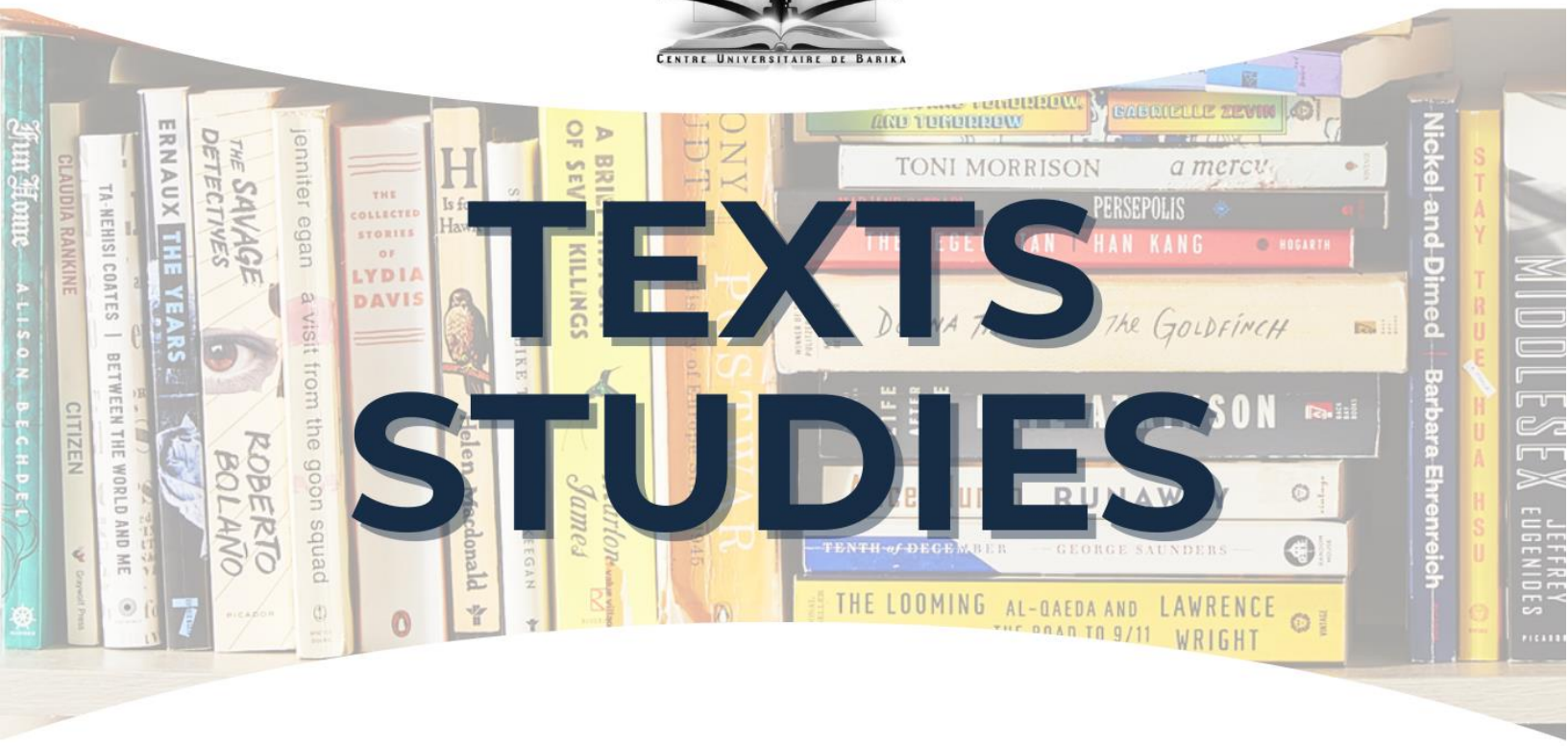
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY CENTER OF BARIKA
FACULTY OF LETTERS, LANGUAGES AND ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LAI GUAGE




# TEXTS STUDIES

## PEDAGOGICAL HANDOUT

### SECOND YEAR

ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025

**THE THIRD SEMESTER**

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# COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This texts studies handout follows the syllabus provided by the Department of English Language and Literature in the University Center of Barika. It equips the learners with theoretical and practical knowledge to understand and study scientific texts more effectively. The learners will be exposed to authentic scientific texts and gain fundamental concepts related to techniques of reading and skills to dissect short to medium texts efficiently. Therefore, the objectives of the course can be summarized in the following:

- Learners will learn and be able to use effective reading strategies and techniques such as skimming, scanning, previewing, predicting content etc.
- They will be introduced to a variety of different types of texts
- They will be able to use reading techniques to read different types of texts effectively.
- They will be able to apply different reading techniques to different types of texts and apply different methods of textual analysis.
- They will be able to read and understand scientific articles.
- They will be able to make summaries of scientific texts using critical summaries sheets.

Additionally, the course description details are provided in the table below:

| | |
|---|---|
| **SUBJECT** | Texts Studies |
| **CREDIT** | 4 |
| **COEFFICIENT** | 2 |
| **COURSE DURATION** | 45 Hours |
| **SEMESTER** | 3 |
| **TD LENGTH** | 3 Hours |
| **EVALUATION** | 100% Continuous Evaluation |

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Students' academic career relies on their skill of understanding texts and their various forms and natures with excellence. These texts will vary, from simple summarized lessons, dissertations, books, literary works, and even advanced rigorous research papers and articles. Hence, this subject of texts studies is crucial in developing the students' reading skills, comprehension and their academic techniques in dealing with these texts.

This pedagogical handout summarizes lessons of second year students in the first semester of the year 2024-2025. The lessons were formatted into theoretical lessons in the shape of simplified lectures and practice sessions in the shape of workshops that undertook different patterns of interaction and work from individual, pair to group practices. As a result, this handout equips the learners with a deeper understanding of the nature of texts in their academic career and thorough rigorous practice.

Thus, after completing this course the learners will be able to read texts with ease in addition to having tangible skills that allows them to manipulate and read different kinds of texts. Additionally, the theoretical texts will provide solid ground for their practice and understanding texts as a means of communicating knowledge.

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# LECTURES

## LECTURE 1 AN INTRODUCTION TO TEXTS STUDIES

### 1. What is a text?

- ***Lead-in Task***

Work in pairs, read the citations below and try to give one holistic definition to texts.

- ***Citation*** 1 *"In a general understanding, text is defined as a contextually coherent sequence of several phrases"* (Glück & Rödel, 2016, p. 707).
- ***Citation 2*** "*the word text is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole*" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 1)
- ***Citation 3*** *"A text is a passage of discourse which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the context of situation, and therefore consistent in register; and it is coherent with respect to itself, and therefore cohesive*." (Halliday & Hasan, 1976 p. 23)
- ***Citation 4*** *"In common usage, as in the non-specialized scientific disciplines, the term is mostly used to refer to linguistic utterances. In this restrictive sense, a text is the physical manifestation (written or oral) of a message sent by an issuer to one or more recipients so that it can be subjected to interpretation and then understood".* (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981, p.1)
- ***Citation 5*** *"Texts are seen as language units which have a definable communicative function, characterized by such principles as COHESION, COHERENCE and informativeness, which can be used to provide a FORMAL definition of what constitutes their identifying textuality or texture".* (Crystal 2006, dictionary entry TEXT)

- ***Citation 6*** *"Texts indeed appear to be something more than mere sequences of sentences, and the comprehension and formation of texts seem to be governed by a specific competence of the speaker: textual competence. (This competence is distinct from sentence competence by which the ideal speaker-listener formulates and comprehends grammatically correct sentences)".* (Dressler, 1977, p. 18)

## *A suggested wholistic definition to a text:*

A text can be understood as any stretch of language—spoken or written—that comes together as a meaningful and unified whole. It's not just a random collection of sentences, but something that makes sense both within itself and in the situation where it's used. What gives a text its shape is a combination of internal connections (like how ideas are linked through words and structure) and external consistency (how it fits the context or purpose it's meant for). Texts are created by someone intending to send a message, and they're meant to be interpreted and understood by others. This makes them more than just linguistic forms—they're tools for communication. In that sense, a text reflects a person's ability not only to form correct sentences but also to organize them in a way that's relevant, coherent, and purposeful. What really defines a text is this combination of structure, meaning, and intent, which together make it something we can recognize, analyze, and respond to in everyday life or scholarly study.

Therefore, a text's nature is very flexible and can have different forms such as written or spoken utterances that are bound to logical and cohesive rules that allow meaningful communication. Additionally, texts could be long or short, as long as lengthy volumes of books or simple utterances.

## 2. What constitutes a text?

Based on the definitions mentioned earlier, it can be deduced that texts have certain criteria that can be summarized in seven different points such as cohesion and coherence, this was retrieved online from (SOURCE).

***Key Criteria for Textuality:***

Criteria for textuality refers to the characteristics that defines a text. Beaugrande & Dressler (1981) presented seven standards of textuality to be considered:

**1. Cohesion** is the way in which linguistic items of which texts are constituted are meaningfully interconnected in sequences. Cohesion may be of four types: reference, ellipse, conjunction and lexical cohesion.

• **Reference** as cohesive device has to do with the introduction of a new item in the text and the subsequent referral to that same item by means of another item, usually a shorter form (popularly referred to as a 'pro-form'). Pronouns, demonstratives, comparatives, a variety of lexical constructions, even adverbs and adjectives are used for this function. The effect of reference lies in the retrieval of information (referential meaning) from somewhere else in the sentence or in a neighboring sentence by using one of the grammatical devices mentioned above. "Cohesion itself lies in the continuity of reference whereby the same thing enters into the discourse a second (and more) time(s)" (Halliday & Hasan 1976, p.31).

