



Smithsonian American Art Museum. Washington, D.C.

English B2  
IM259, *Lingua Inglese Pari a Livello B2*

## Lesson 7

### Reading and writing complex texts

#### 1. Definition of reading:

## Reading

**Reading** is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols to derive meaning. It is a form of language processing.

**Success in this process is measured as *reading comprehension*.**

Reading is a means for language acquisition, communication, and sharing information and ideas.

In academic life reading is an important tool to acquire new knowledge in our field of expertise or in any other field. A proficient reader is able to extract meaning of almost any text without effort. Since most language tests are based on “reading comprehension” we are going to concentrate on some strategies to become a better reader, or at least, to perform reasonably well in a reading comprehension exercise.

In lesson 8 we defined a text as a set of interrelated ideas that are consistent with each other. Let’s try to read, for example the following article:



## Satoshi Nakamoto

ON PAPER—or at least on the blockchain—Satoshi Nakamoto is one of the richest people on the planet. Bitcoin is a semi-anonymous currency and Mr Nakamoto is a pseudonymous person, so it is hard to be sure; but he is generally reckoned to own around 1.1m bitcoin, or around 5% of the total number that will ever exist. When bitcoin hit its peak of over \$19,000, that made him worth around \$20bn.

But Mr Nakamoto, though actively involved with his brainchild in its early history, has been silent since 2011. An army of amateur detectives has been trying to work out who he really is, but there is frustratingly little to go on. While developing bitcoin he claimed to be male, in his late 30s and living in Japan, but even that information is suspect. There are indications that he may have lived in an American time zone, but his English occasionally contains British idioms. Some of his goldbug-like comments about central banks that “debase the currency” and the evils of fractional-reserve banking led early cyber-libertarian bitcoin enthusiasts to claim him as one of their own. One thing is certain: he values his privacy. To register Bitcoin.org he used Tor, an online track-covering tool used by black-marketeers, journalists and political dissidents.

Still, the legions of sleuth have turned up various candidates, ranging from Japanese mathematicians to Irish graduate students. In 2014 Newsweek, a business magazine, fingered Dorian Prentice Satoshi Nakamoto, an American engineer. He emphatically denied the story, and the next day a forum account previously used by Mr. Nakamoto, posted, for the first time in five years, to say, “I am not Dorian Nakamoto” –though there are doubts about that account too.

Attention also focused on Hal Finney, an expert in cryptography, an experienced programmer and a dedicated cypherpunk. He was the recipient in the first-ever transaction conducted in bitcoin, with Mr Nakamoto as the sender. He died in 2014. Andy Greenberg, a journalist, who studied private emails between Mr Finney and Mr Nakamoto, concluded that he was probably not bitcoin’s creator. And Mr Finney himself always denied that he was Mr Nakamoto.

Conversely, in 2016, Craig Wright, an Australian computer scientist, explicitly claimed that he was the man everyone was looking for. He invited several news organisations, including The Economist, to witness him prove his claim by using cryptographic keys that supposedly belonged to Mr Nakamoto. He did not convince his audience, so he said he would settle the matter by moving a bitcoin from Mr Nakamoto stash. He later decided against it when an online story suggested he could face arrest if he confirmed he was bitcoin’s creator, on the ground of “enabling terrorism”. But the story turned out to be a fake.

According to another theory, Mr Nakamoto is actually a group of people. But for now his, or their identity, remains a mystery. Some think his withdrawal was a matter of principle, to underline the point of a decentralised currency. Perhaps he simply wants a quiet life.

In order for any reader to answer any question about this article, s/he must comprehend:

A. The vocabulary.

The reader must understand clearly the meaning of fundamental words such as:

- bitcoin
- cryptography
- programmer
- cypherpunk
- currency

B. The interconnection among ideas through the use of “connectors” such as:

- but
- though
- while
- still
- and
- conversely
- so
- and

In the following table, you’ll find a list of very common “connectors” and their meaning. Understanding them is crucial to grasp the interrelationship amongst sentences in a paragraph, or the rapport among different paragraphs in a text.

Connectors  
or  
Discourse



<b>ADDING</b> and also as well as moreover too furthermore additionally	<b>SEQUENCING</b> <u>first, second, third...</u> finally next meanwhile after then subsequently	<b>ILLUSTRATING</b> for example such as for instance in the case of <u>as revealed</u> by... illustrated by	<b>CAUSE and EFFECT</b> because so therefore thus consequently hence
<b>COMPARING</b> similarly likewise as with like equally <u>in the same way..</u>	<b>QUALIFYING</b> but however although unless except apart from as long as if	<b>CONTRASTING</b> whereas instead of alternatively otherwise unlike <u>on the other hand..</u> conversely	<b>EMPHASISING</b> above all in particular especially significantly indeed notably

Once we have understood the connection among all the elements in a text we are able to answer any question about it. In our case, for example, answer about Satoshi Nakamoto's identity. And, if we want, we can write a summary of the text.

A good summary of the article about bitcoin and its anonymous creator could be the following:

### Bitcoin's enigmatic creator may never be identified

#### Exercise:

Open the following link in your computer, tablet or cellphone and read the article "AI cannot be recognized as an inventor, US rules."

<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-52474250>

- Make a list of unknown words. Look them up in a dictionary.
- Make a list of connectors you find in the article.
- Write a summary of the article. Use no more than 5 lines (75 words approximately).