** has his or her own idea of the perfect beach. **Stewart** is happy to take people's advice, but his goal is to find his own dream beach. **Stewart** goes to the state of **Bahia** in the **northeast**. **Portuguese settlers** arrived there in 1549. Over the centuries, people of many races have mixed here. This mix influences **Bahia's** language, religion, food, music, and dance. **Stewart** is told that one of **Bahia's best** beaches is near the town of **Itacaré**. He finds its golden sand and perfect **palm** trees. The **moonlight** makes the silver waves look like **moonlight**. The beach is too perfect for **Stewart**. He wants a beach that is a little wilder.

Out of List Words

moonlight
multicultural
bodybuilders
exploration
coastline
settlers
palm

92% Coverage

Youtube Videos with Captions/ subtitles Instagram/ Tiktok?

Text Format or Type

Text Level

4. Youtube Videos with Captions

Wide range of levels but it takes time to find those at appropriate length and levels

Youtube Videos with Captions: Example Ha Long Bay 2018



Transcript

🔍 Search in video

- 0:00 thousands of limestone pillars and
- 0:02 eyelets sculpted by the wind and sea
- 0:04 speckle emerald waters this is Viet
- 0:09 Nam's halong bay one of the world's most
- 0:11 beautiful but now a victim of its own
- 0:14 success at the port filled with
- 0:17 thousands of tourists from all over the
- 0:19 world many say their trip is not what
- 0:22 they had expected it's a highway on
- 0:24 water girl traveling the same boats for
- 0:27 aren't very beautiful and emit a lot of
- 0:29 pollution it's a bit like Disneyland
- 0:31 we're all waiting in line for the same
- 0:32 thing Tuan Chau port is the largest
- 0:36 artificial tourist harbor in Asia and a

English (auto-generated)

Paradise lost: mass tourism leads to pollution crisis in Ha Long Bay

Captions to Text: Ha Long Bay -related video 2018

Thousands of limestone pillars and eyelets sculpted by the wind and sea speckle emerald waters. This is Viet Nam's Ha Long bay one of the world's most beautiful but now a victim of its own success. At the port filled with thousands of tourists from all over the world many say their trip is not what they had expected. The boats for emit a lot of pollution and it's a bit like Disneyland. We're all waiting in line for the same thing. Tuan Chau port is the largest artificial tourist harbor in Asia and a major departure point for tourists. In just three years the number of daily visitors has doubled. Water shuttle operators say it's increasingly difficult to manage and that they don't even have enough boats for all the tourists because the numbers are constantly increasing....

Transcript pasted into NGSL Profiler gives just 84% coverage but students can also listen and see the visual clues making it the equivalent of a more difficult but still manageable READING

Infographics as a "Reading"

5. Infographics

Wide range of levels- difficult to find lower levels but high appeal for today's student

Ha Long Bay Promotional Infographics

WORLD NATURAL HERITAGE SITE
HA LONG BAY

Rankings
2/25
World top nature destinations

Rankings
3/25
World top trending destinations

Boasting crystal-clear emerald waters and nearly 2,000 limestone islands of various shapes, with fascinating caves forming a vibrant, mystical world

A focal point of biodiversity with a rich and varied ecosystem

Especially appealing for those who love sports such as hiking, swimming, diving, and kayaking

Source: TripAdvisor, Vietnam National Authority of Tourism
<https://infographics.vn/>

TTXVN

HA LONG BAY

RANKS FIFTH AMONG WORLD'S 10 MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACES

(Selected by *The Travel*, Canada)

Ha Long Bay is home to over 1,600 limestone towers and islands covered in tropical trees. Most of the islands are uninhabited and unaffected by humans. "The best way to experience this mist-shrouded landscape is to board a junk boat and sail through the outstanding scenic beauty."

