
READING TASKS FROM BRITISH COUNCIL

B1 Reading

A conference programme

Read the programme for a management conference to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and tips and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. to adapt
2. to explore
3. to consider
4. to ensure
5. uncertain
6. the positives
7. development
8. an employee

Definitions

- a. to think carefully about something
- b. to change your behaviour for new conditions
- c. to look into or discuss something in detail
- d. a worker
- e. the good things about something
- f. unsure, unclear, unknown
- g. to make sure something happens
- h. change, growth or progress

Reading text: A conference programme

Morning programme

9.00– 9.30	Conference opening <i>Dr Jon Martinez</i>		
9.30– 10.45	Management styles <i>with Helena Clark</i> Consider the different management styles and how you can adapt yours to suit your team.	Giving feedback <i>with Amelia Novak</i> Explore the different ways to give feedback to maximise development.	Managing change <i>with Akira Yoshida</i> Help your employees deal with change and to see the positives change can bring.
10.45– 11.15	Coffee break		

11.15– 12.30	Using storytelling in leadership communication <i>with Antoine Martin</i> Sometimes, the best way to communicate with your team is by telling stories. Find out how to do this in this workshop.	Leading small businesses <i>with Cheng Wei</i> How is leading small businesses different and how can leaders of small businesses bring success to their team?	Leading in uncertain times <i>with Omar Abboud</i> Uncertainty can affect the success of your team. Learn to bring confidence to your team in a time of uncertainty.
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Afternoon programme

12.30– 2.00	Lunch		
2.00– 3.15	Managing international projects <i>with Alisa Petrov</i> Consider how to ensure successful intercultural communication in your international teams.	Developing creative thinking in your team <i>with Mariana Silva</i> How can you get your team to think more creatively? Explore the different ideas that can help your team see things in a new way.	Conflict management <i>with Tracy Edwards</i> Conflict can create problems in your team, but managing conflict well can bring about development. Learn how to manage conflict in this workshop.
3.15– 4.15	Group discussions		
4.15– 5.00	Conference closing <i>Dr Grace Moloney</i>		

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. Helena Clark thinks that we should know our own management style and not change it.	True	False
2. Amelia Novak believes that we should give feedback to help our employees get better at what they do.	True	False

- | | | |
|--|------|-------|
| 3. Akira Yoshida will focus on the problems with change. | True | False |
| 4. Cheng Wei believes that leading small businesses is different from leading big ones. | True | False |
| 5. Omar Abboud thinks that when your team doesn't feel sure about the things happening around them, it can cause problems. | True | False |
| 6. Tracy Edwards believes that conflict is bad and you should not let it happen in your team. | True | False |

Task 2

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

think	deal with	manage
give	tell	explore

- Being positive and patient will help employees change.
- Team leaders should consider how they feedback to motivate their team.
- Marketing experts say your brand should a story.
- Team members should be encouraged to solve problems together and creatively.
- Talking about plans with a colleague can help to ideas.
- It is important that people know how to conflict at work.

Discussion

Which of the conference sessions would you attend? Why?

A flyer for a gym

Read a flyer promoting a new gym to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–f) with the vocabulary (1–6).

Vocabulary

1. a session
2. a gym
3. fitness
4. a training plan
5. an instructor
6. a fee

Definitions

- a. a building or club where people go to do physical exercise
- b. the state of being healthy and strong.
- c. a document that gives details about how and when you will do physical exercise
- d. a period of time for a particular activity
- e. money you pay so that you can do something such as join an organisation
- f. a person who teaches a skill or a sport

Reading text: A flyer for a gym

BEST BODY FITNESS

About us

You don't want just a gym membership. You want a membership that means something. And that means you need support, expert help and a community.

Best Body Fitness isn't just a gym: it's a full-service fitness membership made for you.

Here's how it works:

STEP ONE: Your assessment

We begin with an assessment session. This is a chance for you to see what we do at **Best Body**. Our assessment plans are no-cost and no-risk. We'll also make a training plan specifically for you.

STEP TWO: Your training

When you decide to become a **Best Body** member, we show you what to do, how to do it and why you are doing it. After a few sessions with an expert private trainer you will feel comfortable working out on your own. But don't worry, we'll always be nearby if you have questions.

STEP THREE: Your membership

Membership works on a month-to-month basis. There are no sign-up fees and no cancellation fees. Start and stop whenever you want. And the best part? Our fees are the most competitive in the whole downtown area.

STEP FOUR: Your community

At **Best Body Fitness**, we see everyone as part of a big team. And when you work with a team, you can do great things. Join any of our specialised classes, led by expert instructors. Come to our nutrition classes. Participate in our regular social events. Everything is included in your fee.

Finally, we wanted to share with you some reasons why our members say that they have chosen us over any other fitness centre in the city.

It's so EASY

- Easy to start, stop, cancel or refund a membership
- Easy to access – we're open 24/7, we never close
- Easy to do exercise – we have lots of equipment, no long wait
- Easy results – our trainers and equipment give you success, fast
- Easy to find – in the centre of town, near public transport and with parking

It's WONDERFUL

- Wonderful members
- Wonderful trainers and staff
- Wonderful equipment
- Wonderful energy
- Wonderful location

Come and visit us for a personal tour!

