

Worksheet A

A. Pre-reading

This activity tests students' ability to skim-read. With weaker students, tell them in advance that three of the statements are true, and three are false.

Key:

1. T. *'When one looks at the size of the recruitment industry around the world, it seems that practitioners act as if recruitment and selection is the most important human resource function. The research on the critical role of ability in explaining performance suggests that they are right to do so.'* [paragraph 1, lines 1-6]

2. T. *'... the need to recruit astutely is particularly important where higher levels of discretion or specialised blends of skills are required in the work.'* [paragraph 2, lines 2-5]

3. F. *'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.'* [paragraph 2, lines 11-13]. *The sentence compares professional candidates with each other, and not with less qualified people.*

4. T. *'Among those who do have the threshold abilities, the performance range will still be enormous.'* [paragraph 2, lines 20-22]

5. F. *'In Anglo-American countries, at least, firms commonly find they need 'sales compensation packages' which allow high achievers to earn a higher pay pack better linked to their personal productivity.'* [paragraph 2, lines 22-26] *The expression at least suggests that firms in other countries might also follow the same practices.*

6. F. *'Recruitment strategy is best understood as the way in which a firm tries to source or attract people among whom it will ultimately make selections.'* [paragraph 3, lines 11-14] *The definition provided here relates to selection practices.*

B. Vocabulary 1: Synonyms

With stronger students, before getting them to find the answers in the text, give them extra help to try to elicit the correct answer (for example by giving them the total number of letters in the word, extra letters, or further synonyms).

Key:

1. doom; stunted; 2. nurture; 3. astutely;
4. pronounced; 5. blend; cognitive; traits;
6. source

C. Vocabulary 2: Academic writing

The activity focuses on commonly confused words. Encourage students to use dictionaries to check their answers before you go through the answers with the class.

Key:

1. b; 2. b; 3. a (b is not a normal collocation in English); 4. b (Students need to look at how the expression is used in context to answer this correctly.); 5. b; 6. b; 7. a

D. Comprehension: Words with more than one meaning

Key:

1. a ('b' is a possible interpretation, but 'a' is more likely in the context of the text as a whole);
2. a; 3. b; 4. a

E. Discussion

When reviewing and evaluating the suggestions with the class, encourage them to use the vocabulary they have studied throughout this lesson.

Worksheet B

A. Pre-listening

Monitor / review the initial discussion before they go on to listen to the conversation. Do the final stage as a whole-class discussion.

B. Comprehension

See which of the questions the students can answer before they listen for a second time. Allow for an initial checking stage, then play the recording again, focusing on the key points where the relevant information is given.

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

With weaker students (or if you are pressed for time), skip the initial stage where they try to remember answers and start by replaying the audio file. If you do this, you should still get them to read all the questions first.

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

All the missing items are key vocabulary for this topic, so you should encourage students to note them down and learn them.

Point out the speaker's use of words with similar meanings in pairs (*purpose and objectives; duties and responsibilities; skills and abilities*). See if they can think of similar pairings.

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

For question 2, 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. Webquest

These questions are all designed to get students to explore the topic area on the internet in a general way. Students can report their findings either in the form of a class presentation or a written essay.

Worksheet A: Level 2 (Upper Intermediate)

A Pre-reading

Quickly read the text and decide whether the statements below (1-6) are true (T) or false (F).

1. People working in HR believe that recruitment and selection are the most important aspects of what they do, and this is borne out by research.
2. The more specialized and complex the job, the harder it is to recruit the right people to do it.
3. Candidates for 'professional' and specialized categories of jobs (e.g. lawyers and IT consultants) are generally better in interviews than candidates for less demanding jobs.
4. Even if people do have all the necessary skills and qualities to do a job effectively, there will still be a wide variation in individual ability.
5. Only Anglo-American companies try to reflect individual differences in performance through pay policy.
6. Recruitment strategy is concerned with choosing the right person from a group of suitable candidates.

The crucial role of recruitment and selection

When one looks at the size of the recruitment industry around the world, it seems that practitioners act as if recruitment and selection is the most important human resource function. The research on the critical role of ability in explaining performance suggests that they are right to do so. Failure to recruit workers with appropriate competencies will doom the firm to failure or, at the very least, to stunted growth. Firms need to attract and nurture people with the kind of abilities that will make the organization productive in its chosen industry.

While firms should aim to recruit effectively at all levels of ability, the need to recruit astutely is particularly important where higher levels of discretion or specialized blends of skills are 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 pronounced and are more consequential for the organization. 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 cognitive abilities and personality traits needed (such as a friendly manner plus the ability to pursue the sales deal and not be deterred by rejections) and should not be recruited at all. Among those who do have the threshold 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 a higher pay pack better linked to their personal productivity.

Recognizing the crucial role of ability in performance, the literature on recruitment and selection is vast. Our concern is not to summarize it but to point to underlying principles. 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 source 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 pools of candidates.

