

Classroom Activities
ISE I
Reading & Writing

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Skimming techniques - travel information

At a glance

Level: ISE I

Focus: Task 1

Aims: Reading comprehension practice

Objectives: Familiarity with reading comprehensions

Skill: Skimming

Topic: Travel

Language functions: Giving reasons, expressing obligation and necessity

Lexis: Travel

Materials needed: White board, one worksheet per student and pens

Timing: 1 hour

Procedure

Before class preparation

1. Print the worksheet (one per student). Be ready to write the questions below (see Stage 4) on the board.

In class

1. Explain to the students that they are going to practise some techniques to help them with the reading and writing exam, part 1, *reading comprehension* of the ISE Grade I Test.
2. Write **READING** in large letters on the board, ask the students to tell you what words they think of when they see **reading**. Write some good examples on the board (e.g. *books, English, newspapers, computers, magazines, TV, etc.*)
3. Explain to the students that there are so many things around us that we read, reading is really important.
4. Write the following questions on the board:
 - i) **What do you read in (your language)**
 - ii) **How fast do you read?**

- iii) What do you usually do while reading?**
- iv) What do you read in English?**
- v) How fast do you read in English?**
- vi) What would you like to read in English?**
- vii) Why is reading important?**

5. Put the students into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss these questions for around 10 minutes.
6. Ask the students for feedback to the questions. Write some good answers on the board.
7. Now explain to the students that today they are going to work on their reading speed. Tell the students that this is important as in the exam they will need to read quickly.
8. Explain to the students that in Part 1 of the reading test, students will have to answer 5 questions. More specifically, students will have to label the paragraphs with appropriate headings. Tell the students that this uses skimming technique, which is a speed-reading technique. So, you read something very quickly and find out information.
9. Give each student one worksheet. Tell the students that they are going to focus today on skimming. Explain to the students what *skimming* is.

Skimming

This is when you read a text fairly quickly to get the general idea of it and the main points

10. Ask the students to *skim* Texts A-E on the worksheet and to give each text an appropriate heading. Give the students approximately 15 minutes. Go through the answers in open-class. Write up the correct answers on the board.
11. Now ask the students to skim texts A-F on the worksheet and to answer the questions. Give the students approximately 15 minutes. Go through the answers in open-class. Write up the correct answers on the board.

Extension activity

1. Tell the students to ask and answer questions about Text F (the temperature chart), for example

Example: What is the temperature in December in C?

What is the average rainfall in January in inches?

2. In their English books, the students can find a text to skim and explain the main points to their partner.

Further support activity

1. Weaker students can be given extra time to complete the worksheet or they can be asked to read and complete only one or two of the exercises.

After class

1. Ask students to practise their skimming techniques in their daily lives. Ask them to find a newspaper and practise finding the main events as quick as they can.

Skimming techniques – Travel Information

Student worksheet

Below are 6 texts which you are going to skim read. Once you have read the texts, give each one an appropriate heading, then answer the questions

Text A

1. Read the text and add an appropriate heading.
2. Answer the questions below.

Heading: _____

Today, many people prefer to travel independently. Firstly, they decide where they want to go and then think about the details, such as how long they want to stay, where they want to stay, how they will get there, how much it will cost, when they will go and what they need to take.

Answer the following questions

1. How do people like to travel these days? _____
2. What do they decide on first? _____
3. How many other details are mentioned in the text? _____

Text B

1. Read the text and add an appropriate heading.
2. Answer the questions below.

Heading: _____

The time you go depends on what you want to do. For example, if you want to do outdoor activities such as walking, cycling or canoeing then you need to choose a time when the weather is dry. If you prefer a more relaxed holiday spent sunbathing and swimming then the weather should not be too hot.

Answer the following questions.

1. What does the time you go depend on? _____
2. What are some examples of outdoor activities? _____
3. What do you do on a relaxing holiday?

Text C

1. Read the text and add an appropriate heading.
2. Answer the questions below.

Heading: _____

Most people take too much when they travel, travel light is the key! Remember you will have to carry it and heavy luggage soon becomes a nightmare. Take enough clothes (but not too many), a towel, soap, shampoo and your travel documents and money.