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. The first visit to the club is free.	True	False
2. Everybody gets the same training plan.	True	False
3. At this gym, you always do exercise with an expert instructor.	True	False
4. If you stop your membership, you don't have to pay anything.	True	False
5. This gym says it's the best value for money.	True	False
6. Nutrition classes cost a little bit extra.	True	False
7. The gym is open at 4 o'clock in the morning.	True	False
8. The gym is outside of town.	True	False

Task 2

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

time	membership	over	whenever
specifically	own	led	nearby

- The gym offers a full-service fitness
- We'll make a training plan for you.
- You can now work out on your
- We'll always be to help.
- Start and stop you want.
- Join any of our classes, ... by expert instructors.
- This is why our members have chosen us any other gym.
- Stop, start or refund your membership any

Discussion

What would you like most in a gym?

A travel guide

Read a travel guide about Bangkok to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–f) with the vocabulary (1–6).

Vocabulary

1. polluted
2. noodles
3. alternative
4. authentic
5. express
6. a stand

Definition

- a. real or normal for a place, not specially for tourists
- b. dirty from traffic or chemicals
- c. fast
- d. another way to do something
- e. a table where food or other things are sold in a market
- f. a long, thin food made from flour, water and eggs

Reading text: A travel guide

Whether you're travelling to the islands or the mountains of Thailand, you're likely to spend at least one night in its capital city on the way. Bangkok might be noisy and polluted but it's also an exciting city with plenty of things to see and do. Why not make it a longer stay?

Where to stay

The Khao San Road was a famous traveller spot even before Leonardo di Caprio's character in the film *The Beach* stayed there. But it's noisy, not very pretty and not very Thai. For something more authentic, Phra Kanong offers an alternative place to stay, with its fantastic street markets where everyday Bangkok people eat, work and live. It's not as convenient for the main tourist sites, but it has a Skytrain station so you can be at the Grand Palace in 20 minutes.

How to get around

Bangkok's traffic can be a nightmare. Sure, you can easily take a taxi – if you want to spend hours stuck in traffic jams – but there are two much better ways to get around the city. To explore the temples and historical sites, catch an express boat river taxi or a longtail boat along the Chao Phraya river and the canals. For the modern part of the city, the Skytrain is a fast, cheap way to travel from the river to the shopping malls and nightlife of Sukhumvit, and the famous Chatuchak street market.

Where to eat

The simple answer is: everywhere! Thai street food is among the best in the world, and for around \$5 you can eat a filling and delicious meal. Some food stands have little plastic seats where you can sit and eat and they cook the same dish over and over, like fried chicken on rice or Pad Thai noodles. Head for Chinatown – Yaowarat Street – and choose whatever looks most interesting from the many excellent Chinese and Thai restaurants and food stands.

What to do

After you've seen the main sites like the Giant Buddha at the temple of Wat Pho and the spectacular Grand Palace, and shopped at Chatuchak market, check out the snake farm and watch the live snake show. You can even touch a snake yourself if you want to!

Tasks

Task 1

Match the Bangkok landmarks and places with the descriptions.

Wat Pho	Khao San Road	Sukhumvit
Yaowarat Street	Phra Kanong	Chao Phraya

- a place that you might see in the film *The Beach*
- a place where local Thai people go
- an alternative route through the city
- a place to go for shopping and bars
- a place to go for food
- an important sightseeing spot

Task 2

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. One night is enough time to see Bangkok.	True	False
2. Khao San Road is an authentic Thai area of the city.	True	False
3. Phra Kanong is further away from the main tourist sites than Khao San Road is.	True	False
4. The river boat taxis often get stuck in traffic too.	True	False
5. Taking the Skytrain is a faster way to see the city than going by taxi.	True	False
6. You need to choose where to eat carefully, as not everywhere is good.	True	False

Discussion

Would you like to visit Bangkok? Why or why not?

An email request for help

Read an email asking for help from another department to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–f) with the vocabulary (1–6).

Vocabulary

1. to clear something with somebody
2. to talk through something
3. product design
4. to launch a product
5. to have a good eye for detail
6. packaging

Definitions

- a. the material used to protect goods and present them to the customer
- b. the process of producing or improving a product to suit customers' needs
- c. to introduce a product to the customers for the first time
- d. to be good at noticing the smaller but important parts of things
- e. to discuss something carefully and in detail
- f. to get approval or permission from somebody to do something

Reading text: An email request for help

To: James Forrester

Date: 6 November

Subject: Possible help with product design

Dear James,

As you know, we have been working on the new perfume that we are launching in April and we are unsure about some of the packaging details. We have seen some of your creative work in the sales department and we think you have a very good eye for detail.

Do you have some time before close of business this Friday to sit down with us and talk through some of our designs? We would truly appreciate your advice on this. It shouldn't take longer than two hours of your time and we would be happy to clear it with Patricia, your department head, if necessary.

Best regards,

Sarah Ford

Head of Department

Product Design

Tasks

Task 1

Circle the best answer.