• **Ellipsis** means elements in sentences are physically deleted/omitted because the writer believes that the reader will insert the missing elements on his or her own as the sentence is used. In this case the pressure is on the reader or listener to make the cohesive link (e.g., Have some more).

• **Conjunction,** mainly conjunctions and adverbs are used to connect propositions in neighboring sentences according to certain semantic relations (e.g. additive, adversative, causal and temporal) between the propositions. The conjunctive elements serve to "... reinforce

and highlight the relationship between other elements of the text" (Donnelly 1994:105). The specific choice of the conjunctive marker provides the reader with clues as to how the writer perceives the statement to be related.

• **lexical cohesion** refers to semantic relations (such as synonymy, antonymy, collocation) created by specific lexical items. Knowledge of semantic structures is necessary in order to understand this type of cohesion.

**2. Coherence:** "A coherent text has an underlying logical structure that acts to guide the reader through the text" so that "it 'sticks together' as a unit" (Hatch 1992:209) and creates the "feeling that a text hangs together, that it makes sense, and is not just a jumble of sentences" (McCarthy 1991, p. 26).

**3. Intentionality and acceptability** are generally regarded as a 'pair' of principles. In any text there is a producer who has the intention to produce a sound piece of information to a receptor. The receptor, on his or her part needs to be willing to accept the proffered text as a communicative text. In order to do this both producer and addressee have to adhere to the pragmatic cooperative principle which states that one has to make the maximum effort to enable a piece of intended communication to be a success. Knowledge of pragmatic principles therefore makes this aspect of textuality 'work' or not.

**4. Informativity broadly** has to do with the way in which parts of the text have communicative value. For example: a definite expression like the man with the golden gun has more communicative value than a pronoun like him/his.

**5. Contextuality** focuses on the very important role the context plays in any form of communication. Trask (1995) is quite emphatic in this regard when he states that "Every text - that is everything that is said and written - unfolds in some context of use" (p. 68). This in effect means that in every situation in which language is used, the quality and effect of the communication is determined by the contextual knowledge shared by the participants.

**6. Intertextuality** is the last linguistic principle of all the principles of textuality. This principle usually has to do with the study of literature and it literally means that the formation and understanding of one text will be influenced by the structure of another text similar to it. If for example you read a poem it will be reasonable to expect of you to understand that poem if you have read others poems in the past. This is why a newspaper is accepted as a newspaper because of past experience with the genre of newspapers, etc.

## 3. Homework

Write an essay summarizing what you have learnt today.

# LECTURE 2 THEORIES OF TEXTUALITY

## *1. Objectives of the lecture*

The aim of this lecture is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of how the concept of textuality has evolved in critical theory, with a particular focus on structuralist, post-structuralist, and materialist perspectives. By the end of the lecture, students should be able to define the term "textuality," distinguish between its major theoretical formulations, and apply each lens critically to literary and cultural texts. Additionally, they should be able to reflect on how these theories shape our broader understanding of meaning, authorship, and ideology in literature

## *2. Introduction to Textuality*

When we talk about textuality, we're referring to much more than just what a written work says on the surface. It's not simply about the words on the page or the story being told—it's about how those words are structured to create meaning, and how that meaning comes into being. Textuality invites us to think differently about texts, moving away from the old idea that a text is a fixed, self-contained product created by an author and passively received by a reader. Instead, it asks us to consider texts as dynamic systems shaped by language, culture, and context—that do not deliver meaning in a straightforward way.

In the twentieth century, this shift in thinking sparked a major transformation in literary and cultural studies. Scholars began to move beyond concerns with what an author intended or whether a text upheld certain moral values. The focus turned instead to the deeper systems at work: the structures of language, the operations of power, and the material conditions that influence how texts are created and interpreted. Each major theoretical approach, structuralism, post-structuralism, and materialism, offers its own lens for exploring these questions. They differ in

important ways, but all of them challenge us to rethink what a text is, how it produces meaning, and who or what gets to decide what that meaning is.

### *3. Structuralist Views on Textuality*

Structuralism emerged primarily from linguistics, especially the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, whose distinction between langue (the structure of language) and parole (individual speech acts) laid the foundation for understanding texts as systems of signs. In this view, meaning is not inherent in words themselves but generated through their differences and relationships within a broader system. Structuralist theorists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and early Roland Barthes extended this linguistic model to myths, narratives, and literature, treating cultural products as governed by universal codes and binary oppositions.

For structuralists, a text is a closed system that can be decoded through a methodical analysis of its underlying structure. Roland Barthes's S/Z (1970) is a prime example, offering a detailed breakdown of Balzac's short story "Sarrasine" into five narrative codes. This approach sees textual meaning as discoverable, though complex, and dependent on the organization of signs within the system. Structuralism thus offers a scientific, almost mathematical view of textuality, prioritizing form over content and seeing the reader as an analyst rather than a co-creator of meaning.

### *4. Post-Structuralist Challenges to Structure*

Figures such as Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva and Michel Foucault argued against the rigidity of structuralist view and as a conclusion post-structuralism was introduced as a response. These figures argued that structures are unstable and flexible in the means of delivering meaning and morphing it.

Jacques Derrida's idea of *différance* which was a clever play on the French words for "to differ" and "to defer", challenges the notion that words can ever pin down a final, complete and ultimately unchanging meaning. According to Derrida (1967), language is slippery and flexible: every time we think we've nailed down what something means it slips away or points somewhere else. Meaning, in other words, is always in motion between the thoughts of interlocutors, their understanding, interpretation and missing fractions of communication.

Therefore, the author isn't the ultimate authority over a text nor can he decide how it may be interpreted by different individuals at the receiving end of the communicative sycle. Roland Barthes (1967) famously declared the idea of "the death of the author," arguing that what really matters isn't what the writer intended, but how readers interact with the words on the page by bringing their comprehension that is reliant on their backgrounds into the equation, changing various interpretations than solely one. Meaning comes alive through that interaction, and it cannot deliver without this dynamic.

Julia Kristeva (1980) adds another twist with her idea of *intertextuality*. She suggests that every text is stitched together from pieces of other texts and giving the example of a quilt made from scraps of stories, ideas, and cultural backgrounds of the interlocutors. Original and genuine meaning isn't about starting from scratch but how these pieces are woven together into one.

In the post-structuralist view, texts aren't tidy containers of ultimate meaning and truth. They're flexible, messy and vibrant unpredictable spaces full of contradictions and multiple meanings that can be rich of pragmatic interpretations. Reading becomes a creative act rather than just a rigid structuralist process where we are not just uncovering a message, but engaging in a kind of interaction with the text and exploring the mechanisms that shape our meaning (Culler, 1982; Eagleton, 1996).

# PRACTICE LESSON 1 PREVIEWING A TEXT

## *1. General Introduction to the Lesson*

Scientific texts tend to be lengthy and cause the students to spend long time reading all details, in the following lesson and lessons coming forward, students will have the sufficient understanding of the different techniques used in academic reading to become more efficient and quick readers.

In this practice lessons students will be introduced to one of the most beneficial techniques in academic reading which is called *"previewing".* This technique is often used in reading for the gist as well as mapping the text and understanding its different parts and sections. If previewing is used effectively, the students will be able to understand texts in short time, answer questions and locate information in addition to being able to summarize it.

## *2. Objectives of the Lecture*

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify key elements of a text before reading in detail (title, headings, subheadings, visuals, abstract/summary, and keywords).
2. Make predictions about content based on previewed information.
3. Develop questions to guide reading based on the preview.

## *3. Lead-in*

Students work in pairs and answer the questions:

- What do you do before you start reading a text?

- Are you supposed to start reading from the beginning without any other starting activities?
- Is it important to look at visuals, titles subheadings etc. before reading?

***4. Previewing***

- Work individually, read the following citations about previewing then make a definition of your own.
- Share with a partner and compare.

***Citation 1*** **Grabe & Stoller (2011)** define previewing as "a strategy in which readers glance quickly through a text to get a general sense of its content, structure, and purpose before reading it more carefully."

***Citation 2*** **Grellet (1981)** describes previewing as a part of pre-reading that includes skimming and scanning to "identify the type of text, its layout, and what it is likely to be about."

***Citation 3*** According to **Brown (2001),** previewing is a "top-down processing activity" that allows readers to anticipate information in a text, helping them to read more effectively.

***Citation 4*** **Nunan (2003)** emphasizes previewing as a way to engage with a text at the macro level, helping readers to "construct meaning by organizing textual features before in-depth processing."

***Defining Previewing***

Previewing is a pre-reading strategy which involves scanning the structure, parts or sections of a text before reading the text. This includes titles, headings, subheadings, visuals, abstracts, conclusions, highlighted notes etc. While the way we preview texts can differ from a text type to another, previewing can be applied in reading all texts.

Previewing allows the reader to activate prior knowledge, predict the content of the text, understand the context, type of the text and give the reader a purpose. This strategy can improve overall comprehension and answers of the students. This technique is very helpful in reading academic texts which tend to be overloaded with information and in academic texts such as the IELTS reading.

### *5. The Features of an Academic Text*

**TASK A.** In order to understand a text, we first are required to understand the features of a text or passage, complete the following activity to understand parts of a text. (Tasks were taken from the official Cambridge Guide to IELTS)

**1.1** Label the reading passage with the correct letters in the box (A–G).

**Features of a Reading passage**

| | |
|---|---|
| **A** footnote | **E** heading |
| **B** subheading | **F** caption |
| **C** column | **G** paragraph |
| **D** figure / illustration | |

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

# Health-Tea

*Sid Cowans looks at the health properties of a favourite drink*

If you are a tea drinker you have probably heard of **tannins**, which are plant based chemicals found in tea. They are responsible for the **astringent** bitter taste sometimes associated with tea. When you drink a cup of tea, it usually dissolves and remains clear unless the water is too cold or too **alkaline**.