Answer the following questions

1. What do most people take when they travel?

2. What is the best solution? _____
3. Which six items should you take with you? _____

Text D

1. Read the text and add an appropriate heading.
2. Answer the questions below.

Heading: _____

Monalos is a lively, noisy place, suitable for young people and those who do not like peace and quiet. The information centre is in the main street (number 50, High Street), and their phone number is 324-5698. They are open every day from 10am to 8pm except Sundays when they are open from 1pm to 4pm.

Answer the following questions

- i) What is the address of the information centre?

- ii) What is their phone number? _____
- iii) What time are they open on Fridays? _____
- iv) What time do they close on Sundays? _____

Text E

1. Read the text and add an appropriate heading
2. Answer the questions below

Heading: Some interesting

The area covers over 2,000 miles and has around 100,000 inhabitants. The coastline is over 500 miles long and there are 54 islands, 22 of which are inhabited. The highest mountain is 3,007ft, and the deepest lake is 700ft below sea level.

Answer the following questions

- i) What is the area? _____
- ii) How many people live there? _____
- iii) How long is the coastline? _____
- iv) How many islands do people live on? _____
- v) What is the highest point? _____

vi) What is the lowest point? _____

Text F

Look at the following temperature chart and find the answers.

Average temperatures and rainfall

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monalos												
C/F	6/43	7/45	9/48	11/52	14/57	16/61	17/63	17/63	15/59	12/55	9/48	7/45
mm	146	109	83	90	72	63	55	22	36	47	120	132
inches	5.8	4.3	3.3	3.5	2.8	2.1	1.8	.9	1.2	1.6	4.0	5.2

- i) What is the average temperature in September in C?

- ii) How much rain falls in February in mm? _____
- iii) How many inches of rain do they receive in May?

- iv) What is the average temperature in August in F?

Skimming techniques, travel information - Answer key

Appropriate headings

Text A – Planning a trip.

Text B – When to go.

Text C – What to take.

Text D – Monalos information

Text E – Possible answers – facts, information, details.....

Answers to questions in texts

Text A

1. Independently
2. Where they want to go
3. How long they want to stay, where they want to stay, how they will get there, how much it will cost, when they will go, what they need to take. 6 other details are mentioned in the text.

Text B

1. What you want to do
2. Walking, cycling, canoeing
3. Sunbathing and swimming

Text C

1. Too much
2. Travel light
3. Clothes, a towel, soap, shampoo, travel documents, money

Text D

1. Number 50, High Street
2. 324-5698
3. From 10am to 8pm
4. 4pm

Text E

1. 2,000 miles
2. 100,000 people
3. 500 miles long
4. 22
5. 3,007ft
6. 700ft below sea level

Text F

1. 15
2. 109
3. 2.8
4. 63

Greeting cards

At a glance

Level: ISE I

Focus: Task 2A

Aims: Students practise reading four texts and matching statements to the relevant text

Objectives: Students can read a text for gist and look for specific information

Skill: Skimming and scanning

Topic: Special occasions

Language functions: Describing events in the indefinite and recent past, giving reasons, quantifying, expressing and requesting opinions and impressions

Lexis: Vocabulary used to talk about text types, special occasions and greeting cards

Materials needed: An example greeting card (this can be made by the teacher), whiteboard, paper and pens and one student worksheet per student

Timing: 40 minutes

Procedure

Before class preparation

1. If possible, find a greetings card to take to the lesson. If not, you can make a very simple card by folding a thin piece of card in half, writing "Happy Birthday" and drawing a flower on the front, and writing a short greeting inside, e.g. "To Maria, Wishing you a very happy birthday, Lots of love, Grandma".
2. Photocopy one worksheet for each student.

In class

1. Tell the students that they are going to do a "Which text? Multiple Matching" task which is similar to part 2A of the ISEI reading test. Tell them that the reading texts are about greeting cards. Hold your example greetings card up in front of the class. Ask students if they know what it is. If not, explain that it is something that people in the

UK and the USA like to send to their friends and family on special occasions.

2. Write "special occasions" on the board. Elicit one special occasion from the class. Put students into small groups, and tell them they have one minute to list all of the special occasions they can think of. Stop them after one minute, elicit all of their answers, and write them on the board. Add the following if they are

Reading and Writing Test

not already on the list: birthdays, Christmas, graduation, new home, engagement.