1. What department does James work for?
 - a. Marketing
 - b. Product Design
 - c. Sales
 - d. Research and Development
2. Which department is working on the new perfume?
 - a. Marketing
 - b. Product Design
 - c. Sales
 - d. Research and Development
3. What is happening in April?
 - a. The company will introduce the new perfume to the public.
 - b. The product design department will finish their design of the new perfume.
 - c. The sales department will stop selling perfumes.
 - d. The marketing department will design advertisements for the new perfume.
4. What is Sarah requesting?
 - a. For James to design the perfume.
 - b. For James to have a meeting with the product design department to help them with the packaging of the perfume.
 - c. For James to ask Patricia for permission to sell the perfume.
 - d. For James to move to the product design department.
5. Who is the head of the sales department?
 - a. James
 - b. Sarah
 - c. April
 - d. Patricia
6. When would Sarah like to sit down with James?
 - a. Today
 - b. Some time next week
 - c. Any time between today and the end of Friday
 - d. This weekend

Task 2

Write a number (1–6) to put the events in the order they are mentioned.

- _____ James has a meeting with Sarah and her team.
- _____ The product design department starts work on the design of the new perfume.
- _____ Sarah asks Patricia for permission to use James.
- _____ The product design department introduces the new perfume to the public.
- _____ Sarah and her team finalise the details of the packaging for the new perfume.
- _____ Sarah writes an email to James asking for help.

Discussion

What should you include in an email asking for help?

Digital habits across generations

Read an article about how people at different ages use computers and smartphones to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (1–8) with the vocabulary (a–h).

Vocabulary

1. to miss out on
2. addiction
3. constantly
4. to be cut off from
5. unlike
6. social media
7. ironically
8. early adopters

Definitions

- a. websites and apps like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- b. in a funny or strange way because it's unexpected
- c. different from
- d. to not get the benefits of
- e. needing something too much or in an unhealthy way
- f. people who are the first to buy or use new technology
- g. all the time without a break
- h. to have no access to

Reading text: Digital habits across generations

Today's grandparents are joining their grandchildren on social media, but the different generations' online habits couldn't be more different. In the UK the over-55s are joining Facebook in increasing numbers, meaning that they will soon be the site's second biggest user group, with 3.5 million users aged 55–64 and 2.9 million over-65s.

Sheila, aged 59, says, 'I joined to see what my grandchildren are doing, as my daughter posts videos and photos of them. It's a much better way to see what they're doing than waiting for letters and photos in the post. That's how we did it when I was a child, but I think I'm lucky I get to see so much more of their lives than my grandparents did.'

Ironically, Sheila's grandchildren are less likely to use Facebook themselves. Children under 17 in the UK are leaving the site – only 2.2 million users are under 17 – but they're not going far from their smartphones. Chloe, aged 15, even sleeps with her phone. 'It's my alarm clock so I have to,' she says. 'I look at it before I go to sleep and as soon as I wake up.'

Unlike her grandmother's generation, Chloe's age group is spending so much time on their phones at home that they are missing out on spending time with their friends in real life. Sheila, on the other hand, has made contact with old friends from school she hasn't heard

from in forty years. 'We use Facebook to arrange to meet all over the country,' she says. 'It's changed my social life completely.'

Teenagers might have their parents to thank for their smartphone and social media addiction as their parents were the early adopters of the smartphone. Peter, 38 and father of two teenagers, reports that he used to be on his phone or laptop constantly. 'I was always connected and I felt like I was always working,' he says. 'How could I tell my kids to get off their phones if I was always in front of a screen myself?' So, in the evenings and at weekends, he takes his SIM card out of his smartphone and puts it into an old-style mobile phone that can only make calls and send text messages. 'I'm not completely cut off from the world in case of emergencies, but the important thing is I'm setting a better example to my kids and spending more quality time with them.'

Is it only a matter of time until the generation above and below Peter catches up with the new trend for a less digital life?

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
	True	False
1. More people aged 55 or more use Facebook than people aged 65 or more.		
2. Grandparents typically use Facebook less than their grandchildren.	True	False
3. Sheila feels grateful to social media.	True	False
4. Peter found his own smartphone use affected how he felt about how much his children used their phones.	True	False
5. Peter has changed how much he uses his phone during the working day.	True	False
6. Peter feels that the changes make him a better parent.	True	False

Task 2

Write the phrases in the correct group.

are returning to older technology use social media to find old friends	are less keen on Facebook were the first generation to get smartphones	like to keep their phones near them feel lucky to have the internet in their lives
Teens	Grandparents	Parents

Discussion

Who uses their phone the most among your family or friends?

Encyclopedia entry

Read an encyclopedia entry on the Taj Mahal to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–f) with the vocabulary (1–6).

Vocabulary

- 1..... a fountain
- 2..... a pathway
- 3..... a dome
- 4..... an archway
- 5..... precious stones
- 6..... marble

Definition

- a. a rounded roof with a circle-shaped base
- b. valuable stones like diamonds, rubies and emeralds
- c. a narrow track for walking on
- d. a structure in a garden or park that pushes water into the air
- e. a type of hard smooth stone that is often used for decoration
- f. a curved structure, often over an entrance or passage

Reading text: An encyclopedia entry

The Taj Mahal (pronounced /tɑːdʒ m'hɑːl/) is a famous mausoleum next to the river Yamuna in the Indian city of Agra. A mausoleum is a building where people bury the dead. The name Taj Mahal means 'the crown of palaces'.

1.