Tannins occur in many different types of plants and food, but are especially present in **oak galls**, which have been used for centuries in Chinese medicine due to their health giving properties. Tannins are often present in drinks and medicine because they are **soluble** in water, but how much they dissolve depends on factors like temperature and the chemical make up of the liquid.

Tannins exist in all types of tea

[1] In chemistry, an alkali is the opposite of an acid.
[2] Abnormal growths on oak trees

6 .....

5 .....

4 .....

**TASK B.** Preview the text from ***The Official Cambridge Guide to IELTS*** below, Ask the following questions whenever you preview:

- **What is the text about?**
- **How is it organized?**
- **What are the different sections and parts?**
- **Are there any visuals? How do they relate to the content?**
- **What is important in the text?**

# Why we need to protect polar bears

Polar bears are being increasingly threatened by the effects of climate change, but their disappearance could have far-reaching consequences. They are uniquely adapted to the extreme conditions of the Arctic Circle, where temperatures can reach −40°C. One reason for this is that they have up to 11 centimetres of fat underneath their skin. Humans with comparative levels of adipose tissue would be considered obese and would be likely to suffer from diabetes and heart disease. Yet the polar bear experiences no such consequences.

A 2014 study by Shi Ping Liu and colleagues sheds light on this mystery. They compared the genetic structure of polar bears with that of their closest relatives from a warmer climate, the brown bears. This allowed them to determine the genes that have allowed polar bears to survive in one of the toughest environments on Earth. Liu and his colleagues found the polar bears had a gene known as APoB, which reduces levels of low-density lipoproteins (LDLs) – a form of 'bad' cholesterol. In humans, mutations of this gene are associated with increased risk of heart disease. Polar bears may therefore be an important study model to understand heart disease in humans.

The genome of the polar bear may also provide the solution for another condition, one that particularly affects our older generation: osteoporosis. This is a disease where bones show reduced density, usually caused by insufficient exercise, reduced calcium intake or food starvation. Bone tissue is constantly being remodelled, meaning that bone is added or removed, depending on nutrient availability and the stress that the bone is under. Female polar bears, however, undergo extreme conditions during every pregnancy. Once autumn comes around, these females will dig maternity dens in the snow and will remain there throughout the winter, both before and after the birth of their cubs. This process results in about six months of fasting, where the female bears have to keep themselves and their cubs alive, depleting their own calcium and calorie reserves. Despite this, their bones remain strong and dense.

Physiologists Alanda Lennox and Allen Goodship found an explanation for this paradox in 2008. They discovered that pregnant bears were able to increase the density of their bones before they started to build their dens. In addition, six months later, when they finally emerged from the den with their cubs, there was no evidence of significant loss of bone density. Hibernating brown bears do not have this capacity and must therefore resort to major bone reformation in the following spring. If the mechanism of bone remodelling in polar bears can be understood, many bedridden humans, and even astronauts, could potentially benefit.

The medical benefits of the polar bear for humanity certainly have their importance in our conservation efforts, but these should not be the only factors taken into consideration. We tend to want to protect animals we think are intelligent and possess emotions, such as elephants and primates. Bears, on the other hand, seem to be perceived as stupid and in many cases violent. And yet anecdotal evidence from the field challenges those assumptions, suggesting for example that polar bears have good problem-solving abilities. A male bear called GoGo in Tennoji Zoo, Osaka, has even been observed making use of a tool to manipulate his environment. The bear used a tree branch on multiple occasions to dislodge a piece of meat hung out of his reach. Problem-solving ability has also been witnessed in wild polar bears, although not as obviously as with GoGo. A calculated move by a male bear involved running and jumping onto barrels in an attempt to get to a photographer standing on a platform four metres high.

In other studies, such as one by Alison Ames in 2008, polar bears showed deliberate and focussed manipulation. For example, Ames observed bears putting objects in piles and then knocking them over in what appeared to be a game. The study demonstrates that bears are capable of agile and thought-out behaviours. These examples suggest bears have greater creativity and problem-solving abilities than previously thought.

As for emotions, while the evidence is once again anecdotal, many bears have been seen to hit out at ice and snow – seemingly out of frustration – when they have just missed out on a kill. Moreover, polar bears can form unusual relationships with other species, including playing with the dogs used to pull sleds in the Arctic. Remarkably, one hand-raised polar bear called Agee has formed a close relationship with her owner Mark Dumas to the point where they even swim together. This is even more astonishing since polar bears are known to actively hunt humans in the wild.

If climate change were to lead to their extinction, this would mean not only the loss of potential breakthroughs in human medicine, but more importantly, the disappearance of an intelligent, majestic animal.

**TASK C. Complete the task from *The Official Cambridge Guide to IELTS*** below.

Most Reading passages will have a heading and a subheading.
The subheading is used to give you the context to the passage.

Match headings A–D from four Reading passages with subheadings 1–5. There is one extra subheading that you do not need.

**A** Alpine Glacial Lakes
**B** Clean Dream
**C** Virtual Connections
**D** Creating Young Scientists

**1** *Researchers disagree about whether social media is making us more isolated.*
**2** *Climatologists are assessing the impact of climate change on high-altitude bodies of water.*
**3** *James Clegg identifies two current trends that are expanding the role of science in high schools.*
**4** *Alan Parker outlines a recent breakthrough in technology.*
**5** *In the 19th century, a schoolgirl and a former travelling salesman helped turn the humble soap bar into an $18 billion industry.*

Understanding the context can help you to predict the type of information contained in the Reading passage.

### *6. Homework*

- Check old newspapers, manuals, magazines at home and preview them
- Use the different techniques that we have seen in the lesson
- Make a short summary of each one
- Present it to class on the platform, check the due date.

# PRACTICE LESSON 2 SKIMMING AND SCANNING

## *1. General Introduction to the Lesson*

Following the same principle of making academic reading easier and enabling the learners to become more efficient in reading, this lesson follows the same footsteps of the previous practice lesson where students were introduced to previewing as an important technique in academic reading. Students should be able to become proficient readers by minimizing the time and effort spent during reading and being able to handle larger and denser academic texts with ease. International academic tests such as the IELTS, Cambridge test, Pearson etc. often rely on testing the student's ability to read and sift through large passages in a short period of time.

This lesson introduces two other skills or techniques which are skimming and scanning. These two techniques are often used hand in hand to deal with large texts. Skimming being very similar to previewing in the essence of getting the gist and mapping the text, scanning plays a slower comparative role in matching the information with that of the text.

## *2. Objectives of the Lecture*

By the end of this lecture, students will be able to:

- Comprehend larger texts using skimming and scanning techniques
- Understand and apply skimming
- Understand and apply scanning
- Use previewing, skimming and scanning more proficiently together

## *3. Skimming*

This technique is also called speed reading; it often involves different techniques. It is reading a text quickly and focusing on content words only. Function words do not carry meaning; therefore,

they do not contribute to the overall objective of skimming. Therefore, this technique is used to comprehend and locate main points, and not the details. Skimming a text will give the reader a general odea of how the information is organized, very similar to previewing but more thorough.

- **Techniques of Skimming**

There are different techniques of skimming, we can mention some of them such as the list below taken from ***Ready for IELTS by Sam McCarter***:

- Reading titles and subheadings
- Reading the first and last sentences in a paragraph
- Looking for repeated keywords
- Temporarily ignoring unfamiliar or difficult words
- Reading at speed but with purpose

**TASK A.** Complete the task taken from ***Ready for IELTS by Sam McCarter*** below and practice skimming the text.

Scan the Reading Passage. Which paragraphs contain the following information:

1 a description of the olive tree and fruit
2 a reference to the time of harvesting
3 a history of olive cultivation

***The fruit of the olive tree***

**A** Olive trees (*Olea europaea*), which are widely distributed across the Mediterranean region, Africa and Asia, have long represented wealth, abundance, power and peace. The olive has been a symbol of the Mediterranean since time immemorial and has a reputation for long life, nourishment and its ability to thrive in tough conditions. There are claims of 1600-year-old trees still producing fruit.

**B** The tree's primary product, olive oil, is revered throughout the world for its distinctive flavour. Homer called it 'liquid gold'. In Ancient Greece athletes rubbed olive oil over their bodies and winning competitors received no trophies or medals – instead the symbol of supreme honour was the olive wreath placed on their heads.

**C** *Olea europaea* is an evergreen shrub or tree, which grows up to 15m tall. It is slow to mature but can live for hundreds of years. The leaves are borne in opposite pairs. The leaves are evergreen, 3 to 9cm long, elliptic, and silvery in appearance. The flowers are borne in axillary clusters, with a four-lobed calyx, and a four-lobed corolla. The two stamens (male parts) project beyond the mouth of the flower. The fruit has a hard endocarp (the olive stone), which is surrounded by a fleshy, edible mesocarp.

**D** Grown in the Mediterranean for over 5000 years, the olive has shaped the landscape and culture of the region: 90% of all olives are produced in the Mediterranean. It is the region's most versatile and valuable crop with the fruit, oil and leaves having been used for food, fuel, medicine and embalming.

**E** The birth of olive-farming is shrouded in the mists of time. Discoveries of olive stones at archaeological sites in the Middle East show at least 20 000 years of use and by 5000 years ago olives had been taken into cultivation and spread throughout the Levant. Domestication may have taken place in the eastern Mediterranean region, or in the region of the Nile Delta where the climate of the time would have been more suitable for cultivation. Today, there are thought to be around 1000 million olive trees in the world.

