

How to teach reading for exams?

A reading lesson

Our learners need to read different types of texts. Use this activity with a story, a coursebook text, a magazine article or newspaper story.

- Write the title of a text on the board. Ask learners where the text is from (a book, magazine, newspaper?).
- Learners think of as many words as possible connected with the title. Write the words on the board.
- Learners read the text quickly in silence. Can they find any of the words from the list on the board? Invite learners to the board to cross off the words they found.
- Learners read the text again and, in pairs, make a note of any names, numbers, and dates they see. Set a five-minute time limit. Ask a volunteer to list the names, etc. on the board.
- Cover the text. In pairs, learners try to remember what the names, numbers and dates refer to, then look at the text to check.

Words in a text

This activity helps learners to understand new vocabulary in a text.

- Each learner chooses five new words from a text that they have just read.
- In pairs, learners compare their five words. Can they explain or translate any of their partner's words? Then they choose five words from their combined list of ten.
- Pairs join to make groups of four. Learners compare words and translate or explain if possible, as before. Again they choose five words from their combined list of ten.
- Each group writes their five words on the board.
- Learners explain any of the words they know to the class; the teacher can explain any that are left.

Running dictation

This lively activity uses texts to practise reading, speaking, listening and writing.

- Choose a short text. Put several copies of the text up around the walls of the classroom (or even the school building).
- Put the learners in pairs.
- The aim is for one of the learners in each team to walk (or run!) to read the text on the wall. They memorise some of the text (three or four words), return to their partner and dictate what they remember. Their partner writes the text.
- Learners swap roles when the teacher shouts 'Change!' Over several turns they build the whole text.
- The winner is the team that finishes first.
- Learners compare their writing with the text and make any corrections.
- Use the text for the next part of the lesson: for example, questions about the text, a discussion.

The Teacher

The magazine for teachers of all subjects

ANY BOARD CAN BE A SMART BOARD!

Hi, We wanted to share with you the idea of using a smart board in the classroom. It's a great idea for all subjects. It's a great idea for all subjects. It's a great idea for all subjects.

Smartboards are a great idea for all subjects. They are a great idea for all subjects. They are a great idea for all subjects.



Preparing for the exam

There are four things you need to do to prepare for the exam:

1. Practise your English in all four of the language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking.
2. Improve your grammar and vocabulary.
3. Make sure you know what to expect in the exam.
4. Make sure you know the practical arrangements for the exam.

The most important of these is to practise communicating clearly. For example, in the Speaking test, the examiner will be interested in how you ask your partner questions, and how you answer their questions.

To help you prepare for B1 Preliminary, our **website** has a lot of free exam preparation material, including:

- sample papers and a computer-based practice test
- skills practice activities
- language practice activities.

To help you prepare for the exam, Cambridge Assessment English and Cambridge University Press have developed a wide range of **official preparation materials** including coursebooks and practice tests. You can purchase these in both print and digital formats.

Which of the following text types do you read? Why?

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| text messages | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| newspaper articles | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| reports | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| postcards | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| emails | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| public notices | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| stories | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| advertisements | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

https://docs.google.com/document/d/18cKL9QVJ3vUoHHzcabKJHgm6_5ADDHvydoEr1RRVXMA/edit?usp=sharing

Why do we read?

- To learn something new
- For fun
- To communicate
- To give or get information

Why is it important?

The variety of texts available and
the reasons we read them
affects how we teach these skills.

Difficulties when reading a text

What are our main problems when trying to read a text in English?

SEEING THE WORLD

The taxi is late, and I get nervous. Once at the airport I'm thrown into the harsh lights of Terminal B, running with my suitcase so I can wait in a long security line. My belt buckle sets off the metal detector, and my aftershave is confiscated. By now you can probably guess the punchline of this very banal story: my flight has been cancelled due to bad weather. I will be stuck here for the next 218 minutes, my only consolation a plastic cup of coffee and the predictably tasteless sandwich. Then I will miss my connecting flight and wait, in a different city, with the same menu, for another plane. It's not the flying I mind – I will always be awed by the physics that gets a fat metal bird into the sky. The rest of the journey, however, will inevitably feel like a depressing lesson in the ills of modernity, from the pre-dawn X-ray screening to the sad airport malls peddling rubbishy souvenirs.