3. Tell students they are going to read four different texts about greetings cards. Give each student one worksheet. Put the students in pairs and ask them to discuss what kind of text they think text A, B, C or D is and where they would expect to find it. After 2 minutes, discuss as a class.

Example answers:

Text A - A description of the tradition of sending greeting cards. It could be found in a school textbook.

Text B - Infographics on greetings cards. It could be found in a magazine.

Text C - An explanation of how e-cards work. It could be found on the homepage of a website selling e-cards.

Text D - An example greetings card verse. It could be found inside a Mother's Day card.

4. Now ask the students to complete the *Which text? Multiple Matching* questions on the worksheet. Give students 10 minutes to answer the questions individually. Then ask the students to compare their answers in pairs.
5. Go through the answers with the class. Explain any vocabulary the students do not understand.
6. Draw the students' attention to Task B on the worksheet. Ask students to discuss in pairs. Monitor and provide help where necessary. After 10 minutes, briefly elicit some answers from the class.

Extension activity

1. Early finishers during the reading activity can write their own *Which text?* questions.
2. Early finishers during the speaking activity can talk about other special occasions.

Further support activity

2. Weaker students can be given a choice of two texts for each *Which text?* question.

After class

2. For homework, students can be asked to write an email to a friend describing the tradition of sending greeting cards.

Greeting Cards

Student worksheet

Aim: To practice Which text? Multiple Matching (Part 2A of the ISEI Reading Test)

Read the following texts about greetings cards, then answer the questions below.

Text A

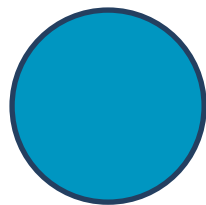
Over 2 billion greeting cards are sold in the UK each year. People in the UK send more cards per capita than any other nation. The greetings cards industry is also big in the US, but the custom is not consistently observed anywhere else.

Cards are sent to celebrate many types of occasion such as birthdays, Christmas, graduation, new home, engagement, and even divorce. Greeting cards come in different shapes, sizes and styles, including humorous cards, photo cards, artistic cards, and handmade cards.

Even in the age of social media, greeting cards continue to play a significant role in UK culture. People still want to celebrate special occasions with their loved ones and to mark many of life's important moments by sending a card.

Text B

Greeting Cards - Facts and figures



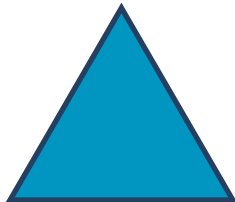
£1372 million
Total market value



£1.42
Average retail price of a card



£42.5 million
Amount spent on Valentine's Day cards



3% Rise in sales in 2012 compared to 1993

Text C

Welcome to ecards 4 u!

We have 100s of greeting cards that can be easily personalised by changing the text or uploading a photo. You'll find a wide variety of cards, including Birthday Cards, Christmas Cards, Congratulations Cards, Good Luck Cards, Thank You Cards, and Sympathy Cards.

Ecards 4 u is the perfect place to create and send thoughtful, funny and custom-made cards. You can also set reminders for special occasions.

Ecards cost £1.50 to send by email and £3.50 to send by post. Cards are sent by email within 3 hours, and by post the next working day.

Text D

My darling mum, you're everything to me.

Thanks to you I am happy and free.

You've made me who I am today,

by supporting me in every way.

Together we have laughed and cried,

you've always been there by my side.

I'll be there for you until the end

because you're my mum and my best friend.

Questions

A. Read questions 1-5 first and then read the four texts again. As you read each text, decide which text each question refers to. You can use any letter more than once.

Which text...

- a) advertises cards that can be sent electronically?
- b) tells you how many cards are bought annually in the UK?
- c) shows the kind of text that can be found inside a greeting card?
- d) gives the price of personalised greeting cards?
- e) compares the sales of greeting cards in two different years?

B. Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions in pairs.

- a) Have you ever sent or received a greeting card? Who was it to/ from?
For what occasion?
- b) Did anything that you learnt about greeting cards today surprise you?
What?/Why?
- c) Do you think that divorce cards are a good idea? Why?/Why not?
- d) What is your favourite special occasion and how do you usually
celebrate it?

Answers

A.