**F** The harvesting of the olives occurs in autumn. If they are to become table olives, they are soaked in water for five days to extract the bitter phenolic compounds such as oleuropein. The fruit is then cured in brine for around four weeks. Green olives are unripe, whereas black olives are ripe and less bitter. Olives are eaten as snacks or appetisers with a variety of accompaniments, and are a key ingredient of Mediterranean cooking.

**G** The oil is obtained from the fruit shortly after harvesting. The fruit is cleaned and processed into a paste from which the oil is extracted. Olive oil is classified according to the production method and the oleic acid content. A refined olive oil is obtained with the use of heat or solvent extraction and requires further processing to yield edible oil (it contains up to 3.3% oleic acid). The leftover cake is used as a source of inedible industrial-grade oil (containing more than 3.3% oleic acid), and is also used in livestock feed and compost.

**H** The oil is used for food, cooking and for a multitude of therapeutic purposes. The safe dosage for adults is two tablespoons (28g) of olive oil per day. Evidence suggests that people whose diets include olive oil have a reduced risk of developing certain cancers. Likewise, a diet rich in olive oil (and low in saturated fats) is associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol levels and high blood pressure.

**I** The beneficial qualities of olive oil have been attributed to the fatty-acid composition and the presence of phenolic compounds, which seem to have antioxidant, vasodilating, antiplatelet and anti-inflammatory effects. At the Botanical Gardens in Kew in London, investigations are being carried out on how the waste products of olive oil production could be used as sources of compounds for medicines to treat cardiovascular disease.

**J** In the Arboretum Nursery at Kew young olive plants are grown from seed. It has been noted that germination is spasmodic, taking from a few weeks to a few months. The compost used as a growing medium is an open, gritty, free-draining mix. The seedlings are pricked out into 'air pots'. Air pots prevent the plants from becoming pot-bound by encouraging the roots to grow outwards rather than spiralling. Planting out into the required position in the garden can be carried out straight from the air pot. The glasshouse zone in which the seedlings are grown is kept at a minimum temperature of 5°C. Only natural light is provided. The young plants are well watered and not allowed to dry out.

**TASK B.** Complete the task taken from ***Ready for IELTS by Sam McCarter*** below and practice skimming the text

**This passage has four paragraphs of around 100 words each.**

1 Using a timer, skim read the text to get the general idea of what it is about.
2 After 30 seconds, jump to the start of the next paragraph.

**A** The diets of children have changed dramatically over the last century due to the effect of technologies (such as improved transport, canning and refrigeration), social changes (such as the establishment of boarding schools) and evolving ideas about the nutritional needs of growing bodies. Before World War I, the meals of children and adults alike would typically consist of vegetables (often potatoes), large amounts of bread (often 0.5 kg/day) and soups with small amounts of meat.

**B** Imagine a 12-year-old Australian boy from 1970 standing next to a 12-year-old boy from 2010. The boy from 2010 will probably be 3–5 cm taller and 7 kg heavier than his counterpart in 1970. He will also be 25% fatter. A lot of that fat will be around the waist. The 2010 school trousers won't fit the boy from 1970: they will be 10 cm too big around the waist. Now imagine that the two boys have a running race of over 1,600 metres: the boy from 1970 will finish 300 metres ahead of his mate from 40 years in the future.

**C** There are two chances in three that the boy from 1970 walked to school each day; there are three chances in four that the boy from 2010 is driven to school by mum or dad. There are four chances in five that in 1970 the boy was allowed to play unsupervised in the neighbourhood; there is only one chance in four that in 2010 the boy will be allowed to go down to the park on his own. The boy in 1970 probably played three or four different sports; the boy from 2010 plays one or none. It is 30 times more likely that the local river was the favourite play space of the boy from 1970 than it is for the boy today.

**D** What has caused these dramatic changes in the space of a single generation? There are two main theories. Increasing overweight is caused by an energy imbalance: either energy intake (food) increases, or energy expenditure decreases, or both. The 'Gluttony Theory' argues that children are fatter because they are eating more than they used to, and more bad food (high energy density, high in fat and sugar, high in saturated fats). The 'Sloth Theory' argues that children are fatter because they are less active than they used to be. The two theories have battled it out in nutrition and physical activity journals for the last 10 years.

### *4. Scanning*

This technique is slower compared to skimming; it relies on the identification of the required information in the text. This is used in locating and comparing information, reading for detail rather than for gist. Sam McCarter mentions multiple scanning steps; they can be summarized as follows:

- Identifying the purpose and keywords: the reader underlines or mentally notes the key words or the piece of information to be found in the text, in the case of students it is often the key words in the question
- Looking for dates, numbers, concepts etc. These are often easier to find and locate.
- Moving the eyes quickly to locate very specific and particular words, phrases or numbers. Different techniques could be used such as moving the eyes top to bottom, bottom to top, left to right, right to left, zigzag or diagonal scanning. All of these techniques force the reader NOT TO READ and instead just use their eyes to locate information.
- Avoiding reading every word or reading in general
- Using paragraph structure such as locating topic sentences and details
- Reading around keywords once found

Therefore, scanning is different than skimming and previewing. Scanning only uses one purpose limited to the details to be found, unlike skimming that deals with the gist of information.

**TASK A.** Complete the task taken from ***The Official Cambridge Guide to IELTS*** below.

Spend one minute skim reading the following passage to get a sense of the overall meaning. What is the main topic?

**A** new discoveries in chemistry
**B** the discovery of ancient objects
**C** how international scientific teams work

## Ochre find reveals ancient knowledge of chemistry

*The oldest ochre-processing toolkits and workshop ever found have been unearthed, indicating that as far back as 100,000 years ago, humans had an understanding of chemistry.*

South Africa's Blombos Cave lies within a limestone cliff on the southern Cape coast, 300 km east of Cape Town. It's known for its 75,000-year-old rich deposits of artefacts such as beads, bone tools and ochre engravings. Some engravings date as far back as 100,000 years.

Archaeologist Christopher S. Henshilwood from the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and University of Bergen, Norway has been excavating at the site since 1992, and has reported the discovery of a mixture, rich in ochre, stored in two abalone shells. It dates back to the Middle Stone Age – 100,000 years ago. Ochre is a term used to describe a piece of earth or rock containing red or yellow oxides or hydroxides of iron. It can be used to make pigments, or paints, ranging from golden-yellow and light yellow-brown to a rich red. Its use spans the history of humans – from those living more than 200,000 years ago, to modern indigenous communities.

Made from an array of materials, this mixture, which could have functioned as wall, object and skin decoration or skin protection (acting in a similar way to modern-day sunscreen), indicates the early developments that occurred in the people who originally used the site.

"[Judging from] the complexity of the material that has been collected from different parts of the landscape and brought to the site, they [the people] must have had an elementary knowledge of chemistry to be able to combine these materials to produce this form. It's not a straightforward process," said Henshilwood.

Scanning involves searching a text quickly for a specific piece of information. Practise scanning the passage for the words/ numbers in the box.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 75,000 | 100,000 | 200,000 | artefacts | ochre |

**TASK B.** Complete the task taken from ***The Official Cambridge Guide to IELTS*** below.

Look at this task based on the Reading passage. For each question, underline the type of information you need to scan for. The first two have been done for you.

*Which paragraph contains the following information?*

*N.B. You may use any letter more than once*

*Write the correct letter, A–E, next to questions 1–7 below.*

1 visual evidence of the gecko's ability to resist water

2 a question that is yet to be answered by the researchers

3 the method used to calculate the gripping power of geckos

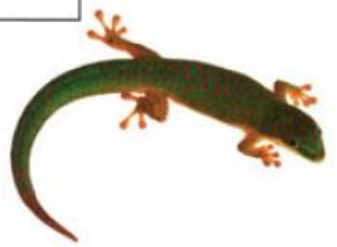
4 the researcher's opinion of the gecko's gripping ability

5 a mention of the different environments where geckos can be found

6 the contrast between Stark's research and the work of other researchers

7 the definition of a scientific term

# How geckos cope with wet feet



**A** Geckos are remarkable little lizards, clinging to almost any dry surface, and Alyssa Stark, from the University of Akron, US, explains that they appear to be equally happy scampering through tropical rainforest canopies as they are in urban settings. 'A lot of gecko studies look at the very small adhesive structures on their toes to understand how the system works at the most basic level', says Stark. She adds that the animals grip surfaces with microscopic hairs on the soles of their feet, which make close enough contact to be attracted to the surface by the minute forces between atoms.

**B** However, she and her colleagues Timothy Sullivan and Peter Niewiarowski were curious about how the lizards cope on surfaces in their natural habitat. Explaining that previous studies had focused on the reptiles clinging to artificial dry surfaces, Stark says 'We know they are in tropical environments that probably have a lot of rain and geckos don't suddenly fall out of the trees when it's wet'. Yet, the animals do seem to have trouble getting a grip on smooth, wet, artificial surfaces, sliding down wet vertical glass after several steps. The team decided to find out how geckos with wet feet cope on both wet and dry surfaces.

**C** First, they had to find out how well their geckos clung onto glass with dry feet. Fitting a tiny harness around the lizard's pelvis and gently lowering the animal onto a plate of smooth glass, Stark and Sullivan allowed the animal to become well attached before connecting the harness to a tiny motor and gently pulling the lizard until it came unstuck. The geckos hung on tenaciously, and only came unstuck at forces of around 20N – about 20 times their own body weight. 'In my view, the gecko attachment system is over-designed,' says Stark.

