

Worksheet A

A. Pre-reading

This tests ability to skim-read. Encourage students – especially stronger ones – to complete the task as quickly as they can.

Key:

1. c; 2. a; 3. f; 4. e

B. Comprehension

When checking students' answers, make sure they can identify which sentences they used to decide on their answers.

Key:

1. T. 'The research on the key role of ability in explaining performance suggests that they are right to do so.' [paragraph 1, lines 5-7]

2. F. 'Failure to recruit workers with appropriate skills will cause a firm to fail **or, at the very least, not to grow properly.**' [paragraph 1, lines 7-9]. The expression 'at the very least' means that failure is likely but not necessarily certain.

3. F. 'While firms should aim to recruit effectively at all levels of ability ...' [paragraph 2, lines 1-2]. In other words, good recruitment is still important for lower-level jobs, even though it's more important for higher-level ones.

4. T. 'Some people simply lack the blend of intelligence and personality traits needed ... and these people should not be recruited at all.' [paragraph 3, lines 6-10]

5. F. 'Among those who do have the necessary abilities, the performance range will still be enormous.' [paragraph 3, lines 10-12]

6. T. 'Selection is about choosing among job candidates ... Recruitment strategy is best understood as the way in which a firm tries to find or attract people among whom it will ultimately make selections.' [paragraph 4, lines 6-7 and 10-13]

C. Vocabulary: Word transformation

Review answers with the whole class. Practise saying the words aloud (either in isolation or a complete sentence) and ensure that students are placing the syllable stress correctly. Point out how

the syllable stress can often shift (e.g. able > ability; produce > productivity).

Key:

2. ability; 3. productive; 4. complexity; 5. ambiguity; 6. to pursue; 7. productivity; 8. distinction; 9. attract, attractive

D. Discussion

Use question 2 to expand students' knowledge of adjectives and especially personality descriptions. Make a list of jobs and positive and negative traits and qualities on the board, e.g.

Sales executive:

+ energetic, articulate, sociable
- introverted, shy, dislikes travel

As a follow-up activity, you could get students to discuss which qualities and characteristics are relevant to all jobs and which are especially important for particular jobs (or categories of job).

Question 3 leads in to the topic of interviews and personality tests which is covered in more detail in Worksheet B.

Worksheet B

A. Pre-listening

Monitor students while they are discussing their ideas and review answers with the whole class. For weaker students, you might need to give one or two examples before they begin the discussion.

B. Comprehension

Key:

1. F. Tom says this is true of "more and more companies" but not all of them. [Tom, paragraph 4, line 1]

2. T. "Big companies have the resources to do this for themselves on their own company websites." [Tom, paragraph 4, lines 2-3]

3. F. Some use them in this way, "But other recruitment agents offer to manage the entire recruitment process online ..." [Tom, paragraph 4, lines 6-7]

4. F. The opposite is true for some agents, who work "... in collaboration with their client company's HR department." [Tom, paragraph 4, line 7]

5. T. "... now the bigger companies also place more general adverts which aim to make job candidates aware of the company: what it does and what its image and values are." [Tom, paragraph 6, lines 3-4]

6. T. "Nowadays, interviews tend to be much more structured and standardized than they were in the past." [Tom, paragraph 14, lines 3-4]

7. T. "First, there are ability or aptitude tests ... And secondly, there are personality tests or inventories ..." [Tom, paragraph 16, lines 2-4]

C. Listening for detail

Students will probably not know many (or any) of these expressions before doing this activity, so it is primarily test of their note-taking skills and ability to identify specific and unfamiliar pieces of information.

Key:

1. "... in newspapers mainly, but also in specialist professional journals." [Tom, paragraph 2, line 3]
2. a "job board" [paragraph 4, line 5]
3. "low-involvement' advertisements" [paragraph 6, line 5]
4. "competencies" [paragraph 14, line 9]
5. "personality tests or inventories" [paragraph 16, line 4]
6. a "self-report questionnaire" [paragraph 18, line 1]
7. (a) "... it allows companies to save money and to process candidates more quickly." [paragraph 20, line 1]
(b) "... it means that they might end up rejecting good candidates as well as bad ones." [paragraph 20, line 2]

D. Vocabulary

Draw the students' attention to the speaker's use of words with similar meanings in pairs (*purpose* and *objectives*; *duties* and *responsibilities*; *skills* and *abilities*). This might help them to fill in the gaps correctly, or you could point it out afterwards.