- a) C
- b) A
- c) D
- d) C
- e) B

Websites used:

<http://www.greetingscards.co.uk/helpdesk/additional-information/the-history-of-greetings-cards>

<http://www.greetingcardassociation.org.uk/resources/for-publishers/the-market/facts-and-figures>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18020006>

<http://www.moonpig.com/uk/>

<http://www.craftsuprint.com/card-verses/>

Best ways to learn a language – Writing an essay

At a glance

Level: ISE I

Focus: Task 2B

Aims: Writing a planned essay of 100-130 words based on 3 reading texts

Objectives: Finding important information, writing a plan based on given information and writing an essay step-by-step

Skill: Understanding and identifying specific information, writing notes and formulating an essay using notes

Topic: Learning a foreign language and essay writing

Language functions: Describing, explaining and making suggestions based on short reading texts in written form

Lexis: Learning a foreign language

Materials needed: One worksheet per student

Timing: 1 hour

Procedure

Before class preparation

1. Print one worksheet per student.

In class

1. Explain to the class that they are going to learn some techniques for helping them with the "Reading into Writing" task (2B) of the ISE I Writing Test. Tell students that they are going to read 3 short texts about learning a foreign language and then write a 100-130 word essay about what they have read.
2. Ask the students about how they feel about learning a foreign language. What do they find easy or difficult? What are the best ways to learn?

3. Ask the class to read Text 1 which offers advice, suggestions, tips and techniques for learning a foreign language. Give the students 3 minutes to read the text.

4. Now, with a partner or in a small group of up to 4 students, ask the students to find and write down 1 important word from each of the 5 points made in the text.

Possible answers: Vocabulary, grammar, apps, friend, films

5. Now ask the students to remember as much as they can about each point and tell their partner.

6. Now ask the class to read Text 2 which shows the different stages of learning to speak a second language. Give the students approximately 5 minutes to do this.

7. With a partner or in a small group of up to 4 students, ask the students to find and write down some important information from each of the 5 categories (6 months, 1 year, 1-2 years, 2-4 years, 5 years)

Possible answers: 6 months – silence: very few words understood or spoken; 1 year – few words spoken and used; 1-2-years – sentence use; 2-4 years – good sentence use; 5 years – advanced, very good use of sentences

8. Now ask the students to do the same with Text 3. Find and write down an important piece of information from each of the 5 students.

Possible answers: Pablo – some English every day, Silvia – reading, Tom – Skype, Anna – vocabulary, Darius – films.

9. Now with their partner or in a small group ask the students to discuss what they wrote down and try to remember as much as they can.
10. Now explain to the students that they are going to practise writing notes, then writing an essay step-by-step, using the texts they have read.
11. Tell the students to read the exam question and discuss exactly what they need to do with their partner.
12. It is important for students to practise how to write a plan and think carefully about the writing process. With this in mind, work your way through the different Exam question stages (on the worksheet) with the students.

Extension activity

1. The more advanced students can write the essay by themselves.

Further support activity

1. The weaker students can practise making their own sentences using the key words from the texts. They can also be given the keywords to help them with this.

After class

1. Ask students to research the best ways to learn a foreign language and to write a short essay on the information they have found.

Best ways to learn a language – writing an essay

Student worksheet

Text 1

1. Read text 1 in 3 minutes. Find and write down 1 important word from each of the 5 points.
2. Now read it again and try to remember as much as you can about it and tell your partner.

Learning a language – Advice, suggestions, tips and techniques

Apps, films, friends and Skype

1. Vocabulary: try to remember around 2,000 basic words and phrases. Make it fun with 5 to 10 minutes of memorisation each day. You will improve rapidly, try it with a friend!
2. Learn the grammar, take it step-by-step and practise forming sentences.
3. Find free language learning apps on your phone, you can learn the language anywhere you are.
4. Find a friend to practise with. You can speak together which will improve your confidence and ability, and will also encourage you to.... You can also do this over Skype.
5. Learn from films, find a film you want to watch and watch it in English. You can learn a lot from this.

Text 2

Read text 2 in 5 minutes. Find some important information from each of the 5 categories (6 months, 1 year, 1-2 years, 2-4 years, 5 years) and write it down.