The most famous part of the Taj Mahal is the large white dome in the centre. It is 35 metres high and is surrounded by four smaller domes. The rooms inside the building are decorated with beautiful archways and precious stones in the walls. The buildings are surrounded by gardens with pathways, pools, fountains and green gardens.

2.

The construction of the Taj Mahal began in 1632 and finished in 1653. It was built with materials from all over India and Asia, but the main material is white marble. Historians believe that the materials were transported by over 1,000 elephants for the construction.

3.

The emperor Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal as a burial place for his wife, Mumtaz Mahal. According to legend, he wanted to build another Taj Mahal in black on the other side of the river, but this never happened. During the Indian Rebellion of 1857, many parts of the Taj Mahal were damaged by British soldiers, who took some of the precious stones from its walls. Over the years, the Taj Mahal has suffered from environmental damage, and there have been many government attempts to conserve its beauty.

4.

The Taj Mahal is one of India's most famous landmarks. There are millions of visitors to the mausoleum every year. The Taj Mahal is almost always included in lists of famous buildings to visit and is considered one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. It is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

5.

- Encyclopedia Britannica article on the Taj Mahal: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Taj-Mahal>
- Official site of the Taj Mahal: <https://www.tajmahal.gov.in/>
- UNESCO Profile of the Taj Mahal: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/252>

Tasks

Task 1

Match the paragraphs (1–5) with the best paragraph headings (a–f). One heading is not needed.

Paragraph	Heading
1.	a. History
2.	b. Gallery
3.	c. Architecture
4.	d. Construction
5.	e. Tourism
Not needed	f. References

Task 2

Are the sentences true, false or not mentioned?

1. The Taj Mahal is constructed of white marble and a small amount of black marble.

a.True	b.False	c.The text doesn't say.
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2. There are water features in the gardens of the Taj Mahal.

a.True	b.False	c.The text doesn't say.
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3. The construction of the Taj Mahal never finished.

a.True	b.False	c.The text doesn't say.
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- ## Discussion

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How to spot fake news

Read some tips for spotting fake news to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

bombard	fooled	unrelated	source
fake	subtle	phenomenon	sure

1. A is something that is designed to look real but isn't.
2. If you someone with messages or information, you give them so much that it is difficult to deal with at all.
3. A is a rare or important fact or event.
4. If something is , it is not obvious and it is difficult to notice.
5. If you are , you are tricked into believing something that is not true.
6. If you are about something, you are confident that it is true or correct.
7. If something is to something else, the two things have nothing to do with each other.
8. A is a thing, person or place that provides information.

Reading text: How to spot fake news

Every time you're online, you are bombarded by pictures, articles, links and videos trying to tell their story. Unfortunately, not all of these stories are true. Sometimes they want you to click on another story or advertisement at their own site, other times they want to upset people for political reasons. These days it's so easy to share information. These stories circulate quickly, and the result is ... fake news.

There is a range of fake news: from crazy stories which people easily recognise to more subtle types of misinformation. Experts in media studies and online psychology have been examining the fake news phenomenon. Read these tips, and don't get fooled!

1. Check the source

Look at the website where the story comes from. Does it look real? Is the text well written? Are there a variety of other stories or is it just one story? Fake news websites often use addresses that sound like real newspapers, but don't have many real stories about other

topics. If you aren't sure, click on the 'About' page and look for a clear description of the organisation.

2. Watch out for fake photos

Many fake news stories use images that are Photoshopped or taken from an unrelated site. Sometimes, if you just look closely at an image, you can see if it has been changed. Or use a tool like Google Reverse Image search. It will show you if the same image has been used in other contexts.

3. Check the story is in other places

Look to see if the story you are reading is on other news sites that you know and trust. If you do find it on many other sites, then it probably isn't fake (although there are some exceptions), as many big news organisations try to check their sources before they publish a story.

4. Look for other signs

There are other techniques that fake news uses. These include using ALL CAPS and lots of ads that pop up when you click on a link. Also, think about how the story makes you feel. If the news story makes you angry, it's probably designed to make you angry.

If you know these things about online news, and can apply them in your everyday life, then you have the control over what to read, what to believe and most importantly what to share. If you find a news story that you know is fake, the most important advice is: don't share it!

Tasks

Task 1

Circle the best title for the text.

- a. Experts share dangers of fake news
- b. Experts share top tips for resisting fake news
- c. How to create fake news: a guide
- d. Tips on how to read the news online

Task 2

Circle the correct answers.

1. Which reason is NOT given for an online fake news story?
 - a. To convince people of a political view
 - b. To make people angry or sad
 - c. To plant a virus in your computer

2. The text says some fake news ...
 - a. is easy to recognise as fake.
 - b. is funny.
 - c. comes from the political right.

3. Which of these may mean that a news site should not be trusted?
 - a. The text is well written.
 - b. The site has a variety of other stories.
 - c. The site's 'About' page does not clearly describe the organisation.

4. Some images on fake news ...
 - a. are real images, but come from a different website.
 - b. are images that have been changed.
 - c. both the above

5. Fake news stories ...
 - a. are usually only on fake news sites or social media.
 - b. are not on any websites, only in social media.
 - c. are often hidden on real news sites.

6. Many fake news stories are written ...
 - a. without capital letters and with terrible spelling.
 - b. in a way that makes people upset.
 - c. inside of advertisements that pop up on your screen.