This activity tests vocabulary that is central to the topic, so you should encourage students to note it down and learn it.

Key:

1. standards; 2. title; 3. department; 4. reports; 5. objectives; 6. responsibilities; 7. qualifications; 8. abilities; 9. motivation; 10. application; 11. reference; 12. interview

E. Discussion

With stronger students, you might want to discuss *why* a question might be wrong (for example is it illegal, inappropriate or simply unlikely to produce a useful answer?). Answers about what kind of questions are legal or illegal to ask during a job interview vary from country to country and are an interesting discussion point in their own right.

F. Project

For weaker students, provide categories for both job descriptions and personnel specification before they begin writing, e.g.

Job descriptions:

- job title
- job department
- responsible to
- purpose / overall objectives of the job
- specific responsibilities of the job
- where the job will be located
- salary and working conditions

Personnel specification:

- qualifications
- experience
- abilities
- achievements
- interests
- motivation
- personality

For stronger students, get them to find examples of both kinds of document on the internet. A good starting point might be the examples on the website of the UK conciliation service ACAS <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1392>

To turn this from a writing task into a speaking activity, you could do this as a 'What's My Job?' game. Individual students read out the descriptions item by item, and the other students then have to guess at each stage what they think the job is.

A Pre-reading

Read the text and match the correct headings (a-f) to each of the paragraphs (1-4) Two of the headings do not match the text.

- a. Why recruitment and selection are more important for some kinds of job than others
- b. Where and how should companies be looking for new employees?
- c. The central importance of recruitment and selection for companies
- d. The difference between selection and recruitment
- e. How companies can make sure that they are recruiting the best candidates for the job
- f. Why individual differences between employees are so important for recruitment and selection

The crucial role of recruitment and selection

1.
.....

When one looks at the size of the recruitment industry around the world, it seems that the people involved in this industry act as if recruitment and selection is the most important human resource function. The research on the key role of ability in explaining performance suggests that they are right to do so. Failure to recruit workers with appropriate skills will cause a firm to fail or, at the very least, not to grow properly. Firms need to attract and encourage people with the kind of abilities that will make the organization productive.

2.
.....

While firms should aim to recruit effectively at all levels of ability, the need to recruit successfully is particularly important where the ability to take difficult decisions or special combinations of skills is required in the work. As job complexity increases, so does the range of human performance. Thus, as we move up from low complexity work (such as routine clerical work) to jobs where greater ambiguity is involved in decision making, differences in skills and judgement become more significant and have greater consequences for the organization.

3.
.....

It is quite possible for one professional, such as a lawyer or an IT consultant, to be several times better than another at the same task. The phenomenon of large performance variation is also commonly

recognized in sales work, such as insurance sales. Some people simply lack the blend of intelligence and personality traits needed (such as a friendly manner plus the ability to pursue the sales deal and not be deterred by rejections) and these people should not be recruited at all. Among those who do have the necessary abilities, the performance range will still be enormous. In Anglo-American countries, at least, firms commonly find they need 'sales compensation packages' which allow high achievers to earn more money according to a system that is better linked to their personal productivity.

4.
.....

Recognizing the crucial role of ability in performance, the literature on recruitment and selection is vast. In terms of highlighting the key messages in this literature, it is important to make a distinction between selection practices and recruitment strategies. Selection is about choosing among job candidates. It is about how to make fair and relevant assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of applicants. It is concerned with the value of particular selection techniques. Recruitment strategy is best understood as the way in which a firm tries to find or attract people among whom it will ultimately make selections. Recruitment strategies include attempts to make the organization an attractive place to work and attempts to reach better candidates.

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Worksheet A: Level 1 (Intermediate)

B Comprehension

Do these statements match the information in the text? Mark each statement as true (T) or false (F).