Stages of learning to speak a second language

6 months	1 year	1-2 years	2-4 years	5 years
Silent stage	Can speak a little	Starting to speak in sentences	Can speak in sentences well, Intermediate level	Can speak very well, Advanced level
Uses very few words	Uses a few words	Uses basic sentences	Uses a range of sentences	Uses a wide range of sentences
Can understand some words	Can understand and respond a little	Can understand and respond, making mistakes, but this is good as it means there is improvement	Uses the language to communicate well	Can communicate very well

Text 3

1. Read text 3 in 5 minutes. Find and write down an important piece of information from each student (Pablo, Silvia, Tom, Anna, Darius)
2. Discuss what you wrote down with your partner or in a small group, try to remember as much as you can!

Advice from language learners

I asked some successful students for their suggestions on how to improve language learning. This is what they said:

- @Pablo - Speak or listen to some English every day, listen to some English music and sing the words!
- @Silvia - I think reading is the best way, look online for something you're interested in
- @Tom - I use Skype, sometimes I message my friends, sometimes we talk
- @Anna - I think learning vocabulary is the most important, I sit with my dictionary and write down new words, and then I try to remember them. Often, I do this with my friends, it's fun!
- @Darius - I love English films, I listen carefully to them and try to remember the pronunciation of the words and sentences!

Exam Question

Read the following exam question

Your school is doing a project on the best ways to learn English and you have been asked to write a short essay for your English teacher (**100-130** words) about some useful suggestions, how long learning a language takes and how students can improve. Use the information you read in the previous exercises to:

- Describe some of the techniques given to improve your English.
- Explain approximately how long it takes to learn a foreign language
- Suggest how you think students can best improve their learning of a foreign language

Plan your essay before you start writing. Think about what you want to say and make some notes in the box below:

Writing a plan

It is important to organise your ideas, this will make your writing good and clear. You need to spend around 10 minutes writing notes in the box given.

1. Write notes on the first part of the question (spend only 3 minutes on this)
 - Describe some of the techniques given to improve your English.

Planning notes:

2. Now decide which are the important ideas.
3. How many ideas are good to use for around 40 words?

4. Write the first part of the essay

5. Now write notes on the second part of the question. Spend only 3 minutes on this

- Explain approximately how long it takes to learn a foreign language

Planning notes

6. How many ideas do you have?

7. Which ones are you going to use?

8. Now write the second part of the essay

9. Now write notes on the third part of the essay. Spend only 3 minutes on this

- Suggest how you think students can best improve their learning of a foreign language

Planning notes

10. How many ideas do you have?
11. Which ones are you going to use?
12. Now write the third part of the essay

Model answer for best ways to learn a foreign language

Some of the useful suggestions about how to learn a foreign language are learning vocabulary, learning grammar step-by-step, use language apps on phones, practise with a friend and watch films in English.

It takes around 5 years to learn to speak a second language to an advanced level. At 6 months very few words are used, at 1 year, more words are used, from 1-2 years sentences are used with mistakes. From 2-4 years is Intermediate level, a range of sentences are used.

My own suggestions are to speak some English every day, or listen to some music you like. You can find a friend to practise with and have fun with vocabulary memory games. I also like to watch films in English and copy the words and sentences.

Writing: Thank you for the music

At a glance

Level: ISE II

Focus: Writing 3

Aims: To develop writing skills by planning and writing an essay on the role of music in the students' own culture

Objectives: To plan an essay on the role of music by giving brief answers to a set of questions, to write an essay with an appropriate main body and conclusion and to write an essay by using cohesive devices accurately

Topic: Music

Language functions: Giving reasons, opinions and preference, and expressing and expanding ideas and opinions

Grammar: Cohesive devices

Lexis: Music

Materials needed: Whiteboard, one worksheet per student, pens and blank paper, dictionaries

Timing: Approximately 60 minutes

Procedure

Before class preparation

1. Print one worksheet per student.

In class

1. Explain to the class that they will be doing a writing activity which will help them to prepare for writing task 3 of the ISE II exam.
2. Tell the students that the topic of today's lesson is 'Music'. Write the following three questions on the board and ask the class to discuss them in pairs.
 - *Is music important for you?*
 - *What kinds of music do you like?*
 - *What effect does music have on your feelings?*

After five minutes, discuss these questions as a class.