What are our main problems when trying to read a text in English?

- I don't know enough words >> Long sentences and difficult vocab
- I need the dictionary
- It's very slow – it takes ages to get through a few sentences >>>>>> the interest is soon lost
- I understand all the individual words, but the whole thing eludes me completely (can't read between the lines)
- Poor reading skills (skimming and scanning)
- Lack of background knowledge about the reading texts

The different types of reading test

Multiple choice

Proofreading

Gapped texts

Matching

True/false

Simplify the task! Simplify the text!

Simplify the task!

Simplify the text!

You are going to read an article about the actor Daniel Radcliffe, who played the role of Harry Potter in the films. For questions 31–36, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Daniel Radcliffe

I first meet Daniel Radcliffe at the offices of his agent, just before he takes to the stage for an evening performance of *The Cripple Of Inishmaan*. He's wearing tight jeans, no glasses, and is a super ball of energy. He is extraordinarily polite, slim, well turned out. If you'd never seen him before, you might assume he was a children's television presenter. But at the age of just 24 he has 16 movies behind him, eight of them Harry Potter blockbusters. It feels as if he's been with us forever. The funny thing is, apart from the facial hair, he doesn't really look any different from the schoolboy wizard who made his screen debut in 2001.

Yet over the past half-dozen years, it seems he has done everything he could to distinguish himself from Harry in the parts he has chosen to play. Radcliffe disagrees with this, saying 'I pick films based on scripts and directors and parts. I'm not interested in making films I've seen before. There's nothing more exciting to me when I read a script than originality. That's all it's governed by, there's no master plan to distance myself from Potter.'

He says he doesn't want to sound ungrateful. 'I know that Potter is going to be with me for the rest of my life, so to try to stop people talking about that any more is stupid. It's



just a fact of your life, so you can't get annoyed by it. You have to accept the fact that you were involved in this incredibly cool thing and though you might not always be happy with the work you did on it, the opportunity it has given you to make a career for yourself is amazing.'

Was he aware how much Harry would change his life when he was offered the part? 'No, I knew I was signing on for the first two, that four books had come out. Warner, the film company, genuinely didn't know at that stage if they were going to make more than one film. If it flopped, then they certainly weren't going to put up all that money again.' Did he ever consider exercising his opt-out clause? 'By the third film, I thought, if there's a time to get out, it's now; there's still enough time for another actor to come in and establish himself. For a while, I thought, if I do all of them, will I be able to move on to other stuff or should I start doing other stuff now? But in the end I decided I was having way too much fun. And actually there aren't many great parts out there for teenage boys, certainly not as good as Harry Potter.'



Nowadays, of course, he is incredibly wealthy. I ask whether he sometimes worries people might socialise with him purely because of that. He laughs, and says people are going to be sadly disappointed if they befriend him for his lavish spending. 'Anyone who is my friend knows that I don't spend money. So they can hang around with me as much as they like and they still aren't going to get anything. Haha!' But, he says, he has never had a problem with working out who to trust. 'I'm a fairly good judge of character, and I have a small but very close circle of friends. I'm not looking to recruit new friends, though I'm actually very open with people. I had a similar conversation with myself when I was about 17, the first time somebody had really betrayed that trust, and I said to myself you have two options: you either become totally insular and shut down and not let anybody into your life ever, or you can continue to be open and amiable when you meet people, and trusting, and occasionally get hurt. And I do think that is the best way.'

- 31 What do we learn about Daniel in the first paragraph?
 A He is now working in TV programmes for children.
 B His appearance has changed considerably since his childhood.
 C He is currently acting in the theatre.
 D He is amused by the way he looked in his early films.
- 32 What does Daniel say about his current work?
 A He likes to make changes to the film scripts he is given.
 B He sometimes has to accept roles he would rather reject.
 C He finds it difficult to play roles that are not Harry.
 D He denies he chooses roles as unlike Harry as possible.
- 33 What does Daniel appear to be criticising in the third paragraph?
 A Some of his acting in the Harry Potter films.
 B The overall quality of the Harry Potter films.
 C The effect of playing Harry Potter on his career.
 D Attempts to talk to him about Harry Potter.
- 34 When Daniel was first asked to play Harry Potter
 A he thought the first film would be made on a low budget.
 B he thought that only two Harry Potter books would be published.
 C he had no idea how many films in the series there would be.
 D he only wanted to be in the first film in the series.
- 35 Why did Daniel eventually decide to be in every film?
 A He thought nobody else could play the role of Harry.
 B He was enjoying making the films so much.
 C He never considered doing any other kind of work.
 D He knew it would eventually lead to different roles.
- 36 How does Daniel feel about friendship?
 A He believes he knows how to choose friends well.
 B He would like to have more friends than he has now.
 C He finds it difficult to trust people these days.
 D He likes to be generous to those he is close to.

