

Sample lesson plan for *Reading for IELTS* Unit 8

Student preparation for this class: Have students complete all of Part 1: Vocabulary before the class. (1 hour)

Teacher preparation: For Vocabulary spot check 3, select and print/cut out a selection of 15 photographs of elderly people. Make sure that there is a variety of types and that it would be possible to use all the adjectives in Vocabulary exercise 3 to describe them. (20 mins)

Part 1: Vocabulary (20–30 mins)

FOCUS These exercises introduce common words and expressions associated with age (young and elderly people), and help learners understand the connotations of adjectives and nouns that describe people's age and relationships.

Spot check 1:

To revise vocabulary from Section 1, have learners discuss what they wrote in Vocabulary exercise 5 in pairs.

1. One learner in each pair reads aloud what they have written and their partner tries to identify the five words they have included from the Vocabulary section.
2. The partner asks questions about the text to clarify and elicit further information.
3. They swap roles and repeat the procedure.
4. Learners then tell the rest of the class any interesting things they have found out about their partner.

Spot check 2:

To develop an understanding of connotation, write the following words on the board: *a couple*, *-ish* (*twelve-ish*), *aspiration*, *scam*, *elderly*, *octogenarian*, *mature*.

1. Learners discuss in pairs any connotations they feel the words have for them. These might include:
a couple: no longer willing to go out and have fun.
-ish: the speaker is uncertain
aspiration: relates to someone who is ambitious
elderly: a fairly respectful way to refer to old people (perhaps old but still active)
octogenarian: someone in their eighties (often positive connotations so perhaps still active)

mature: someone who is not old but no longer youthful

Note that these are not definitions, but possible feelings about or reactions of an individual to the words.

Spot check 3:

To develop a more in-depth understanding of words to describe age, have learners describe a selection of elderly people using the words in Vocabulary exercise 3.

1. Distribute the photographs, one for each learner. If you have more than 15 learners, you will need to put some of them in pairs.
2. Each student writes the number of the adjective from Vocabulary exercise 3 that they feel best describes the person in the photo.
3. They then pass the photos on to another student and select a different adjective to describe the new photo they have received. Continue until everyone has described all the photos.
4. Learners work in groups of four and discuss their choice of adjectives.

Part 2: Practice exercises (25 mins for Exercises 1 & 2; 15 mins for Exercise 3; 25 minutes for Exercises 4 & 5)

FOCUS These exercises train learners to read more efficiently and identify information. Exercises 1 & 2 encourage learners to use prediction to anticipate information. Exercise 3 provides practice in increasing reading speed. Exercises 4 & 5 train learners to answer true/false/not given questions.

Exercise 1

This exercise helps learners to tackle true/false/not given questions by identifying different topics in a text quickly. Direct learners' attention to the Exam information and Exam tip boxes at the top of the page. Point out that the exercises in this unit should be carried out exactly according to the instructions so that they gain the maximum benefit. Have learners read the instructions and discuss as a class before they begin. Point out that although they should read carefully, they should keep going rather than looking back or hesitating if they feel they haven't fully understood something. Learners complete the exercise according to the instructions and discuss the outcome as a class.

Typical mistakes: Most learners find it difficult to increase their reading speed for a variety of reasons. One problem is that they can go from their normal reading speed to 'panic reading' where everything becomes a blur. In this exercise encourage them to read normally, while attempting to read a little faster than usual. More importantly, they shouldn't look back or hesitate (except to tick a topic).

Exercise 2

Direct learners' attention to the Exam tip box in the middle of page 71, which reminds them of the need to predict answers. Explain that prediction can take a variety of forms. In this exercise, thinking of paraphrases helps learners focus on meaning. Point out that in this case, paraphrasing just means 'finding alternative words and phrases', e.g. *quantity* as an alternative to *proportion*. Learners complete the first part and discuss their answers in pairs. Then have them complete the second part of the exercise according to the instructions. Have learners reflect in groups how the prediction helped understanding.

Exercise 3

Direct learners' attention to the Exam tip box at the top of page 72 before they do the speed reading. As in Practice exercise 1, the instructions need to be fully understood before the learners begin. Point out that it would be particularly helpful to use a timer on a smart phone, if they have one, instead of a watch. This means they can stop the timer each time they answer the check question. Have them read the first text according to the instructions and then discuss how it went as a class. When they are ready, have them read the second text in the same way. When they finish, discuss whether and to what extent they improved their reading for the second text.

Typical mistakes: As mentioned in Practice exercise 1, learners might go into 'panic reading' mode unless they are sure what to do. Make it clear that this is not a race, but part of the process of increasing their reading speed. If they have to go back and reread a section, they should not see this as a failure but simply as feedback to help them adjust their reading speed to fit comprehension.

Exercise 4

This exercise prepares learners for the true/false/not given questions in Exercise 5. Direct attention back to the Exam information box at the top of page 70. Highlight the fact that the answers must come from the text. Explain that Exercise 4 just focuses on TRUE or NOT GIVEN answers, as the distinction between these two is not always immediately obvious. Have them

complete the exercise according to the instructions and discuss their answers in pairs before checking with the answer key.

Typical mistakes: Many learners find the NOT GIVEN distinction difficult to understand. As indicated in the key, they often think an answer is true based on their own knowledge, or by making deductions from the text. It is therefore important that they have time to think carefully about their answers by discussing them in pairs.

Exercise 5

Have learners complete the exercise according to the instructions and discuss their answers in pairs before checking the key. Then discuss this activity type as a class and clarify any remaining issues if necessary.

Typical mistakes: Learners may have problems identifying the NOT GIVEN answers, especially as they have both TRUE and FALSE items to deal with this time. It is therefore very useful for them to discuss anything they are still uncertain about. Learners like concrete tips so you can tell them:

- Don't make assumptions – All three NOT GIVEN items, 4, 5, and 6 could be wrongly answered by making assumptions, i.e. that Tesco, Asda and Sainsbury's are the three biggest supermarkets; that creating thousands of new jobs means Morrisons are doing well; that the two thirds of staff they are recruiting over 24 are in a specific age range (25–75).
- Notice modifying words like *only*, *some*, *exactly* – This does not come up in the examples but is a common problem, e.g. *Most students want to get a part-time job* is not the same as: *Students always want to work part time*.
- Don't make use of your own knowledge – you may know that most employees of McDonald's are young, but the text doesn't say so (and you cannot assume that because only 1,000 out of 75,000 are over 60, that most of the rest are under 30).

EXTENSION ACTIVITY (30 MINS)

To help learners understand the difference between what a text actually says and what a reader may take from the text, learners work in groups of four to six.

1. Ask learners to tell you what they remember about the text in Unit 7, Practice exercise 6. Write their ideas on the board as statements.
2. Have learners re-read the text to find which statements are correct.
3. Write *assumptions* and *specific phrases* on the board. Look at the first sentence in the text

EXTENSION ACTIVITY (30 MINS)

as a class and have learners come up with an assumption based on the text. You might need to prompt them to say, for example: '*because of the recession*'. Have them look at the second sentence to find a specific phrase: '*traditional recruiters*'. Write both answers under the appropriate headings.

4. Have learners work in groups to find more examples of both possible assumptions and specific phrases in the text and write them in a list under the appropriate headings.
5. Discuss what each group has come up with as a class and clarify how these assumptions and specific phrases could cause learners to misinterpret the text.

Part 3: Exam practice (30 mins)

This can be assigned for homework. Remind students to look again at the Exam information and tip boxes before completing the Exam practice section.