

Reading and Language Knowledge – Multiple choice

Overview: This lesson by Russell Whitehead is designed to help you engage your students' interest with and understanding of the multiple choice task type in the BULATS Reading and Language Knowledge test. In particular, it aims to help with comprehending the different types of texts found in these questions.

Part of Exam: Reading and Listening paper (Reading and Language Knowledge section)

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student

Time: 45 to 100 minutes, depending on the class level and amount of discussion included

Procedure:

Exercise 1: Engaging with short business communication texts

1. Tell students today's lesson is about dealing with business communication, in particular short texts such as signs, emails, graphs, etc. This lesson will help them perform effectively in the multiple choice questions in the Reading and Language Knowledge section of the BULATS Reading and Listening test.
2. Ask the class what short texts they see, either at work or just in their everyday life. This applies to texts in any language. You can prompt them to think of signs, advertisements, emails, and so on. Elicit a few answers.
3. Once the students have got the idea, distribute Worksheet 1 and ask students to work in pairs. They should think of examples for each category in exercise 1A:
 - signs and notices (e.g. warning signs, advertisements on noticeboards, etc)
 - emails / memos / letters (e.g. business correspondence)
 - items of business or economic news (e.g. articles from magazines, newspapers)
 - graphic information (e.g. company organogram, sales graph)

- adverts (e.g. in magazines, online, on TV)

This should not be a very detailed discussion, just a way to engage students' focus at this point.

4. Now ask students to break up their pairs and to form small groups. They should use the questions in exercise 1B to discuss the short texts they have previously discussed in 1A. Monitor the discussions. Lower-level classes may not be able to continue this discussion for more than a few minutes, while higher-level groups may continue for some time.
5. Have a brief whole-class discussion in which you elicit an answer to each of the four questions.

Teacher's notes

Exercise 2: Engaging with BULATS texts

1. Distribute Worksheet 2. Ask students to work in the same pairs.
2. Tell students to put each of the seven texts from Worksheet 2 into one of the categories listed in exercise 2A.

Key (suggested answers):

signs and notices – 4, 7
emails / memos / letters – 3
items of business or economic news – 2
graphic information – 5
adverts – 1

3. Students should re-form the same small groups as before and check their answers together. Monitor and then as a whole class deal with any queries or problems at this point.
4. Explain that in the exam, for multiple choice questions they will have to read a short text and choose, from three possible answers, the sentence or phrase that most closely matches the meaning of the text. Now, for exercise 2B, ask the students to produce a sentence which represents the main meaning of each text from Worksheet 2. To establish the idea here, you might want to work with the class to produce an example sentence for text 1, e.g. *There is a competition for writing about management, with different types of entry.*

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There is, of course, no right or wrong answer to any of these.

- Depending on the level and energy of the students, and the amount of time you have available, you can either ask each group to produce sentences for all of the texts 1–7, or you could allocate between one and three to each group.
- After each group has discussed their sentences, they should write them down on their worksheets. Then, as a whole class, they should discuss some of their sentences.
- Refer students to exercise 2C on Worksheet 1. Each sentence corresponds to the texts on Worksheet 2. Tell students all the answers here are wrong – i.e. the sentences summarising the texts are incorrect in some way. Ask them in their pairs or groups (whichever it seems will work better) to discuss why these answers are wrong. Monitor.
- As a whole class, go through these answers briefly.

Key (suggested answers):

- The prizes are not mentioned.
- There is no mention of what they will do with the profits.
- You should 'spare some time' to attend (this is not the same meaning as 'free time').
- The advert is not for a job. It is for investing or borrowing money.
- The number decreases every year.
- The Marketing Manager already has an email list of colleagues.
- There is no mention of where the Accounts Department is situated, or if they are moving.