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Test 4 Reading and Use of English Part 7

You are going to read an article in which six students talk about their university. For questions 43–52, choose from the students (A–F). The students may be chosen more than once.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Which student

is studying at a university that was not their first choice?

| | |
|----|--|
| 43 | |
|----|--|

has found it easier to make friends at university than they had expected?

| | |
|----|--|
| 44 | |
|----|--|

wishes they had more time to take part in social activities?

| | |
|----|--|
| 45 | |
|----|--|

chose their university partly because a relative had recommended it?

| | |
|----|--|
| 46 | |
|----|--|

complains about the travelling time from their accommodation to the city centre?

| | |
|----|--|
| 47 | |
|----|--|

wants to continue studying at the same university after they graduate?

| | |
|----|--|
| 48 | |
|----|--|

praises the approach to teaching at their present university?

| | |
|----|--|
| 49 | |
|----|--|

decided to study at the university because of its location?

| | |
|----|--|
| 50 | |
|----|--|

sought the opinions of current students before choosing a university?

| | |
|----|--|
| 51 | |
|----|--|

is finding student life less expensive than they had expected?

| | |
|----|--|
| 52 | |
|----|--|



My university

Six first-year students say what life is like at their universities.

A Zehra Erdogan

There's a club here for just about every sport or social activity you can think of, and they're a great way to get to know other students. I'd wondered whether I might feel lonely here with my family so far away, but I needn't have worried. There's a group of us who get on really well, and two are already talking about doing research here once they've finished their first degrees. That's my aim too.

B Ben Robertson

I had to take out a loan to cover my costs as a student here, but I quickly found there were all kinds of expenses I hadn't thought of, such as the cost of getting into town and back from the student village, where I live. The buses aren't cheap and it takes ages to get there, too, but I didn't check that when I chose this university. That's something I could have done quite easily online, but unfortunately I didn't. Actually, the main reason I came here was to be with my friends, who applied at the same time as I did.

C Anika Mishra

I found it relatively easy to settle in here, just as I thought I would, really. I'd done some research on the various places offering the course I wanted to do, and what I found particularly helpful were the online comments by people actually studying in each one. Actually, this one had always appealed to me as my aunt did a research degree here and said it was a good place to live and study, though unlike her I think I'll move onto another university once I've graduated.

D Lottie Peeters

Before I came here, people had been telling me I'd find it hard to live on my government grant, but that hasn't really been the case because during my free time I'm nearly always in the halls of residence with the other students. There's so much to do there that it doesn't matter that they're quite a long way from the university, which is right in the centre of town. In fact, I can't do half the things I'd like to do because I'm a medical student and I'm just too busy studying to join any more societies or clubs.

E Pablo Flores

Universities in different parts of the world tend to be quite similar in some ways, such as the international mix of students, the atmosphere and even the buildings, but something I like about studying here is that you spend a lot of your time in seminars with a tutor. So, nearly a year on, I'm actually quite relieved I had my application rejected by the top university on my list: if I'd gone there I would have spent all day taking notes in lectures. The only downside is that the cost of living is quite a bit higher in this country.

F Maxim Kuznetsov

As I have family and friends living in several nearby countries, I needed to be somewhere close to an airport offering budget flights. So studying here looked ideal, and though I've noticed prices are quite high in the city, there's plenty to do on campus and I rarely need to go there. Actually, the only time I do that is when some of my old friends come to visit me, and on those occasions we take the train. There's a good service into town, and I can get a discount by using my student card.

FCE, part 7, CAE, part 8

Paraphrasing

FCE, part 7, CAE, part 8

Read text A >>

read the statements >>

read text B >>

read the statements >>

...