7. What should you do with fake news?
 - a. Report it to the police
 - b. Make a note of it for reference
 - c. Not show it to other people online

8. What is the purpose of this article?
 - a. To complain
 - b. To inform
 - c. To entertain

Discussion

Have you ever read a fake news story online? Are you worried about this problem?

Innovation in business

Read a blogpost about being innovative in business to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. profits
2. innovative
3. a demand
4. to review
5. feedback
6. R&D
7. to target
8. to be aware of

Definition

- a. using new ideas or ways of doing things
- b. to look at something again to change it if necessary
- c. research and development, the part of a business that develops or improves its products
- d. money that is made by a business after all the costs are paid
- e. a need for something to be sold or provided
- f. to direct a product at a particular person or group
- g. to know that something exists
- h. information about people's opinions of something that can be used to improve it

Reading text: What does it mean to be innovative in business?

In order for a business to survive in today's world, it is important that we regularly review what we are doing and how we are doing it. By considering new ideas and new ways of doing things, and trying to innovate, we can improve on our products/services, increase sales, reduce costs and make our processes more effective and efficient. Innovation is key to increasing profits.

There are several ways a company can be innovative with their products and services. Today we will look at four of them.

1. Using the latest technology to improve your product/service

When we think of innovation, we often think of new technologies. While they might be impressive, we should not use new technologies just because they are available. It is important to consider how the technology can improve our product/service and make a difference to our customer. Companies that produce cars, toiletries, household appliances, etc. often have a large R&D department to work on making their products better.

2. Responding to customer demands by changing what is on offer

By listening to customer feedback, we can get their opinions on how we are doing and find out about what it is that they want. We also need to be aware of changes in customer demands and keep up with the times. When fast-food restaurant McDonald's realised that the market wanted healthier choices, they introduced fruit and salads, while removing the 'super-size' option from their menus.

3. Offering a new product/service to reach new customers

Your business might be doing well, but there is no growth or development and there is a risk that your competitors might take away some of your customers. Innovation sometimes means developing a new product that targets a different market. Although video games were often played by boys, in 2006, video games giant Nintendo introduced the game console Nintendo Wii, successfully targeting girls and older customers with games like Cooking Mama and Brain Training.

4. Changing the way you provide a service

By looking at the changes to the customer's lifestyle and needs, we sometimes realise that there might be better ways to serve them. Customers who do not have a lot of time might prefer to have their food or their shopping delivered to their homes, or they might like to do their banking online rather than in an actual bank.

Not all innovation will bring success to our businesses, but it can give us the opportunity to grow and learn more about what we do and what our customers might want.

Tasks

Task 1

Complete the text with words from the box.

aware	recent	innovative	customers
convenient	development	better	demands

We need to introduce (1)..... ideas and ways of doing things so that we can improve and grow. One way of doing this is to look at the most (2)..... technologies and see how they can make our products or services (3)..... . Some companies have a research and (4)..... department that specialises in this. Another way is to be (5)..... of changes in what our customers want and make sure we offer products or services that meet their (6)..... . A third way of introducing innovation is to develop new products that can help you target new (7)..... . You can also change the way your service is offered to make it more (8)..... for your customers.

Task 2

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. We innovate because we want to increase the amount of money our businesses make.	True	False
2. Being innovative is all about using the newest technologies in your business.	True	False
3. Customers often don't know what they want.	True	False
4. McDonald's have not changed their menu since they started.	True	False
5. If you always target the same customers, you might lose them to your competitors.	True	False
6. Nintendo understood that only boys will play computer games.	True	False

Discussion

What are some of the latest innovations in the products/services that you use?

Planning an event

Read a dialogue where three people negotiate who does what to achieve a task.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the words (1–8) with the definitions (a–h).

Word

1. a guest list
2. catering
3. an emcee
4. room set-up
5. an announcement
6. to stick to something
7. to take over something
8. to have someone in mind

Definition

- a. arranging the furniture and decorations in a room for an event
- b. to continue with a plan without changing it
- c. to be thinking of choosing someone for a job
- d. the people making and serving the food for an event
- e. a message to tell people about something, e.g. an event
- f. to do something that someone else was doing
- g. a list of the people coming to the event
- h. a Master of Ceremonies: the person who presents and introduces speakers onto the stage

Reading text: Planning an event

Mike, 14:41

All right, so I've divided up the tasks among the three of us planning this event like this:

@Jen: make guest list, schedule social media announcements, arrange room set-up, organise musicians

@Ed: book catering, send out invitations, design posters, book speakers

@Mike: reserve rooms, design invitations, write and publish blog post, get emcee

But please don't feel like we need to stick to this. If you prefer to do something else, feel free to say so.

Jen, 14:50

Yeah, I was thinking, as you are project leader **@Mike**, maybe it's best you make the guest list? I've got experience in graphic design so I'm happy to design the invitations.

Ed, 14:55

@Jen, do you mind designing the posters too? I'm not very good at designing.

Jen, 14:56

Sure, it'll be fun. If I take the poster design off you **@Ed**, do you think you can organise the musicians?

Ed, 14:58

Absolutely, I know some really good musicians that do events like this one. And I also know a really good emcee. Do you want me to take over getting the emcee too?