**D** Next, the trio sprayed the glass plate with a mist of water and re-tested the lizards, but this time the animals had problems holding tight. The droplets were interfering with the lizards' attachment mechanism, but it wasn't clear how. And when the team immersed the geckos in a bath of room-temperature water with a smooth glass bottom, the animals were completely unable to anchor themselves to the smooth surface. 'The toes are super-hydrophobic,' (i.e. water repellent) explains Stark, who could see a silvery bubble of air around their toes. But, they were unable to displace the water around their feet to make the tight contact that usually keeps the geckos in place.

**E** Then the team tested the lizard's adhesive forces on the dry surface when their feet had been soaking for 90 minutes, and found that the lizards could barely hold on, detaching when they were pulled with a force roughly equalling their own weight. 'That might be the sliding behaviour that we see when the geckos climb vertically up misted glass', says Stark. So, geckos climbing on wet surfaces with damp feet are constantly on the verge of slipping and Stark adds that when the soggy lizards were faced with the misted and immersed horizontal surfaces, they slipped as soon as the rig started pulling. Therefore geckos can walk on wet surfaces, as long as their feet are reasonably dry. However, as soon as their feet get wet, they are barely able to hang on, and the team is keen to understand how long it takes geckos to recover from a drenching.

# PRACTICE LESSON 3 READING COMPREHENSION

## Matching Headings, Multiple Choice and

## True/False/Not Given

### *1. General Introduction to the Lesson*

Students' comprehension is often tested through different types of questions in academic reading tests or the context of scientific study. These questions often reflect and measure the mastery of certain micro reading skills such as identifying main ideas, paraphrases etc. This lesson revolves around introducing the learners to different types of questions and the underlying tested skills. In this lesson students will be taught three different types of questions which are: matching headings, multiple choice and true and false.

Students will have enough practice dealing with few types of questions and the rest will be dealt with in upcoming lessons. The familiarity of students with the different types of questions and their underlying macro skills will equip with the required skill and awareness to deal with large scientific texts and their comprehension.

### *2. Objectives of the Lecture*

By the end of this lecture, students will be able to:

- Identify main ideas of a text and distinguish them from supporting ideas
- Match headings
- Answer multiple choice questions
- Answer true false not given
- Understand the tested underlying skills for each type of question

### *3. Types of questions*

In reading comprehension tests and academic exams, either in universities or international tests, you will be dealing with over than a dozen types of questions that test different skills that you have as a reader. Scientific tests often carry so much information and they can be complex in nature even if the language is simple. This requires the reader to have certain skills that allow them to manage reading large passages and become successful in comprehending the required information.

In this lesson you will be dealing with three different types of questions which are:

- Matching headings
- Multiple choice questions
- Answering true or false

Every type of a question tests a certain skill and these skills can be very helpful in dealing with scientific texts. These skills can be summarized in the table below:

| Question Type | Skills Tested | Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| Matching Headings | - Identifying main ideas<br>- Summarizing information<br>- Skimming for gist | - Read all headings first and understand the main idea of each.<br>- Skim each paragraph to grasp its central idea.<br>- Match based on ideas, not just words. |
| Multiple Choice | - Understanding details<br>- Making inferences<br>- Vocabulary in context | - Read the question first, then locate relevant text.<br>- Eliminate clearly wrong answers.<br>- Watch for distractors that are partially true but not fully accurate. |
| True/False/Not Given | - Identifying specific information<br>- Distinguishing fact from inference<br>- Critical reading | - Read the statement carefully.<br>- Locate the exact part in the text.<br>- Check if the statement agrees (True), contradicts (False), or isn't mentioned (Not Given). |

**TASK A.** Match the question type in Column A with the correct skills in Column B.

| Column A: Question Type | Column B: Skills Tested |
|---|---|
| 1. Matching Headings | A. Finding specific facts; distinguishing fact from inference |
| 2. Multiple Choice Questions | B. Skimming for the main idea; summarizing information |
| 3. True / False / Not Given | C. Making inferences; understanding vocabulary in context |

Your Answers: 1 → ___ 2 → ___ 3 → ___

**TASK B.** Fill in the missing words to complete the strategy tips for each question type.

***1. Matching Headings***

- Read all the _____ first.
- Skim each paragraph for the _____ idea.
- Match based on meaning, not just matching _____.

***2. Multiple Choice Questions***

- Read the question carefully to understand what is being _____.
- Eliminate obviously _____ answers.
- Be careful with answers that are only _____ true.

***3. True / False / Not Given***

- Locate the exact part of the _____.
- If the statement agrees → _____.
- If the statement contradicts the text → _____.
- If there's no information → _____.

***4. Extensive Practice Identifying Main Ideas Tested by Matching Headings Question***

***These tasks are taken from The Official Cambridge Guide for IELTS book.***

Read the list of headings i-vii. What topic do they have all in common? Underline main points in each heading.

**List of headings**

- **i** The future of urban planning in America
- **ii** Conflicting ideas through the history of urban planning
- **iii** Urban planning has a long and varied history
- **iv** Financial problems helped spread an urban planning concept
- **v** The background to one particular planned community
- **vi** Political change obstructs progress in urban planning
- **vii** An urban plan to reduce traffic

**1.2** Skim read the passage below to get the overall meaning.

## Planned communities: garden cities

**A**

The notion of planning entire communities prior to their construction is an ancient one. In fact, one of the earliest such cities on record is Miletus, Greece, which was built in the 4th century BC. Throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, various planned communities (both theoretical and actual) were conceived. Leonardo da Vinci designed several cities that were never constructed. Following the Great Fire of London in 1666, the architect Christopher Wren created a new master plan for the city, incorporating park land and urban space. Several 18th-century cities, including Washington D.C., New York City, and St Petersburg, Russia, were built according to comprehensive planning.

**B**

One of the most important planned city concepts, the Garden City Movement, arose in the latter part of the 19th century as a reaction to the pollution and crowding of the Industrial Revolution. In 1898, Ebenezer Howard published the book *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* in which he laid out his ideas concerning the creation of new economically viable towns. Howard believed that these towns should be limited in size and density, and surrounded with a belt of undeveloped land. The idea gained enough attention and financial backing to lead to the creation of Letchworth, in Hertfordshire, England. This was the first such 'Garden City'. After the First World War, the second town built following Howard's ideas, Welwyn Garden City, was constructed.

**C**

In the early 1920s, American architects Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, inspired by Howard's ideas and the success of Letchworth and Welwyn, created the city of Radburn, New Jersey. Conceived as a community which would be safe for children, Radburn was intentionally designed so that the residents would not require automobiles. Several urban planning designs were pioneered at Radburn that would influence later planned communities, including the separation of pedestrians and vehicles, and the use of 'superblocks', each of which shared 23 acres of commonly held parkland.

**D**

In America, following the stock market crash of 1929, there was great demand for both affordable housing and employment for workers who had lost their jobs. In direct response to this, in 1935 President Roosevelt created the Resettlement Administration, which brought about a total of three greenbelt towns: Greenbelt, Maryland; Greenhills, Ohio; and Greendale, Wisconsin. These towns contained many of the elements of the Garden City Movement developments, including the use of superblocks and a 'green belt' of undeveloped land surrounding the community.

**1.3** Read Paragraph A and choose the best summary:

- **A** Past, present and future examples of urban planning
- **B** The history of urban planning
- **C** Problems associated with urban planning

**1.4** Create a shortlist of possible answers for Paragraph A.

1. Decide which headings (i–vii) you can confidently say are not connected to the main topic of paragraph A.
2. Look at your shortlist again and choose the heading that best summarises **the main idea of all of paragraph A**.

***5. Extensive Practice Understanding the Main Points Tested by Multiple Choice Question***

***These tasks are taken from The Official Cambridge Guide for IELTS book.***

## 2 Understanding the main points

Another type of question that can focus on the main point of a paragraph is **multiple choice**. This type of question often requires you to carefully read more than one sentence in the paragraph.

**2.1** Look at this question, based on the passage in 1.2.

1 In Paragraph A, what is the main point that the writer makes?

**A** Some urban designs are better in theory than in practice.
**B** The urban-planning concept itself is not restricted to modern times.
**C** Urban planning should be carried out by professionals.
**D** Some planned ancient cities are more successful than modern ones.

**2.2** The parts of Paragraph A relating to each option are underlined below. Read the paragraph carefully and choose the correct option, A–D.

[B] The notion of planning entire communities prior to their construction is an ancient one. [D] In fact, one of the earliest such cities on record is Miletus, Greece, which was built in the 4th century BC. [A/D] Throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, various planned communities (both theoretical and actual) were conceived. [C] Leonardo da Vinci designed several cities that were never constructed. Following the Great Fire of London in 1666, the architect Christopher Wren created a new master plan for the city that incorporated park land and urban space. [C] Several 18th-century cities, including Washington D.C., New York City, and St Petersburg, Russia, were built according to comprehensive planning.

**2.3** Read the questions below. Underline the parts of the passage that each question relates to. Then read the text in detail and choose the correct letter, A–D.

2 According to the second paragraph, the Garden City Movement
**A** came just before the Industrial Revolution.
**B** was held back by a war and a lack of funds.
**C** resulted in cities that were larger than they had been before.
**D** was designed to combat problems caused by modernisation.

3 What was one aim in designing the city of Radburn?

**A** to create something totally different from cities elsewhere.
**B** to reduce the danger for families living in the area.
**C** to make sure people could park their cars close to their home.
**D** to increase green spaces by designing houses with gardens.