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Worksheet A: Level 2 (Upper Intermediate)

B Vocabulary 1: Synonyms

Without looking back at the text, try to remember the words used in the text that have similar meanings to the ones in the definitions and fill in the gaps. Then, look back at the text and check your answers.

- condemn a firm to failure or to restricted growth
d_____ a firm to failure or to s_____ growth
- to help (an employee) be successful and develop
to n_____ an employee
- to recruit in an intelligent manner
to recruit a_____
- differences are more noticeable
differences are more p_____
- the combination of the ability to understand and analyze problems and the personality characteristics needed
The b_____ of c_____ abilities and personality t_____ needed
- to find the right people
to s_____ or attract people

C Vocabulary 2: Academic writing

Look at the excerpt from the text in the box below. There is often more than one way to say the same thing in academic writing. Sometimes we use an equivalent expression simply to introduce some variety.

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.

Look at these words and expressions used in the text and decide which is the best equivalent: a or b.

- act as if* [paragraph 1, line 3]
a. pretend that
b. behave as if
- at the very least* [paragraph 1, line 8]
a. at best
b. at worst
- are more consequential for* [paragraph 2, lines 10-11]
a. have greater consequences for
b. give stronger consequences for
- large performance variations* [paragraph 2, line 14]
a. significant changes in performance
b. big differences in performance
- which allow* [paragraph 2, line 24]
a. which authorize
b. which enable
- particular* [paragraph 3, line 11]
a. specialized
b. specific
- ultimately* [paragraph 3, line 14]
a. eventually
b. probably

Worksheet A: Level 2 (Upper Intermediate)

D Comprehension: Words with more than one meaning

Look at the excerpts from the text in the boxes below. Then, decide which of the two definitions best matches the meaning of the word in bold as it is used in the text.

While firms should aim to recruit effectively at all levels of ability, the need to recruit astutely is particularly important where higher levels of **discretion** or specialized blends of skills are required in the work.

1. In this sentence, the word *discretion* means:
 - a. to have discretion, i.e. to have the freedom or ability to make your own decisions at work
 - b. to show discretion, i.e. to keep information confidential in order to prevent problems or embarrassment for your employer

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.

2. In this sentence, the word *quite* means:
 - a. it is fairly / just about possible
 - b. it is completely / absolutely possible

Here are two more sentences (not from the text).

Disappointed candidates will often want to find out why they were not given the job.

3. In this sentence, the word *disappointed* means:
 - a. candidates who were not appointed
 - b. candidates who are upset because they were not appointed

Employers recruiting for high-level jobs are usually highly **discriminating** in their choice of candidates.

4. In this sentence, the word *discriminating* means:
 - a. they choose very carefully between the candidates
 - b. they treat some candidates less fairly than others

E Discussion

In groups, make a list of suggestions for ways in which companies can improve (a) their selection practices and (b) their recruiting strategies. Then, review your answers as a class. Which of these ways do you think is most effective? Why?

Worksheet B: Level 2 (Upper Intermediate)

A Pre-listening

In what ways do you think the process of selecting and recruiting job candidates is different now compared with twenty years ago? Discuss your ideas in pairs or small groups and make notes. Then, listen to the conversation and make more notes. Which of the points that you discussed are (and aren't) mentioned?

B Comprehension

Look at these statements about what is said during the conversation and decide whether they 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 manage the whole process of recruitment on their behalf.
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. Can you remember any of the answers from the first time you listened to the conversation? Listen again. Then, check your answers and answer the questions you weren't able to answer from memory.

1. What sorts of publications did job advertisements used to be placed in twenty years ago?
2. What term does Tom use to describe the website page where recruitment agencies advertise jobs?
3. What term does Tom use to describe advertisements that companies use to advertise themselves to job candidates (rather than advertising a specific job)?
4. What term does Tom 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 Tom use to describe tests designed to assess candidates' personalities?
6. What term does Tom 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 2 (Upper Intermediate)

D Vocabulary

Try to fill in the gaps in the dialogue. Then, listen again to the conversation to check your answers.

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

Discuss one or more of these questions.

1. Do you think a face-to-face interview is essential for all jobs or only for specific categories of job?
2. What subjects should (or shouldn't) be discussed during a job interview?
3. What advice would you give interviewers and interviewees to ensure a successful interview?

F Webquest

Choose one or two of the following.

1. Find examples of good and bad job advertisements in English on the internet. These can be for specific jobs, or 'low-involvement' advertisements for the company. How effective are they? How would you improve them? Would they work in your country?
2. Find the website of a British or American online recruitment agent and one from your own country. Are there any significant differences?
3. Find a free psychometric test on the internet and try it. Make a note of any interesting or unusual questions. How accurate do you think the result is?

Listening transcript: Level 2 (Upper 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 2 (Upper 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 ...