1. There is evidence to suggest that recruitment and selection are the most important aspects of HR.
2. Companies that do not carry out recruitment and selection well will always fail.
3. Effective recruitment is not really important for less complicated / lower-level jobs.
4. Sales people who lack the personality traits of friendliness and determination should not be recruited.
5. Performance variation can be explained entirely by the difference between those who have the necessary skills and personality traits and those who do not.
6. Selection is to do with choosing the right person from a group of potential job candidates, whereas recruitment strategy is focused on attracting good candidates in the first place.

C Vocabulary: Word transformation

Without looking back at the text, fill in the missing words (the first is done for you).

1. the noun from the verb *to recruit* recruitment
2. the noun from the adjective *able* _____
3. the adjective from the verb *to produce* _____
4. the noun from the adjective *complex* _____
5. the noun from the adjective *ambiguous* _____
6. the verb from the noun *pursuit* _____
7. the noun from the verb *to produce* _____
8. the noun from the verb *to distinguish (between)* = to make a _____ between
9. the verb and adjective from the noun *attraction* = to _____ somebody to a job; to make a job seem _____

Now look back at the text and check your answers.

D Discussion

Look at the following excerpt from the text then answer the questions.

Some people simply lack the blend of intelligence and personality traits needed (such as a friendly manner plus the ability to pursue the sales deal and not be deterred by rejections) and these people should not be recruited at all.

1. Do you agree with this statement?
2. Can you think of other examples of particular personality traits and qualities needed for specific jobs? What about traits and qualities that might make someone unsuitable for a specific job.
3. What are the different ways in which a company can find out whether a candidate's intelligence and personality does (or doesn't) make them suitable for a particular job?

Worksheet B: Level 1 (Intermediate)

A Pre-listening

What do you think are the most important stages of the process of selecting and recruiting job candidates? Discuss your ideas in pairs or small groups and make notes. Then, listen to the conversation and make more notes. Which of the stages you discussed are (and aren't) mentioned?

B Comprehension

Listen to the dialogue and decide whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. Nowadays, companies only advertise jobs on websites and only accept job applications online.
2. Companies that advertise jobs and manage recruitment on their own websites tend to be the bigger ones.
3. Companies only use recruitment agents to advertise jobs.
4. When recruitment agents manage the process of recruitment on behalf of a company, they do so independently of the company's HR department.
5. Nowadays, companies sometimes place advertisements simply to attract good candidates, rather than to advertise a specific job.
6. In the past, job interviews tended to be less organized and pre-planned than they are now.
7. Psychometric tests separately assess both a candidate's ability to do the job and whether their personality is right for the job.

C Listening for detail

Read the questions below. Then, listen to the recording again and answer them.

1. What sorts of publications did job advertisements use to be placed in twenty years ago?
2. What term does the speaker use to describe the website page where recruitment agencies advertise jobs?
3. What term does the speaker use to describe advertisements that companies use to advertise themselves to job candidates (rather than advertising a specific job)?
4. What term does the speaker use to describe a person's general characteristics (i.e. their skills and personality) which make them suitable for a particular job?
5. What term does the speaker use to describe tests designed to assess candidates' personalities?
6. What term does the speaker use to describe a questionnaire where job candidates have to describe their own behaviour and attitudes?
7. What does Tom say are (a) the good consequences and (b) the bad consequences of online testing?

Worksheet B: Level 1 (Intermediate)

D Vocabulary

Listen to the dialogue again and complete the notes below using the words in the box.

abilities	application	department	interview
motivation	objectives	qualifications	reference
reports	responsibilities	standards	title

Tom: As you would expect, the job description describes the job and the _____ (1) of performance needed to do it. Typically it includes the job _____ (2), the _____ (3) the job holder works in and who he or she _____ (4) to. It also sets out the overall purpose and _____ (5) of the job and the jobholder's specific duties and _____ (6).

Laura: And the personnel specification?

Tom: That focuses more on the 'ideal' person to do the job. It might include categories such as _____ (7) and experience, skills and _____ (8), why the person wants to do the job – in other words their _____ (9) and personality. It's useful as a way of deciding between candidates.

Laura: OK, so those are the earlier stages. What about the point at which the company selects the successful candidate?

Tom: Well again, looking back to when I started out, the key elements of selection were the _____ (10) form, the letters of _____ (11) and – most important of all – the job _____ (12).

