

1.3

Reading Test: Introduction and Part One

EXAM FORMAT

The Reading Test has six parts, in which there are a total of 52 questions, and lasts one hour. It carries 25% of the total marks. The texts are all business-related and vary between 150 and 500 words in length. Each part tests a particular reading skill or understanding of language structure.

Exam Success

In the exam, you have an hour to read over 2,000 words, so try to develop your reading speed. The only way to do this is to practise:

- Read English business texts, eg *Time*, *Newsweek*.
- Get your news from English Internet sites, eg the BBC, CNN.

Part	Text type	Skill focus	Task
1	Single text or 5 short texts (450 words)	Reading for global meaning; summarising	Matching summaries to each section of text
2	Single text (450–500 words)	Reading for detail; understanding structure	Inserting missing sentences into text
3	Single text (500–600 words)	Reading for general meaning and specific detail	4-part multiple choice comprehension questions
4	Single text (250 words)	Understanding meaning and grammar of individual words	Gap-fill; multiple choice (4-choice)
5	Single text (250 words)	Finding missing words to give meaning and cohesion	Open gap-fill (one word per gap)
6	Single text (150–200 words)	Understanding grammatical structure	Identifying incorrect or unnecessary words

APPROACH

Part One

Part One is a test of reading for gist or global meaning. Five texts or sections have to be matched to five sentences that summarise the general view being expressed in each. Follow these steps.

- Read the instructions twice and make sure you understand the context of the passage(s) and what you are being asked to do.
- Do not read the summaries first.
- Bearing in mind what general information you are looking for, read the first text and then try to summarise, in your head, the general view it expresses.
- Now read the summaries and find the one that matches your own mental summary.
- Repeat this procedure for each of the other four texts.

KEY SKILL

Summarising

- 1 Write a one-sentence summary for this passage. Compare your answer with your partner.

I favour a direct approach to interviewing where the questions really put the candidate under pressure and test their reactions. If you look at manuals on interviewing technique, you'll find that most advise you first to make the candidate feel at ease, and then to ask open-ended questions that give them the freedom to talk and express themselves as they would like. But I think we're being far too nice here. By allowing people to dictate the direction of the interview, we run the risk of not discovering who they really are and wasting everyone's time.

2 Following the approach described above, do this Reading Test Part One. Give yourself about twelve minutes.

PART ONE

Questions 1–8

- Look at the sentences below and at the five extracts from an article on employee motivation.
- Match each statement 1–8 to one of the extracts (A, B, C, D or E).
- You will need to use some of the letters more than once.
- There is an example at the beginning (0).

Example:

0 Job satisfaction is the key to an employee's motivation. D

- 1 Companies usually try to motivate employees with extra payment or verbal praise.
- 2 Financial rewards don't work so well when the manager assesses performance himself.
- 3 In the end, motivation has to come from the person himself.
- 4 Loyalty and commitment are two different things.
- 5 Employees are committed when they understand and believe in the company's aims.
- 6 Most employees see rewards as an end in themselves.
- 7 How well you work does not depend on how good your working conditions are.
- 8 Good relations between managers and workers create the right working environment.

A

Fundamental to the issue of motivation is the distinction between employee loyalty to the company and employee commitment. Employees feel loyal when they feel comfortable and well looked after: job security, reasonable conditions of pay, generous holiday entitlement, medical insurance and a good pension. Without these conditions an employee will feel neither loyalty to the company nor any motivation to work. But it is also possible that even with good conditions, the employee may not feel motivated. This is because performance is not directly related to working conditions: an employee can feel secure, whether he works hard or not.

B

Motivation has more to do with commitment to the job. The conditions that produce commitment are different from those that inspire loyalty. Committed employees will have a clear sense of the goals of the company and understand their part in contributing to achieving them. Moreover, they will believe that these goals are worth working for: they will derive job satisfaction from what they do. So companies who want a motivated staff ought to be spending their time thinking about their goals and communicating these with enthusiasm to their staff.

C

Instead, the motivation debate seems to focus on rewards, either financial or non-financial. For example, money is commonly used as an incentive for sales people or others with measurable targets to reach. Sometimes it is also used to reward employees whose performance has been evaluated subjectively by a line manager. This is less satisfactory. Verbal commendation is also used to motivate, from a simple word of encouragement in the employee's ear to a public award ceremony.

D

But do all these types of rewards motivate people? Well, yes, they do. They motivate them to get rewards. What they don't necessarily do is motivate them to be a committed employee and do a good job. What really motivates people is the level of satisfaction they find in their work. As Herzberg famously put it: 'If you want people motivated to do a good job, give them a good job to do.'

E

So the real motivators are things which are intrinsic to the job: that the employee feels part of a unit that is working towards something worthwhile. And from this, as long as communication between employee and management is open and respectful, will come recognition for good work, advancement in the company and personal growth. The best that companies can do is to create such an environment and then hope that within it people are able to motivate themselves.