4 What do the towns of Greenbelt, Greenhills and Greendale all have in common?

**A** The residents were affected by the stock market collapse.
**B** The towns were built for the wealthiest people in America.
**C** The towns were each surrounded by natural parkland.
**D** They were all constructed in the same year.

***6. Extensive Practice Identifying Information Tested by True/False/Not Given Questions***

***These tasks are taken from The Official Cambridge Guide for IELTS book.***

In this question type you are given a list of statements and you are required to answer:

- True: If the statement matches the information of the text
- False: If the statement does not match the information in the text
- Not Given: If the information or part of it are absent in the text

*PS. Yes/No/Not given questions are very similar however they deal with opinions unlike true/false/not given which deal with facts.*

**3.1** Skim read this passage to get the general idea of the content.

## Urban heat

In 1818, Luke Howard published *The Climate of London* in which he identified an emerging problem: urban development was having a direct impact on the local weather. The early 1800s was a time of great expansion for London and [1] Howard noticed that temperatures in the city were gradually becoming higher than those in rural areas. We now refer to these areas as Urban Heat Islands. [2] The difference in temperature is usually greater at night and the phenomenon occurs in both winter and summer. [3] Experts agree that this is due to urban development, when open green spaces are replaced with asphalt roads and tall brick or concrete buildings. These materials retain heat generated by the Sun and release it through the night. In Atlanta, in the US, this has even led to thunderstorms occurring in the morning rather than, as is more common, in the afternoon. Officials there are advising builders to use light-coloured roofs in a bid to reduce the problem.

Large cities around the world are adopting strategies to combat this issue and it is not uncommon to find plants growing on top of roofs or down the walls of large buildings. In Singapore, the government has pledged to transform it into a 'city within a garden' and, in 2006, they held an international competition calling for entries to develop a master plan to help bring this about. One outcome was the creation of 18 'Supertrees'. These metal constructions are made to resemble very tall trees and range in height from 25m to 50m. Each one is a vertical freestanding garden and is home to exotic plants and ferns. Their structure allowed the designers to create an immediate rainforest canopy without having to wait for trees to reach such heights. They contain solar panels used to light the trees at night and also containers to collect rainwater, making them truly self-sufficient.

**3.2** Decide if statements 1–3 are *True*, *False* or *Not Given* according to the underlined parts of the text.

1 Luke Howard invented the term 'Urban Heat Island'.
2 City temperatures are higher than country temperatures regardless of the season.
3 Experts have failed in their efforts to create heat-reflecting concrete and brick.

**3.3** Read statements 4–8, then underline the relevant parts in the text. Are the statements *True*, *False* or *Not Given*?

4 Atlanta has experienced more dramatic weather change than other areas of the US.
5 Roofs that are dark in colour help address the issue of Urban Heat Islands.
6 Singapore's Supertrees are made entirely from natural materials.
7 The designers of the Supertrees originally planned to plant very tall trees.
8 The Supertrees require regular maintenance.

**3.4** Read statements 1–8 again and correct any that were false.

# PRACTICE LESSON 4 READING COMPREHENSION

## Matching Information and Matching Sentence Endings

### *1. General Introduction to the Lesson*

In this lesson, the students will deal with other reading comprehension skills in addition to other skills required to answer the questions. The two main skills to be taught are identifying the different types of information, locating I and matching it. The question types are competing matching information and sentence ending questions. Other basic skills will be required as well such as skimming scanning and previewing. Thus, students will be recycling the skills they have studied before along with the new skills taught in this lesson.

### *2. Objectives of the Lecture*

By the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- Identify the different types of information
- Locating and matching information
- Understand how ideas are connected
- Complete matching information tasks and matching sentence ending questions

### *3. Types of Questions*

The two types of questions dealt with in this lesson are matching information and sentence ending tasks. These two types of questions require skills that can be listed below:

- Identifying the type of information and locating it
- Understanding how ideas are located

These two micro skills require the reader to be proficient in skimming and scanning, as they serve to be the basis of these two tasks. The table below summarizes the needed skills for each:

| Question Type | Skills Tested | Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| **Matching Sentence Endings** | - Understanding complex sentence structures- Grasping logical connections | - Read all the **sentence beginnings** first to understand the context.- Then read all possible **endings** carefully.- Match using **meaning and grammar** — not just keywords. |
| **Matching Information** | - Scanning for details- Identifying where information appears- Recognizing paraphrases | - Read the **statements** first and underline keywords.- Scan the text to locate **where** the information is mentioned.- Remember: a paragraph may contain **more than one** piece of information. |

**TASK A.** ***These tasks are taken from The Official Cambridge Guide for IELTS book.***

**1.1** Read the extracts from two separate paragraphs of a Reading passage. What type of information has been underlined?

**A** a description of an animal's habitat
**B** the issues that can cause something to happen
**C** an argument for a type of action

**A**
Meerkats devote a significant part of their day to foraging for food with their sensitive noses. When they find it, they eat on the spot. Primarily, meerkats are insectivores, which means their diet is mainly made up of insects.

**B**
These animals are transient by nature and move if their food is in short supply or if they're forced out by a stronger gang. The group's dominant male, the alpha male, marks the group's territory to protect the boundary from rivals and predators.

**1.2** Look at this matching information task based on the extracts above.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

1 two situations that force meerkats to change where they live
2 how meerkats generally spend their time

1 For this type of question, do you need to look for individual words or a whole idea?
2 Question 1 matches the information underlined in the paragraph above, so the answer is B. Underline the part of paragraph A that matches the information in Question 2.

**1.3** Look at extracts A–H from different Reading passages and match them to the type of information that best describes them.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **A** Water is forced at pressure through a narrow pipe. The water hits the top of the water wheel, causing it to turn. | **B** The water is warm thanks to a natural hot spring beneath the riverbed. | **C** Our study looked at the surrounding environment while previous researchers have concentrated on diet. | **D** We achieved this by weighing the animals both before and after periods of exercise. |
| **E** They live in dark, humid areas and so tend to be found in and around tropical rainforests. | **F** A month later, we were able to test it again and the results showed a significant change in temperature when the insulation was used. | **G** After ten years, they gave up. The experiment had failed and, as a result, the public grew angry at the waste of public funds. | **H** It takes 35 days for the chick to leave the nest and fly. |

**Types of information**

1 the findings of a study
2 the method used in a research study
3 the reaction to something
4 a description of a habitat
5 the difference between current and past studies
6 a description of how something works
7 the cause of something
8 the amount of time needed for something

## 2 Locating and matching information

Just like matching headings, **matching information** questions are not in the same order as the passage.

**Study Tip** Some examples of the type of information you may be asked to find are:

- a number
- a date
- a measurement
- a reason
- a cause
- an effect
- a conclusion
- the problems
- a finding
- an account
- a reaction
- a description.

When you are reading different passages in this book, think about whether the information matches any of these types.

### *4. Connecting Ideas Practice*

***Complete Tasks 3.1 and 3.2 taken from The Official Cambridge Guide for IELTS book.***

## 3 How ideas are connected

Another type of question that requires you to match information is **matching sentence endings.** For this type of task, you need to understand how ideas are connected within the Reading passage.

**3.1** Complete each sentence below with the correct ending, A–F.

1 When I pressed the switch,
2 If you heat ice,
3 The respondents to the survey
4 Children who attend small schools
5 Parents with overactive children

**A** all came from similar economic backgrounds.
**B** tend to need more sleep at night.
**C** the light came on.
**D** reported that she has been successful.
**E** generally get more individual attention.
**F** it melts.

You were able to complete this task using only logic and your knowledge of grammar. In the IELTS Reading paper, you can do this to confirm or check your answers, but you will **not** be able to answer the questions without reading the passage.

**3.2** Look at these matching sentence endings questions based on the passage in 2.1. Try using these techniques to answer the questions.

1 Scan the passage in **2.1** to locate the information in the sentence beginnings (1–4).

2 Read the relevant part of the passage carefully, then choose the best sentence ending (A–F).

1 Other researchers have aimed to discover how

2 The work of Stark and her team is different because they wanted to find out how

3 Stark's experiments revealed that

4 The researchers would still like to know when

**A** geckos struggle to grip onto dry glass as well as wet glass.
**B** the gripping mechanism of geckos actually works.
**C** geckos have a weaker gripping mechanism than previously thought.
**D** geckos are able to grip in rainforest settings.
**E** geckos are able to recover their gripping abilities after getting wet.
**F** geckos can grip more easily if their feet are not damp.

# PRACTICE LESSON 5 DISCURSIVE TEXTS

## *1. General Introduction to the Lesson*

In this lesson the students will be able to distinguish discursive texts based on the main features of such texts. Discursive texts tend to discuss or present theories and opinions. These are often filled with cohesive devices required to make the ideas well connected. These cohesive devices tend to be confusing to the readers and often create logical misunderstandings; therefore, it is of high importance to define these devices and their importance. Thus, matching features type of question is often used with discursive texts.

## *2. Objectives of the Lecture*

By the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- Read and comprehend a discursive text
- Understand cohesive devices used in discursive texts
- Identify theories and opinions
- Matching features

## *3. Discursive Texts*

Read the citations in pairs then write one definition of discursive texts that includes all the mentioned features.

***Citation 1.*** "Texts whose primary focus is to explore an idea or variety of topics … without the direct intention of persuading the reader … Discursive texts can be humorous or serious in tone and can have a formal or informal register."

***Citation 2.*** "Discursive writing is texts which primarily focus on exploring an idea or variety of topics in written form. … [They] discuss ideas or opinions without the direct intention or purpose of persuading the reader or audience to agree with any single point of view."