THE BEST WAY TO EXPERIENCE HA LONG BAY

Boarding a junk boat or sailing kayak through the outstanding scenic beauty

Exploring various cave formations across the bay, including Thien Cung (Heaven Grotto) and Sung Sot (Surprise) Cave

<https://infographics.vn>

TTXVN

MOST SEES AND DOS

In Ha Long Bay, Vietnam

VISIT LAN HA BAY OR BAI TU LONG BAY

Lan Ha Bay is located in the southwest, and Bai Tu Long Bay is in the northeast, yet they both have similar geological, geographical and cultural characteristics. Small and popular tourist cruises will only take you around the well-known parts of Ha Long Bay, but if you want to check these locations out, you need to book into big cruise operators

DISCOVER GROTTOS

Hidden in the thousands of jungle-covered peaks of Ha Long Bay are picturesque grottoes and caves of all shapes and sizes. Check out Thien Cung Cave (Heavenly Palace Cave) and Dau Go Cave, which are easily accessed from Tuan Chau Port. Plenty of boats and cruises anchor here, offering cave visits.

TOUR THE FLOATING VILLAGES

Let's imagine someone who lives on a floating village cooks, washes, hang out with friends, and even learns or works in this environment. Visiting these villages is a fascinating and humbling experience. Take your time visiting one or more of the four main floating villages in Ha Long Bay: Cua Van, Vung Vieng, Cong Dam

KAYAK AND SCUBA DIVE

With clean blue water and calm tides, Ha Long Bay is ideal for paddling around from one limestone outcrop to the other, and sometimes even through caves. The scenes underwater are just as beautiful as what you get above. Scuba diving and snorkeling are recent additions to the activities you can do in Ha Long Bay.

TAKE AN EXCURSION TO CAT BA ISLAND

The Cat Ba Archipelago, with 267 islands, makes up most of the south of the bay. Within these islands, you'll find Cat Ba island, the biggest of all, which has some impressive natural beauty. It's also home to the Cat Ba National Park, which is perfect for trekking and climbing.

www.indochinapioneer.com

73% coverage

HA LONG BAY

APPEARS ON A LIST OF THE 24 BEST PLACES TO TRAVEL IN 2024

(Published by US-based *Forbes* magazine in October 2023)

ACCORDING TO **FORBES**

Ha Long Bay is "one of the most unique ecosystems and geological formations in the world"

Distinctive rock formations made up of limestone karsts and islets add to the magic of the unique destination.

Whether you are a history buff, a nature lover, a foodie, or an adventure seeker, Ha Long Bay has something to offer everyone.

RECOGNITION FOR HA LONG BAY IN RECENT YEARS

- 2023**
 - TRAVEL+LEISURE (Asia edition)**
Among idyllic seaside spots to watch the sunrise and sunset in Asia
 - CNN**
World's 25 most beautiful places
 - WANDERLUST**
Among the 16 most impressive UNESCO heritage wonders in SE Asia
 - UNESCO**
Ha Long Bay - Cat Ba Archipelago a World Heritage
 - FORBES**
24 Best Places To Travel In 2024
- 2022**
 - THE TRAVEL**
Among 10 must-visit epic and adventurous places in Southeast Asia
- 2021**
 - WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS**
Asia's Leading Tourist Attraction

<https://infographics.vn>

TTXVN

Some of these infographics used difficult vocabulary and coverage for the third one is just 73%. However this kind of tourism English is often seen by young people when traveling and so being outside the wordlist may not be a major problem.

Ha Long Bay Sustainability Infographics



What is the Canh Buum Xanh (Green Sail) eco-label?



It is a brand attached to cruise ships that meet standards of environmental protection and social responsibility

Cruise ships labelled Canh Buum Xanh are those that make efforts to protect the environment and effectively use resources and energy, contributing to protecting heritage and promoting sustainable cultural, social and

The Canh Buum Xanh label recognises efforts towards environment protection and social responsibility of cruise ship enterprises.

I have lots more to say but thank you for listening
And also **READING** (and thinking)