 Exam task

1

You are going to read four extracts from articles in which academics give their views on behaviour in schools. For questions 1–4, choose from the academic A–D. The academics may be chosen more than once.

Which academic

- has a different view to the others about the historical trends in student behaviour? 1
- expresses a similar view to B about what should be done to improve student behaviour? 2
- expresses a different view to A on the broader social consequences of poor student behaviour? 3
- has a similar view to B about the effect of behavioural issues on student achievement? 4

Behaviour in schools

A Dorota Ignatieff

Student behaviour in schools is a topic that many people are anxious about these days, and rightly so. Recent surveys amongst teachers have given me most cause for concern, especially the reflections of those who have been teaching ten years or more who report a deterioration in standards of behaviour. Although there's no evidence as yet of a concurrent increase in antisocial activities outside of school among the age group, I suspect we may see this emerge in years to come. Despite this, concern about pupils' results seems to be largely unfounded, as there has been a gradual improvement in academic results over the last 20 years or so. This is quite some attainment given that, over the same period, funding for schools has fallen in real terms. This shortfall is the underlying cause of poor conduct, as support for more disruptive students has been eroded, and therefore is what those in power need to rectify.

B Sunil Kumble

Student behaviour has been an issue for as long as schools have been in existence. Teachers have more influence over their students than anyone, so clearly filling the apparent gap in their training would achieve more than any government minister could. The usual hysterical media coverage has made it more or less impossible to ascertain the actual extent of any fluctuation in standards of student conduct, and indeed even to know

which direction it has taken over time. What we can be sure of is that, in schools where behaviour is an issue, levels of attainment for learners from better-off families have fared well, while their poorer counterparts have once again lost out. It remains to be seen whether this will lead to problems in the wider world. Indicators such as petty crime levels are currently stable, but I'd anticipate a sharp rise if this is as big an issue as many suggest.

C Ruth Iveson

Some of the means by which it used to be achieved in the past may not be particularly palatable today, but there's little doubt that over two generations, respect for authority in schools and associated standards of behaviour has suffered a steep decline. The root of the problem sits squarely on the shoulders of those who deal with students on a day-to-day basis. Qualifications for educators clearly haven't kept pace with the speed at which life in schools is changing, so this needs addressing. Although official figures show a steady fall in problems such as graffiti and vandalism, I believe the reverse to be true. They've become such commonplace occurrences now that they're seldom reported, and I can't help but feel that this is not unconnected to people becoming increasingly tolerant of disrespect in schools. Clearly this would also explain the decline in success rates that's starting to emerge. Students appear to have lost their focus on learning.

D Joao Rodrigues

When one analyses school results these days, it's always a good idea to dig a little deeper than perhaps schools or the government would want. On the surface, all appears to be well, as overall pass rates continue to rise. Nevertheless, the breakdown for how different social classes perform shows the opposite to be true for less affluent students. Behavioural difficulties in schools are evident in students from every strata of society, but clearly

they affect this group more than others. Therefore, financial assistance needs to be made available for schools to better support these vulnerable learners and to help them eradicate the underlying problem. Schools simply don't have the resources to do this these days. I think it's no coincidence that, as government provision has declined, levels of misconduct have done the contrary. Teachers are generally devoted to their students yet unfairly receive much of the blame when their charges misbehave.

Divide up a longer text into ... sections!
Create new groups/pairs!
Learners tell each other what they've read!

Which academic

- has a different view to the others about the historical trends in student behaviour?
- expresses a similar view to B about what should be done to improve student behaviour?
- expresses a different view to A on the broader social consequences of poor student behaviour?
- has a similar view to B about the effect of behavioural issues on student achievement?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Pair/group 1

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Pair/group 3

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Pair/group 2

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Some ideas for reading tasks

- Put the illustrations of the text in the correct order
- Put cut-up paragraphs in the correct order
- Find words in the text that mean the same as the words in the list provided by you
- Read the text and make a list of particular items (+, -, jobs, parts of speech (**plastic cups**))
- Give a headline to each section of the article (or match given headlines with the sections)
- Reinsert some sentences that have been separated from the text (cut out those sentences)
- Discuss reactions to, feelings about the text
- Put the events in the correct order
- Discuss the missing last paragraph (predict the finale of the story)
- Linking words

THANK
YOU