***Citation 3.*** "Discursive texts are those whose primary focus is to explore an idea or a variety of topics. These texts involve the discussion of an idea(s) or opinion(s) …"

***Citation 4.*** "Discursive essay is an essay that presents and explores two or more positions related to a given topic. … In a discursive essay, the writer explores discourse surrounding their chosen topic, presenting both (and, in some cases, more than two) positions in good faith."

***Citation 5.*** "Discursive writing is about exploration. It involves discussing ideas or opinions without pushing a specific agenda. … Discursive texts have several key features, like: an exploration of ideas … no persuasion … personal voice … flexible structure."

### *Defining Discursive Texts*

Discursive texts are compositions that explore ideas and topics from different points of view. These texts do not often aim to persuade the readers or change their minds. They often bring a balanced discussion with flexible structure. These texts can also vary in tone and they encourage critical thinking.

### *Cohesive Devices*

Write the cohesive devices below in the table

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ~~moreover~~ | such as | although | for instance |
| indeed | therefore | despite | consequently |
| in spite of | in addition | thus | as a result |
| similarly | to illustrate this | nonetheless | in fact |
| whilst | hence | furthermore | though |

| To add more/clarify a point | To show contrast/present the opposite view | To give an example | To draw a conclusion or introduce a result |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

**TASK A.** Skim the text from ***Cambridge The Offical Guide to IELTS*** and find nine cohesive devices

## Aesop's fable 'The crow and the pitcher' more fact than fiction

*New research indicates that rooks, members of the crow family, are able to solve complex problems using tools.*

In Aesop's fictional fable 'The crow and the pitcher', a thirsty crow uses stones to raise the level of water in a jug to quench its thirst. A recent study demonstrates that rooks, birds belonging to the *corvid* (or crow) family, are in fact able to solve complex problems using tools and can easily master the same technique used in the story.

Christopher Bird of the University of Cambridge, who led the study, highlighted the importance of the findings, stating: 'Corvids are remarkably intelligent, and in many ways rival the great apes in their physical intelligence and ability to solve problems. The only other animal known to complete a similar task is the orang-utan. This is remarkable considering their brain is so different to the great apes. Although it has been speculated in folklore, empirical tests are needed to examine the extent of their intelligence and how they solve problems.'

In their first experiment, the researchers varied the height of the water in a tube and the four rooks, which were the subject of the research, used stones to raise the water level to reach a worm floating on top. The clever birds proved very adept and were highly successful, regardless of the starting level of the water or the number of the stones needed. Two of the birds were successful on their first attempt in raising the water to the correct height whilst the other two birds needed a second try.

In addition to the speed with which they completed the task, the birds were also highly accurate in their ability, adding the exact number of stones needed to reach the worm. Furthermore, rather than attempting to reach the worm after each stone was dropped in, they apparently estimated the number needed from the outset, and waited until the appropriate water level was reached before dipping their beaks into the tube.

In the second experiment, the rooks were presented with stones that varied in size. Here, the rooks selected larger stones over smaller ones (though they didn't do this straight away). The scientists speculate that the birds quickly realised that the larger stones displaced more water, and they were thus able to obtain the reward more quickly than by using small stones.

According to the team, in the final experiment, the rooks recognised that sawdust could not be manipulated in the same manner as water. Therefore, when presented with the choice between a tube half-filled with either sawdust or water, rooks dropped the pebbles into the tube containing water and not the sawdust.

Despite the fact that the study clearly demonstrates the flexible nature of tool use in rooks, they are not believed to use tools in the wild. 'Wild tool use appears to be dependent on motivation,' remarked Bird. 'Rooks do not use tools in the wild because they do not need to, not because they can't. They have access to other food that can be acquired without using tools.' As Bird noted, that fits nicely with Aesop's maxim, demonstrated by the crow: 'Necessity is the mother of invention.'

**TASK B. Identifying Theories and Opinions (Extracted from *Cambridge The Official Guide to IELTS)***

In this extract from the Reading passage. the verbs *highlighted* and *stated* are both used to draw attention to the words of Christopher Bird.

> Christopher Bird of the University of Cambridge, who led the study, highlighted the importance of the findings, stating: 'Corvids are remarkably intelligent, and in many ways rival the great apes in their physical intelligence and ability to solve problems.'

Bird's views could also be expressed indirectly.

**2.1** Which verb in this sentence tells us that this is Bird's view and not the writer's?

> Christopher Bird of the University of Cambridge, who led the study, believes that Corvids are remarkably intelligent, and in many ways rival the great apes in their physical intelligence and ability to solve problems.

**2.2** Find three more verbs and one preposition in the passage that refer to the views or theories of an expert.

**2.3** Statements A–F paraphrase opinions or theories that appear in the Reading passage. Match them to the same idea in the passage, then put them in the order they appear.

**A** We imagine that the rooks were soon able to appreciate the advantage of using different-sized tools.

**B** Tool use in rooks demonstrates a common English saying.

**C** Using tools in their natural habitat is simply not necessary for rooks.

**D** Rooks are as intelligent as the most intelligent of animals.

**E** In their natural setting, rooks can obtain food without using tools.

**F** The ability of rooks is surprising, given the lack of similarities between the brains of birds and mammals.

### *4. Matching Features*

Discursive texts are often accompanied with matching features tasks which contain theories, comments etc. They can be on different places, years, things authors etc. For instance, the following task is a good example of matching features, the task is taken from the same book.

**3.1** Scan the passage on the following page for these names and highlight them each time they appear.

- Page 1
- Lieberman
- Gray

**3.2** Look at the following statements (Questions 1–5) and the list of researchers below. Match each statement with the correct researcher, A, B or C.

**Researchers**
**A** Pagel
**B** Lieberman
**C** Gray

1 We are able to recognise certain words used by people in other cultures.
2 Regardless of what happens in the world, there appear to be fixed rules that govern the way words alter over time.
3 Words that don't follow a standard pattern will remain that way if they are used often.
4 Certain words have kept a similar sound across many years and many countries.
5 We focused on the historical changes that have occurred in one particular language.

**3.3** Put Questions 1–5 in the order they appear in the passage.

**3.4** Remember that some of the questions are based on comments made about the researchers.

1 For which question in 3.2 did you need to match a person to the study that they carried out?
2 Which verbs in the text are used to show that a person other than the writer expressed a particular theory or idea?

**3.5** For further practice in matching sentence endings, complete sentences 1–3 with endings A–E.

1 For a long time, language experts have asked why
2 The English verb 'help' proves that
3 While cultures vary a great deal around the world,

**A** regular and irregular verbs change at different rates.
**B** there are surprising similarities in the way different languages evolve.
**C** eventually, some irregular verbs become regular.
**D** some words stay the same over hundreds of years while others change quite quickly.
**E** some verbs gradually become irregular over time.

# Maths shows why words persist over time

*In a finding that parallels the evolution of genes, researchers have shown that the more frequently a word is used, the less likely it is to change over long periods of time.*

The question of why some words evolve rapidly through time while others are preserved – often with the same meaning in multiple languages – has long plagued linguists. Two independent teams of researchers have tackled this question from different angles, each arriving at a remarkably similar conclusion.

"The frequency with which specific words are used in everyday language exerts a general and law-like influence on their rates of evolution," writes Mark Pagel, author of one of two studies published this week.

Anyone who has tried to learn English will have been struck by its excess of stubbornly irregular verbs, which render grammatical rules unreliable. The past tense of regular verbs is formed by adding the suffix '-ed', but this luxury is not afforded to their irregular kin. Over time, however, some irregular verbs 'regularise'. For instance, the past tense of 'help' used to be 'holp', but now it is 'helped'.

Mathematician Erez Lieberman, from Harvard University in Massachusetts, US, performed a quantitative study of the rate at which English verbs such as 'help' have become more regular with time. Of the list of 177 irregular verbs they took from Old English, only 98 are still irregular today. Amazingly, the changes they observed obey a very precise mathematical description: the half-life of an irregular verb is proportional to the square root of its frequency. In other words, they found that the more an irregular verb is used, the longer it will remain irregular.

A separate group of academics, led by evolutionary biologist Mark Pagel from the University of Reading, in the UK, used a statistical modelling technique to study the evolution of words from 87 different Indo-European languages.

"Throughout its 8,000-year history, all Indo-European-language speakers have used a related sound to communicate the idea of 'two' objects – duo, due, deux, dos, etc." Pagel commented. "But,'' he adds, ''there are many different and unrelated sounds for the idea of, for example, a bird – uccello, oiseau, pouli, pajaro, vogel, etc."

Before now, however, nobody had proposed a mechanism for why some words should evolve more quickly than others. According to Pagel, "our research helps us to understand why we can still understand bits of Chaucer [a medieval poet]" and points out that this likely explains "why we can instinctively recognise words in other Indo-European languages, just from their sounds".

Psychologist and language expert Russell Gray, from the University of Auckland in New Zealand, was impressed by both findings.

"Despite all the vagaries and contingencies of human history, it seems that there are remarkable regularities in the processes of language change," he commented.

# PRACTICE LESSON 6 MULTIMODAL TEXTS

## *1. General Introduction to the Lesson*

In this lesson the students will be introduced to multimodal texts, which play a vital role in our day and age. The consumption of Multimodal texts is at record high where they can be found everywhere, from ad billboards to social media, memes and film industry. This lecture explores how these multimodal texts communicate, drawing on foundational ideas from semiotics to help us decode the messages embedded in everyday media. It also gives the students an idea on the importance and nature of this kind of texts. This can also be the ground for further study of multimodal discourse in their graduate studies.

## *2. Objectives of the Lecture*

By the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- Understand the nature of and define multimodal texts
- Identify the key parts of a semiotic theory
- Analyze the different visual modes and how they work to create meaning
- Critically reflect on the cultural symbols and messages

## *3. Lead-in: Defining Multimodal Texts*

Read the following citations that define multimodal texts from different angles then write one holistic definition.