E Discussion

In pairs or small groups, make a list of examples of good questions and bad questions to ask candidates during a job interview. Why are they good or bad? How would you answer them?

F Project

Look again at the section of the conversation that deals with job descriptions and personnel specifications [see the Vocabulary question above]. Now write job descriptions and personnel specifications for two or three different jobs.

Listening transcript: Level 1 (Intermediate)

Tom and Laura are talking about what can usually be expected in an interview, and how modern recruitment practices are a little different from those in the past.

Laura: So, what would you say are the most important stages of the selection and recruitment process?

Tom: I think the starting point has to be attracting the right candidates. When I first started twenty years ago, it was very simple. Each time a job vacancy came up, the company used to place an advertisement – in newspapers mainly, but also in specialist professional journals. Nowadays things are different in lots of ways.

Laura: For example?

Tom: Well, as you know, there's been a huge growth in e-recruitment. More and more companies only advertise jobs on websites and only accept job applications online. Big companies have the resources to do this for themselves on their own company websites. But there are also lots of recruitment agents who do the job of recruiting on the company's behalf. Sometimes these agents function like a newspaper's jobs page and just provide a job board and other advice to job applicants. But other recruitment agents offer to manage the entire recruitment process online, in collaboration with their client company's HR department.

Laura: Apart from e-recruitment, are there any other changes since you started out?

Tom: Yes, there are. The way in which companies advertise has changed. Whereas they used to just describe a particular job, where it was based, what it involved, what the salary was, and so on, now the bigger companies also place more general adverts which aim to make candidates aware of the company: what it does and what its image and values are. These ads are sometimes called 'low-involvement' advertisements. By doing this, companies hope to draw the best candidates away from their competitors.

Laura: Does that mean that companies have stopped using traditional job descriptions?

Tom: No, job descriptions are still a key aspect of the process. In fact, there are actually two key documents that most companies use: the job description and the personnel specification.

Laura: What's the difference between the two?

Tom: As you would expect, the job description describes the job and the standards of performance needed to do it. Typically it includes the job title, the department the job holder works in and who he or she reports to. It also sets out the overall purpose and objectives of the job and the jobholder's specific duties and responsibilities.

Laura: And the personnel specification?

Tom: That focuses more on the 'ideal' person to do the job. It might include categories such as qualifications and experience, skills and abilities, why the person wants to do the job – in other words their motivation and personality. It's useful as a way of deciding between candidates.

Laura: OK, so those are the earlier stages. What about the point at which the company selects the successful candidate?

Tom: Well again, looking back to when I started out, the key elements of selection were the application form, the letters of reference and – most important of all – the job interview. Job interviews used to be a bit like a general conversation. Nowadays, interviews tend to be much more structured and standardized than they were in the past. Also, job interviews used to focus quite a lot on the candidate's past experience: what they did and the things they were responsible for. Past experience is also significant now, of course, but these days we

Listening transcript: Level 1 (Intermediate)

concentrate much more on finding out about the candidates' abilities and their personality – not just what they are able to do but also how well they are likely to perform in the job. This is what we mean by 'competencies', which is an expression you might have heard. And there are various techniques for finding out about this.

Laura: You mean things like psychometric testing?

Tom: Yes, psychometric testing can be a useful way of finding out how people will perform once they are actually doing a job. In fact there are really two kinds of tests. First, there are ability or aptitude tests that look at skills such as numeracy, verbal reasoning and other mental and physical abilities, depending on what the job requires. And secondly, there are personality tests or inventories, which are designed to find out about candidates' personalities: what their values and interests are; how intelligent they are; what sort of things they're interested in, and so on.

Laura: How do you ask people about their personalities?

Tom: Well, people usually are given a self-report questionnaire, where they have to agree or disagree with a list of statements. For example, a typical statement in a questionnaire might be: "I can work well, even when things are disorganized." People can give a range of responses to the statement, for example 'strongly agree', 'strongly disagree' and 'neither agree nor disagree'. Again, a lot of this kind of testing is done online nowadays. Online testing has good and bad consequences, in my opinion.

Laura: What do you mean?

Tom: Well, on the plus side, it allows companies to save money and to process candidates more quickly. But on the minus side, it means that they might end up rejecting good candidates as well as bad ones. In the end, it's all a question of ...