3. Elicit from the students the three parts of a typical essay. Write the answers on the whiteboard (introduction, body, and conclusion). Elicit from the students which two parts are shorter and which is the longer one.
4. Ask the students what they should include in an introduction. Write the answer on the whiteboard (introduction to the topic and context).
5. Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Ask the students to read the introduction of Task A (mind-map) and elicit what the topic and context are. Write the answers on the whiteboard (topic: music; context: the role of music in my own culture).
6. Tell the students that the mind-map under Task A will help them organize their writing. Tell the students that they should answer the questions for each part. Tell the students they don't need to write full sentences and that they can just write down key words. Ask the students to work alone. Monitor and assist if necessary.
7. When they are finished, tell the students to swap their mind-maps with another student and to add one short answer to each question. Tell the students to give the mind-map back and explain the new information in pairs. Do group feedback and put any new vocabulary on the board.
8. Write "linking words" on the board and elicit some examples. Ask students what the function is of these words. Write down "in addition" and "in summary" and elicit which of these linking words can be found in the conclusion. Tell the students to complete Task B. Tell students that the task has examples of linking words for expanding such as 'in addition' and summarising such as 'in summary'. Ask the students to write sentences using the cohesive devices.
9. Ask students to write sentences on the board that give one example for each cohesive device. Make the students aware of any errors as they arise and correct them.
10. Give each student a blank piece of paper and ask them to write an essay on the role of music in their culture that has one or two paragraphs and a conclusion. The total word count should be approximately 250 words. Tell the students they should use the mind-map and they should focus on using cohesive devices for expanding and summarising appropriately. They can keep the introduction that is used in the mind-map. The students can also use a dictionary.

11. Monitor and correct errors. Write up any common errors on the board.
12. When the students have finished writing, ask them to swap their text with another student and tell them to complete Task C. When they have finished reading their partner's work they complete the checklist and write a brief comment of one or two sentences about the essay.
13. Carry out group feedback and ask students to read out loud the comment and elicit whether they agree with the comment or not. Ask the students to reflect on how they could improve in the future.
14. Ask the students to look at the common errors you have written on the board. Ask students to discuss each error with their partner and to correct the sentences. Then give open-class feedback.

Extension activity

1. Ask the students to have a discussion in groups of four. Tell them that two students are of the opinion that music is not important in their culture and the other two think that music is important.
2. Ask students to rewrite the introduction.

Further support activity

1. Ask weaker students to write example sentences using only a few of the linking words.
2. Allow weaker students to write only one paragraph for the main body.
3. Put weaker students in pairs and ask them to each write one of the paragraphs in the body. Ask them to read each other's paragraph and then use the information to write the conclusion together.
4. Ask weaker students to do the brainstorm together.

After class

1. Ask the students to look online or in a book for a culture where music plays a very important role. Ask the students to report back in the next class.
2. Ask students to rewrite the essay but now change the topic to the importance of art in general. Tell the students to bring the completed essay with them in the next class.

STUDENT WORKSHEET

WRITING: THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN MY CULTURE

Task A: Mind-map

Introduction

It is fairly safe to say that music is part of every culture. However, the importance of music varies from culture to culture. This essay looks at the role music has to play in my own culture.

Body – paragraph 1

What role does music play in your culture?

-
-

Is there a preference for singing, dancing, performing, ...?

-
-

On what occasions do people in your culture listen to music?

-
-

What genres are popular?

-
-

Body – paragraph 2

How does music affect people?

-
-

How important is music for young people?

-
-

How important is music for older people?

-
-

Other information?

-
-

Conclusion

How important is music in your culture?

-
-

Task B: Linking Words

Write a sentence for each linking word.

Expanding

1. additionally:

2. also:

3. furthermore:

4. in addition:

5. moreover:

Summarising

1. in conclusion:

2. to conclude:

3. in summary:

4. to sum up:

Task C: Checklist

Read your partner's text and complete the checklist. Circle either Y (Yes) or N (No).

My partner has written a main body paragraph.	Y/N
My partner has included 2/3 linking words.	Y/N
My partner has written a conclusion.	Y/N
My partner has written a total of 250 words.	Y/N
Write a comment of one or two sentences about your partner's work: 	