***Citation 1***. "Multimodality is the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined." Kress & van Leeuwen (2001, p. 20)

***Citation 2.*** "A multimodal text combines two or more semiotic systems—such as linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial resources—to communicate meaning." Walsh (2010, p. 24)

***Citation 3.*** "Multimodal texts do not simply add images to words; rather, each mode contributes uniquely to the construction of meaning." Jewitt (2008, p. 246)

***Citation 4.*** "Understanding a multimodal text requires interpreting the interplay between visual design, language, sound, and movement." Cope & Kalantzis (2009, p. 175)

***Citation 5.*** "Multimodal literacy involves the ability to interpret and produce meaning using different modes, beyond traditional alphabetic text." Mills (2011, p. 35)

***Citation 6.*** "Meaning in multimodal texts arises not from isolated elements, but from the relationships between modes—what each mode does and how they interact." Serafini (2012, p. 152)

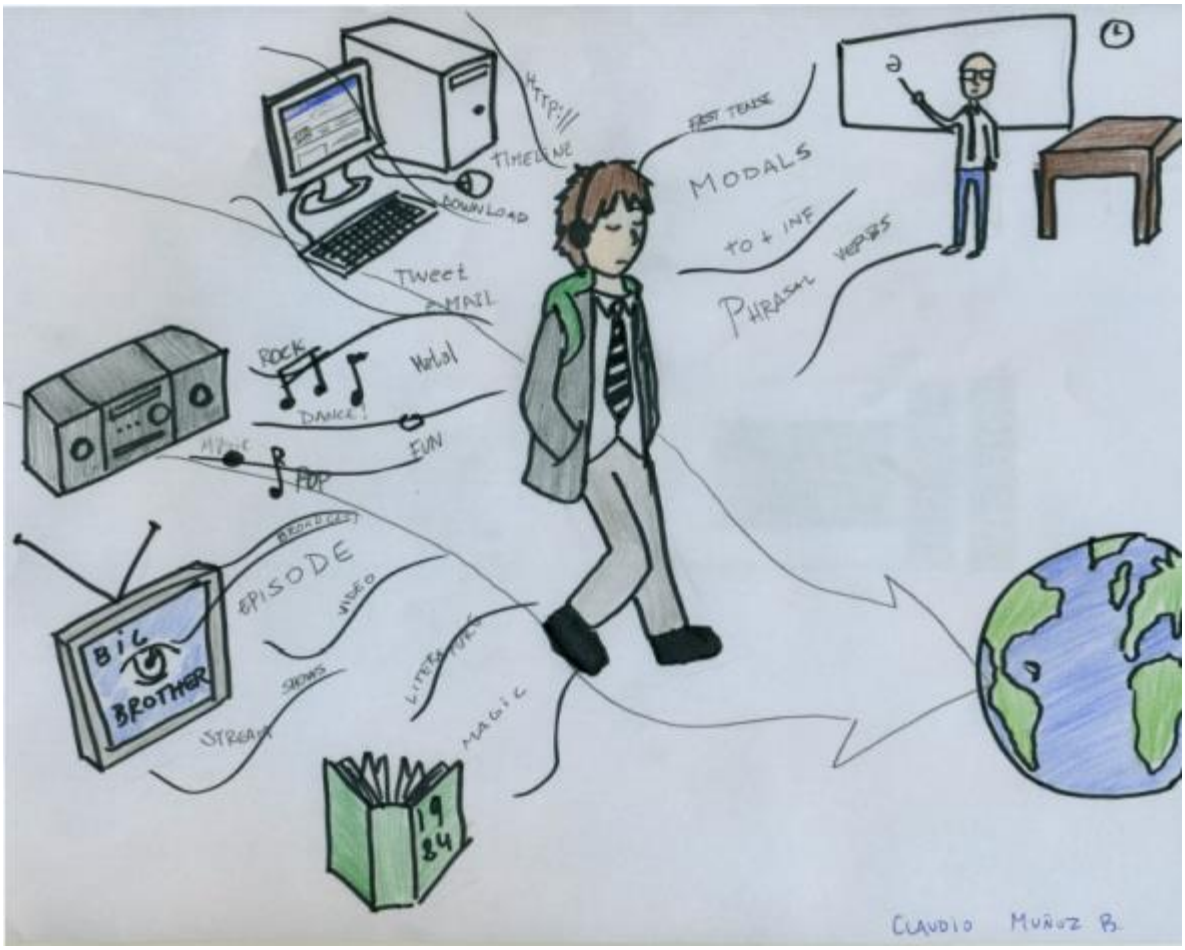
***Citation 7.*** "Multimodal texts reflect the reality of contemporary communication, where visual and verbal modes are often inseparable." Anstey & Bull (2006, p. 4)

***Defining Multimodal Texts:*** A *multimodal text* uses more than one mode to communicate which makes it flexible and versatile in nature. So instead of just words, it might use:

- **Images** (like in comics, memes or ads),
- **Sound and music** (in film, podcast or video),

- **Gestures and facial expressions** (think of a political cartoon or a GIF),
- **Layout and typography** (the way something is arranged on a screen or page).

Visual definition of a multimodal text, taken from ***Abraham Paul and Farías Miguel (2016) Reading with Eyes Wide Open: Reflections on the Impact of Multimodal Texts on Second Language Reading.***



### *4. The importance of Multimodal Texts*

Texts do not carry all the load of communication, with the rise of digital media communication often takes different shapes and modes. Social media is a prime example of the richness of multimodal texts, where they can take different modes such as Instagram posts, reels stories, podcasts on YouTube, notes, Discord servers, etc. Understanding how these texts work isn't just academic. It's vital if we want to be literate in the modern world. We need to be able to *read* images, interpret soundtracks, recognize symbolism, and analyze layout, just like we analyze a literary text.

These multimodal texts are also loaded with political discourse and propaganda, which takes them to a completely new level of discourse analysis. Additionally, these multimodal texts have a virtual date of expiry where they are often allowed for 24 hours or less, or they have a virtual age of trending, unlike all multimodal texts that arrived before the post-modernist age which had a longer age span.

### *5. Semiotic Theory*

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and their significance to the overall discourse. To understand the nature of multimodal texts one has to delve into the nature of semiotics and its historical presence.

***Ferdinand de Saussure*** talked about the **signifier** (the form a sign takes) and the **signified** (the concept it represents). For example, a red rose might signify "love." The image of the rose is the signifier; the idea of love is the signified. However, here's the catch: that connection isn't natural, it's cultural. In some contexts, a rose might mean something completely different.

***Charles Peirce*** took a slightly different approach. He classified signs into three types:

- **Icon**: looks like what it represents (like a photo),
- **Index**: points to something (like smoke indicating fire),
- **Symbol**: arbitrary, learned meaning (like a flag or logo).

Then arrives ***Roland Barthes***, who said that texts, especially images, have two layers of meaning:

- **Denotation**: the literal meaning (e.g., a photo of a man holding a gun),
- **Connotation**: the cultural or emotional meaning (e.g., danger, heroism, violence, depending on context).

Barthes also warned us about **myths**, cultural narratives disguised as natural truths. For instance, an ad showing a mother using a certain cleaning product isn't just selling detergent, it might be reinforcing a cultural myth about gender roles.

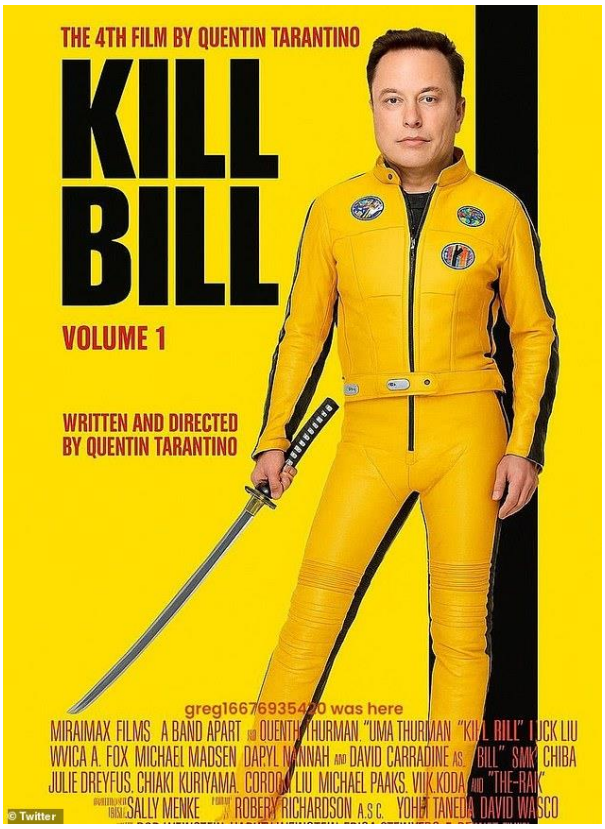
**TASK A**. Choose one of the following to analyze:

- A print advertisement (Source Surfrider Foundation)

- A comic panel (Source A five-panel page from a *Captain Future* superhero comic)


- A film still or scene (Source ***Stalker, Tarkovsky*** 1979)

- A meme or social media graphic (Source MSN News)




Answer the questions below based on the image:

1. **What is the image trying to communicate?**

   (State the literal meaning or message.)

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2. **What signs can you identify? Label one as:**
   - Icon: _____
   - Index: _____

- Symbol: _____

3. **What is the connotation of these signs?**

4. **What might be the myth or cultural message behind the image?**

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