



Band 2

Reading Stimulus

I speak two languages

My Mum and Dad came to Australia from Vietnam.
At home we speak Vietnamese.

I didn't speak English when I started school.
Now I speak quite well.

When I get home from school sometimes I speak in English.
My Mum says, 'Speak Vietnamese. Speak Vietnamese.'

When my cousins come to visit we speak English.
My Dad says, 'Speak Vietnamese. Speak Vietnamese.'

Sometimes in school I speak in Vietnamese to the teacher.
She doesn't understand. I say, 'Oh, I forgot.' She laughs.

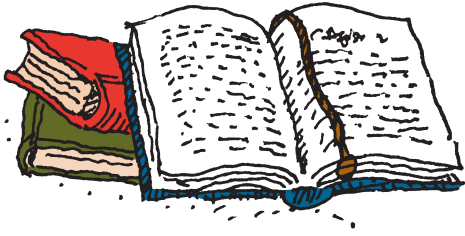
It's good speaking two languages.

I can speak privately with my Vietnamese friends.
When kids tease me, I tease back in Vietnamese.
They don't know what I'm saying.

My uncle is teaching me to read and write Vietnamese.
There are twenty-nine letters in the Vietnamese alphabet.

I'm glad I speak two languages.





Grandpa's books

My name's Hamish and when I was little I loved books. My favourite book was about a caterpillar who ate holes through all the pages. On stormy nights I took that book to bed with me – opened like a tent on top of my head – because I knew that with books everything turns out right in the end.

Then Grandpa came to live with us and he brought his own books, ones with hundreds of pages and thick, hard covers. While Mum and Dad built him a room to live in, Nathan and I sat on little chairs in the lounge room and listened to Grandpa read.

Nathan's my brother. He's really smart and he thought Grandpa's stories were terrific. What I liked best about Grandpa's stories was the way he read them. He always stood up to read, behind a tall skinny desk called a lectern. And he always started by saying, very loudly, 'Ladies and gentlemen!'

I asked Nathan about these ladies and he said that they were invisible ones only Grandpa could see. Once I knew they were there, I could hear them all right – giggling and rattling their chip packets.

'Shh!' I had to tell them sometimes. Grandpa took reading very seriously.

Before he came to live with us,

Grandpa used to act in plays and read stories on the radio, so he knew the proper way to do it: with his head thrown back, his mouth wide open and his eyes fixed on the ceiling.

'How does he do that?' I asked Nathan quietly.

'Do what?'

'Read without looking at the book.'

Nathan didn't know. But as things turned out, I learned the trick myself and used it lots in years to come.