Exercise 3: Language in focus

- Distribute Worksheet 3. Refer students to exercise 3. Tell them that they now have one more wrong answer and also the correct answer for each text on Worksheet 2.
- Tell students, working in the same pairs or groups, to decide which is which in each case. You can make this activity shorter by allocating a different question to each group/pair. Monitor.
- As a whole class, check their answers.
Key (correct answers):
 - may enter in different categories of management writing.
 - has increased its profits by producing goods more efficiently.
 - You will benefit from attending the sessions.
 - You can arrange to see someone about ways to save your money.
 - The number of full-time staff overtook part-time staff in year 2.
 - There may be people who should receive information from the Marketing Department.
 - The HR Department will be located next to the Main Reception after 19th June.
- Emphasize to the class the importance of not simply jumping at the first answer that contains the same word as something in the text.
- Ask students to compare the correct answers here with the sentences they prepared earlier. Make the point that some of these BULATS exam questions test understanding of the gist message of short texts, while others test a certain aspect of the text.
Note: The following two steps (6 and 7) can be done as homework / in the next lesson.
- Tell students to go through the texts and the possible answers, and underline vocabulary – words and phrases, including collocations – and structures which they think it will be useful to remember. Tell them to copy these onto the blank lines on Worksheet 3.
- As a class, discuss what they have put. Encourage effective recording techniques (including information such as part of speech, collocations, explanations of meanings in English where possible, and so on).
- Finally, summarize: there are different text types in BULATS Reading and Language Knowledge multiple choice questions, and reading carefully is very important because the wrong answers are not obvious.

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Exercise 1

A

- signs and notices
- emails/memos/letters
- items of business / economic news
- graphic information
- adverts

B

- When and how often do you see these texts?
- Where do you see these texts?
- Who writes these texts?
- What do you do as a result of seeing these texts?

Exercise 2

A

- signs and notices _____
- emails/memos/letters _____
- items of business / economic news _____
- graphic information _____
- adverts _____

B

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

C

1. Participants in the competition will receive top quality publications on management if they win.
2. According to the spokesman, the company will invest profits it has made in increased production.
3. You can only attend the sessions in your free time.
4. You can make more money by getting a job here.
5. The number of temporary staff remained almost unchanged for three years.
6. A list of colleagues who attended the conference is required by the Marketing Manager.
7. The Accounts Department will be located next to the Main Reception after 19th June.

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1.

Management Writing Competition

For excellence in management writing
Enter now! There are six prizes to be won in two sections:
Best Management Book and Best Management Article.

2.

Websters Inc. announces improved profitability

The spokesman from Websters Inc. said that, in spite of a decline in general business confidence, the company was pleased with its improved profitability, resulting from gains in productivity.

3.

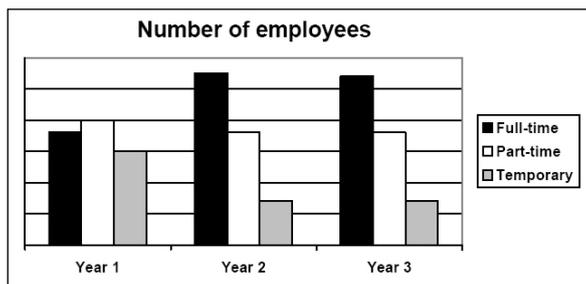
To: All Research Staff
From: J Swann, Human Resources
Subject: Job evaluation sessions

This is just a reminder of the job evaluation sessions which take place next month. You should spare some time to be present at these sessions, as it is very much in your interest to attend.

4.

Make your money work for you!
For free financial advice make an appointment to speak to our savings and loan staff.

5.



6.

From: Sonya Benson, Marketing Manager <sonya@company.com>
To: Marketing Department Staff <marketingstaff@company.com>
Subject: Re: Last week's conference

Please pass the attached notes on to any colleagues who were at the conference but for some reason are not on our current email list.

7.

OFFICE RENOVATION PROGRAMME

The Commercial Department, currently located next to the Main Reception, will transfer to the Accounts Department's offices on the first floor by 19th June. The HR Department will then transfer to the Commercial Department's old office.