Mike, 15:01

@Ed I actually already have an emcee in mind, so I think I'll handle that. I'd appreciate it if you could write and publish the blog post about the event though.

Ed, 15:01

That's not a problem. I quite enjoy online marketing tasks.

Jen, 15:03

If that's the case @Ed, do you want to schedule the social media announcements too?

Ed, 15:04

I can do that ... if someone books the speakers.

Mike, 15:08

I'll book the speakers. And since I'm making the guest list, I should send out the invitations too. @Jen, are you still OK with arranging the room set-up?

Jen, 15:09

Yes, let me do the room reservations as well.

Mike, 15:10

Good idea. That would work nicely.

Tasks

Task 1

Match the tasks (a–l) to the person that will do them.

Person

Mike

Jen

Ed

Task

- a. Book rooms
- b. Create a post for a blog
- c. Create invitations
- d. Create posters
- e. Decide who to invite
- f. Find emcee
- g. Invite guests
- h. Organise live music
- i. Organise the food
- j. Plan room set-up
- k. Plan social media communication
- l. Reserve the speakers

Task 2

Are the sentences true or false?

1. Mike is the project leader.
2. Mike wants Jen and Ed to follow his original plan.
3. Jen enjoys doing the designing tasks.
4. Ed is happy to cook for the event.
5. Ed wants to be the emcee for the event.
6. Mike would like to be the emcee for the event.

Answer

- | | |
|------|-------|
| True | False |
| True | False |
| True | False |
| True | False |
| True | False |
| True | False |

Discussion

How are tasks usually divided in your project teams?

Robot teachers

Read an article about robot teachers to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–f) with the vocabulary (1–6).

Vocabulary

1. a takeover
2. to adapt
3. to underestimate
4. empathy
5. to diagnose
6. creative

Definitions

- a. the ability to think of new ideas
- b. to think something is less than it is
- c. to work out what kind of illness someone has
- d. when someone takes control of something, like a job or a place
- e. to change something so that it fits better
- f. the ability to deeply understand someone's situation or feelings

Reading text: Robot teachers

If you think of the jobs robots could never do, you would probably put doctors and teachers at the top of the list. It's easy to imagine robot cleaners and factory workers, but some jobs need human connection and creativity. But are we underestimating what robots can do? In some cases, they already perform better than doctors at diagnosing illness. Also, some patients might feel more comfortable sharing personal information with a machine than a person. Could there be a place for robots in education after all?

British education expert Anthony Seldon thinks so. And he even has a date for the robot takeover of the classroom: 2027. He predicts robots will do the main job of transferring information and teachers will be like assistants. Intelligent robots will read students' faces, movements and maybe even brain signals. Then they will adapt the information to each student. It's not a popular opinion and it's unlikely robots will ever have empathy and the ability to really connect with humans like another human can.

One thing is certain, though. A robot teacher is better than no teacher at all. In some parts of the world, there aren't enough teachers and 9–16 per cent of children under the age of 14 don't go to school. That problem could be partly solved by robots because they can teach anywhere and won't get stressed, or tired, or move somewhere for an easier, higher-paid job. Those negative aspects of teaching are something everyone agrees on. Teachers all over the world are leaving because it is a difficult job and they feel overworked. Perhaps the question

is not 'Will robots replace teachers?' but 'How can robots help teachers?' Office workers can use software to do things like organise and answer emails, arrange meetings and update calendars. Teachers waste a lot of time doing non-teaching work, including more than 11 hours a week marking homework. If robots could cut the time teachers spend marking homework and writing reports, teachers would have more time and energy for the parts of the job humans do best.

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. Most jobs seem as if they can be done by robots or computers.	True	False
2. Robots are always better at diagnosing illness than doctors.	True	False
3. Many experts agree robots will replace teachers by 2027.	True	False
4. One advantage of robot teachers is that they don't need to rest.	True	False
5. Robot assistants could help teachers by marking homework.	True	False
6. Some teachers use robots to reduce their time answering emails and marking homework.	True	False

Task 2

Choose the best answer.

- It's easy to think robots ...
 - will replace people even if we don't like the idea.
 - are more capable than people and it's true.
 - can do less than people but it's not always true.
- Anthony Seldon thinks teachers in the future will ...
 - help robots in class.
 - teach knowledge to students.
 - no longer exist.
- Robots will probably never ...
 - have human understanding of emotions.
 - be a popular choice for teachers.
 - be intelligent enough to work in education.
- Some parts of the world ...
 - pay robots to teach.
 - already use robots in teaching jobs.
 - have a shortage of teachers.

5. Teachers ...
- a. work harder than office workers.
 - b. have less help than office workers.
 - c. leave their jobs to become office workers.
6. Robots could ...
- a. empathise with students.
 - b. mark homework. c.
 - prepare lessons.

Discussion

Would you like to have a robot as a teacher?

Social media influencers

Read a blogpost about the impact of social media influencers in the business world to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. expertise
2. a trend
3. an audience
4. consistent
5. catchy
6. to charge
7. a bio
8. a niche

Definitions

- a. something that is popular right now
- b. the people who watch or follow a public event, e.g. a film or concert
- c. expert knowledge or skill in an area
- d. to ask someone to pay
- e. a specialised area
- f. a short introduction of a person (short for 'biography')
- g. doing something in the same way over time
- h. attractive and easily remembered

Reading text: Social media influencers

It is estimated that about 40 per cent of the world's population use social media, and many of these billions of social media users look up to influencers to help them decide what to buy and what trends to follow.

