

Learning tips

Reading: It's all about understanding!

- Don't panic if you don't know the meaning of a word. You don't have to know the meaning of every single word to understand the text.
- Decide which words are important for understanding the text and try to guess what they mean.
- Before answering multiple-choice questions:
 - > Read the questions and the options carefully.
 - > When a question refers to the whole text, avoid options which are true but refer only to a part of the text.
 - > Avoid options which sound logical, but are not mentioned in the text.
 - > Avoid options which include a word/phrase from the text, but do not mean the same thing.
- Before completing a gapped text:
 - > Read the whole text and then the sentences given.
 - > Before deciding which sentence fits a gap in the text, carefully read the sentences before and after each gap and the sentences (options) which have been removed from the text.
 - > Pay special attention to the vocabulary, pronouns (e.g. it, they, this) and words/phrases which link sentences (e.g. however, furthermore) both in the text and in the sentences given. Remember that the sentence you choose for a gap must make sense together with the sentences before and after the gap. The tenses must also fit logically with the tenses used in the text.
- When reading, you sometimes might have to read between the lines. In other words, interpret what the writer means rather than take what is written literally.
- Consider the context and situation carefully. Try to put yourself in the character's position and imagine what he/she might think or how he/she might feel in the specific situation.
- When matching topic sentences with paragraphs:
 - > Read the text to understand the gist.
 - > Then read each paragraph carefully and try to match it with the topic sentence which presents the central idea of the paragraph.
 - > Make sure that the other sentences in the paragraph develop the idea expressed in the topic sentence.

Learning tips

Speaking: Let's talk about it!

- Speak clearly.
- Don't worry if you make a mistake. Correct yourself if you can, otherwise just continue speaking.
- If you can't remember a word, don't stop. Try to use other words.
- When you need more time to think about what to say, use phrases like: 'Well, let's see now' or 'Well, let me think'.
- Help each other if one of you gets stuck, for instance by asking a question.
- Express your opinion and give reasons. Remember, no answer is right or wrong, as long as it is justified.
- When discussing a topic, use a range of vocabulary and structures. Try not to repeat the same words all the time.
- When discussing a topic with someone:
 - > Listen carefully to the other person.
 - > Take turns to speak and when it's your turn to speak, avoid long pauses. Try to keep the conversation going.
 - > If you haven't understood something, ask the speaker to repeat or clarify what he or she said (e.g. Could you please repeat that? / Could you say that again? / What do you mean? / Are you saying that...?).
 - > Don't worry if you disagree with the other person. Express your opinion and give reasons.
 - > Respond to what the other speaker says (e.g. That's a good idea! / I don't know about that.) and show interest (e.g. Really? / Yes?).
 - > Do not answer questions with just a 'Yes', 'No' or 'OK'.
 - > Try not to interrupt the other speaker frequently. If you need to interrupt, do it politely (Hold on. Are you saying that...? / Could I say something before you continue? / Sorry to interrupt, but....).

Learning tips

Listening: Getting the message!

- Read the questions carefully before listening to the recording. This will give you some idea of what you are going to hear and what kind of answers you are looking for.
- While listening try to understand the main points, not every single word. Listen for key words or phrases which can guide you to the correct answer.
- Don't be in a hurry to answer a question immediately. Listen carefully till the end and check all the options before your final decision.
- When listening to a dialogue, pay attention to the speakers' intonation and word stress. They can give you useful information about the speakers' feelings, mood or attitude.
- When answering questions that refer to gist, don't focus on details. Try to understand the general meaning of what is being said.
- When dealing with questions that have three options, try to justify why the answer you have chosen is correct and the other options are incorrect.
- When completing information, check that your answers make sense with the rest of the information given.

Learning tips

Writing: Putting words on paper!

- When writing an informal letter:
 - > Use informal language.
 - > Start a new paragraph for every major point.
 - > Use short forms (I'm, I've, etc.).
 - > Use exclamations (It was great!).
 - > Use direct questions (What are you up to?).
 - > Use expressions like: well, of course, anyway, what's more, actually, as you know, you see, by the way, etc.).
- When writing a formal letter:
 - > Use formal language.
 - > Use linking words/phrases to join your ideas/sentences.
 - > Start a new paragraph for every major point.
 - > Open and close the letter in an appropriate manner (e.g. Dear Sir/Madam, Dear Mrs Wilson, Yours faithfully, Yours sincerely, etc.).
- When writing an essay:
 - > Write in a formal style. Do not use short forms or abbreviations.
 - > Start a new paragraph for every major point.
 - > Avoid using the first person singular.
 - > Avoid including any new ideas in the conclusion.
 - > Use linking words/phrases.
 - > Try to use a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures.
 - > Always justify your ideas and, if possible, use examples to illustrate them.
- When writing an article:
 - > Use different techniques to make it more interesting. Ask questions, include exclamation marks and use a variety of words and expressions.
 - > Start a new paragraph for every major point.
 - > Use the Present Simple when describing an event which takes place regularly.
 - > Use past tenses when describing an event which took place in the past and that you know about or attended.
 - > Use linking words/phrases.
 - > Use the Passive Voice to write in an impersonal way and use the personal pronoun 'you' to be more direct.