So what is an influencer and how do we become one?

An influencer is a person who can influence the decisions of their followers because of their relationship with their audience and their knowledge and expertise in a particular area, e.g. fashion, travel or technology.

Influencers often have a large following of people who pay close attention to their views. They have the power to persuade people to buy things, and influencers are now seen by many companies as a direct way to customers' hearts. Brands are now asking powerful influencers to market their products. With some influencers charging up to \$25,000 for one social media post, it is no surprise that more and more people are keen to become influencers too. If you are one of them, then here are five tips on how to do it.

1. Choose your niche What is the area that you know most about? What do you feel most excited talking about?

Find the specific area that you're most interested in and develop it.

2. Choose your medium and write an interesting bio

Most influencers these days are bloggers and micro-bloggers. Decide which medium – such as your own online blog, Instagram or Snapchat – is the best way to connect with your followers and chat about your niche area. When you have done that, write an attention-grabbing bio that describes you and your speciality area in an interesting and unique way. Make sure that people who read your bio will want to follow you.

3. Post regularly and consistently

Many influencers post daily on their social media accounts. The more you post, the more likely people will follow you. Also, ensure that your posts are consistent and possibly follow a theme.

4. Tell an interesting story

Whether it is a photo or a comment that you are posting, use it to tell a story that will catch the attention of your followers and help them connect with you.

5. Make sure people can easily find your content

Publicise your posts on a variety of social media, use hashtags and catchy titles and make sure that they can be easily found. There is no point writing the most exciting blogposts or posting the most attractive photographs if no one is going to see them.

Most importantly, if you want to become a social media influencer, you need to have patience. Keep posting and your following will gradually increase. Good luck!

Tasks

Task 1

Choose the best answer.

1. A social media influencer is not someone who ...
 - a. guides the decisions of their followers.
 - b. is an expert in a particular area.
 - c. pays their followers to buy products.
 - d. has many followers who pay attention to their opinions.
2. Companies want to use influencers to help ...
 - a. sell their products to their followers.
 - b. develop new products.
 - c. write their blogposts.
 - d. design their websites.

3. If you want to be an influencer, your bio on your social media account shouldn't ...
 - a. say who you are.
 - b. talk about your niche area.
 - c. be interesting.
 - d. be the same as other people's bios.
4. You should make sure that you post ...
 - a. once a month.
 - b. every day for the first month and then once a month after that.
 - c. about similar subjects.
 - d. about all sorts of different things.
5. You can make sure that people find your post by ...
 - a. using hashtags.
 - b. using funny or memorable titles.
 - c. using different social media to link to your post.
 - d. doing all of the above.
6. What should the title of this blogpost be?
 - a. Five ways to influence people
 - b. Five ways to use influencers in marketing
 - c. Five tips on becoming a social media influencer
 - d. Five tips on making money as an influencer

Task 2

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. An influencer needs to know about as many topics as possible, e.g. fashion, travel, technology, etc.	True	False
2. Companies are paying some influencers up to \$25,000 to post about their products.	True	False
3. Most influencers write regular posts on their blogs or micro-blogs.	True	False
4. You can chat with your followers using your bio.	True	False
5. Your posts should not only be attractive but should tell a story.	True	False
6. You can become a social media influencer in a short time.	True	False

Discussion

Do you know of any social media influencers? What are their niche areas?

If you became a social media influencer, what medium would you use and what would you post about?

The Martian: a book review

Read a review of the book *The Martian* to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Put the words in the correct groups.

author	botanist	scientist	scientific
story	astronaut	calculations	base
ship	character	planet	plot

books	space	science

Reading text: *The Martian*: a book review

The Martian tells the story of Mark Watney, an astronaut on the Ares 3 mission to Mars. After a terrible storm almost destroys the ship and the base, the crew of his ship believe he is dead. 1) Alone on the red planet, he has to survive until the next mission to Mars arrives.

While this novel is fiction, in some ways it feels like non-fiction. It is very scientific and packed with details about survival on Mars. Watney is a botanist and engineer, and he begins to grow food and produce water in his artificial camp. How does he do this? 2)

The author is Andy Weir, and this is his first published book. In it he has created a realistic character. There is a lot of humour in the story, and the reader can identify with the emotions (although no one can really imagine what it's like to be on Mars). Watney admits at the beginning that he is in deep trouble, but he never gives up. 3) Instead, what *The Martian* gives us is a realistic look at an intelligent person alone on a planet and trying to survive.

The majority of the plot takes place on Mars and is written in the form of Watney's journal entries. 4) Unfortunately, the other characters in the book (his fellow crew members, the scientists at NASA on Earth) do not get much development and so they often feel one-dimensional.

I should also mention that the book is thrilling to read. You will be on the edge of your seat until the very end. 5) It's good not only for space travel fans and scientists but for anyone who is looking for a unique and exciting story. *The Martian* was so popular that it was made into a film starring Matt Damon in 2015, but I recommend reading the book first.

Tasks

Task 1

Match the missing sentences (a–e) with the correct place in the text (1–5).

- a. The answers are explained with lots of very convincing calculations.
- b. But Mark does not die in the storm, and he has been left behind.
- c. I would recommend this book to all audiences.
- d. Without the character of Mark Watney, this book would only be a scientific look at survival on Mars.
- e. This diary style makes the character of Watney very real.

Task 2

Circle the best definitions for the words in CAPITALS.

- 1. It is very scientific and PACKED with details about survival on Mars.
 - a. filled
 - b. ready for a trip
 - c. empty
- 2. ... he begins to grow food and produce water in his ARTIFICIAL camp.
 - a. from the military
 - b. not natural
 - c. imaginary
- 3. Watney admits at the beginning that he is in deep trouble, but he never GIVES UP.
 - a. stops trying
 - b. escapes
 - c. begins

4. The majority of the plot takes place on Mars, and is written in the form of Watney's JOURNAL ENTRIES.
 - a. things you write in a diary
 - b. newspaper articles
 - c. types of transport

5. Unfortunately, the other characters in the book (his fellow crew members, the scientists at NASA on Earth) do not get much development and so they often feel ONE-DIMENSIONAL.
 - a. complicated
 - b. not deep, not realistic
 - c. interesting

6. I should also mention that the book is thrilling to read. You will be ON THE EDGE OF YOUR SEAT until the very end.
 - a. bored and sleepy
 - b. confused and lost
 - c. very excited, wondering what is going to happen

Discussion

What book would you recommend?

The legend of fairies

Read a text about the legend of fairies to practise and improve your reading skills.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. a tribe
2. fake
3. to support
4. to worship
5. origin
6. a spirit
7. a weapon
8. to invade

Definitions

- a. the explanation for how something started
- b. the part of a living thing which is not the body and you can't see or touch it
- c. to pray to
- d. a group of people, usually connected to each other by place or culture
- e. something used to hit or hurt people
- f. to attack a place with an army
- g. to make something stronger
- h. looks real but is not

Reading text: The legend of fairies

(1) Fairies today are the stuff of children's stories, little magical people with wings, often shining with light. Typically pretty and female, like Tinkerbell in *Peter Pan*, **they** usually use their magic to do small things and are mostly friendly to humans.

(2) We owe many of our modern ideas about fairies to Shakespeare and stories from the 18th and 19th centuries. Although we can see the origins of fairies as far back as the Ancient Greeks, we can see similar creatures in many cultures. The earliest fairy-like creatures can be found in the Greek idea that trees and rivers had spirits called dryads and nymphs. Some people think **these creatures** were originally the gods of earlier, pagan religions that worshipped nature. **They** were replaced by the Greek and Roman gods, and then later by the Christian God, and became smaller, less powerful figures as they lost importance.

(3) Another explanation suggests the origin of fairies is a memory of real people, not spirits. So, for example, when tribes with metal weapons invaded land where people only used stone weapons, some of the people escaped and hid in forests and caves. Further support for **this idea** is that fairies were thought to be afraid of iron and could not touch it. Living outside of society, the hiding people probably stole food and attacked villages. **This** might explain why fairies were often described as playing tricks on humans. Hundreds of years ago, people

actually believed that fairies stole new babies and replaced them with a 'changeling' – a fairy baby – or that they took new mothers and made them feed fairy babies with their milk.

(4) While most people no longer believe in fairies, only a hundred years ago some people were very willing to think they might exist. In 1917, 16-year-old Elsie Wright took two photos of her cousin, nine-year-old Frances Griffiths, sitting with fairies. Some photography experts thought they were fake, while others weren't sure. But Arthur Conan Doyle, the writer of the Sherlock Holmes detective stories, believed they were real. He published the original pictures, and three **more** the girls took for him, in a magazine called *The Strand*, in 1920. The girls only admitted the photos were fake years later in 1983, created using pictures of dancers that Elsie copied from a book.

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false or is the information not given?

1. Fairies are not usually male.

True

False

Not given

2. Newer religions changed how people thought of fairies.

True

False

Not given

3. People used iron to protect themselves from fairies.

True

False

Not given

4. People thought very good babies were presents from the fairies.

True

False

Not given

5. Arthur Conan Doyle created some fake photos.

True

False

Not given

6. Elsie and Frances were surprised Arthur Conan Doyle believed them.

True

False

Not given

Task 2

Circle the best answer.

1. In paragraph 1, the word **they** refers to ...
 - a. fairies.
 - b. children.
 - c. stories.
2. In paragraph 2, the words **these creatures** refer to ...
 - a. tree and rivers.
 - b. the spirits of trees and rivers.
 - c. the Ancient Greek people.
3. In paragraph 2, the word **They** refers to ...
 - a. pagan gods.
 - b. pagan religions.
 - c. Greek and Roman gods.
4. In paragraph 3, the words **this idea** refer to ...
 - a. the idea that fairies were based on people.
 - b. the idea that fairies used metal weapons.
 - c. the idea that fairies used stone tools.
5. In paragraph 3, the word **This** refers to ...
 - a. the fact that fairies were thought to be afraid of iron.
 - b. stolen food.
 - c. the possibility that hiding people stole food and attacked villages.
6. In paragraph 4, the word **more** refers to ...
 - a. the girls.
 - b. the photos.
 - c. the fairies.

Discussion

What stories of little magical people are there in your culture? What are they like?

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