



VI Symposium

ASSESSING MATHS AND ENGLISH

Reading strategies for success in the secondary classroom

David Bradshaw & Ben Fedigan



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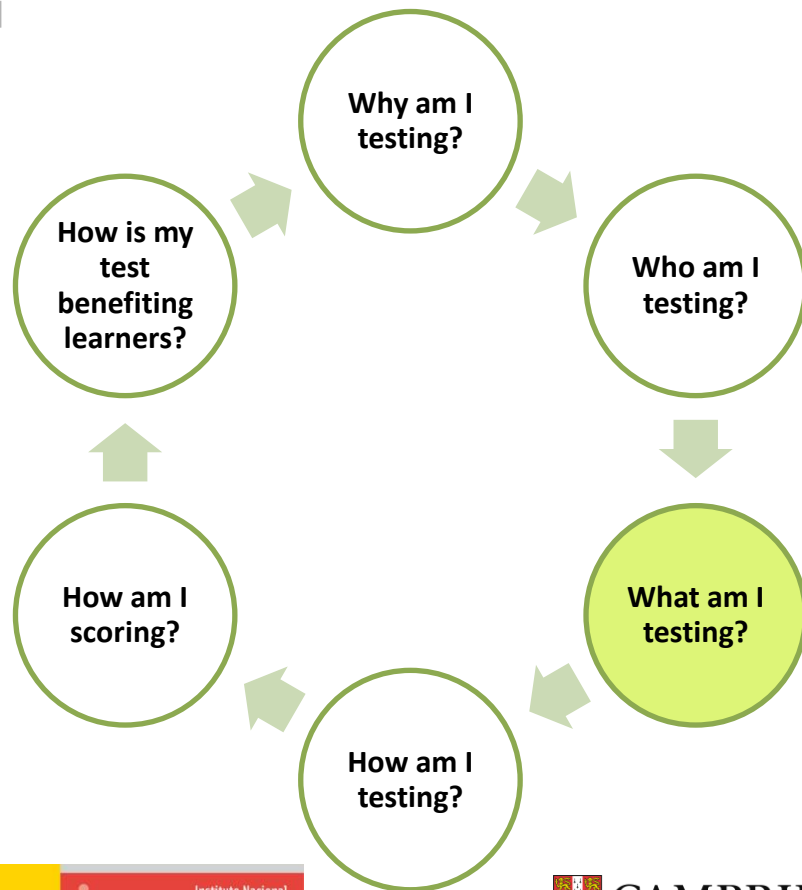
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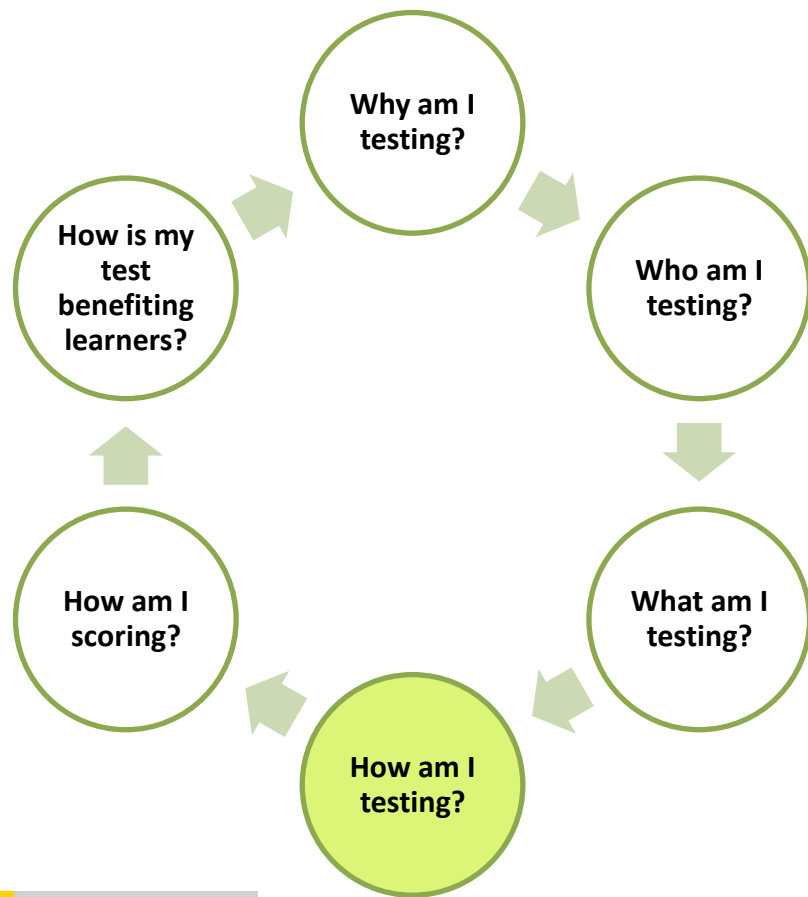


Our aim today



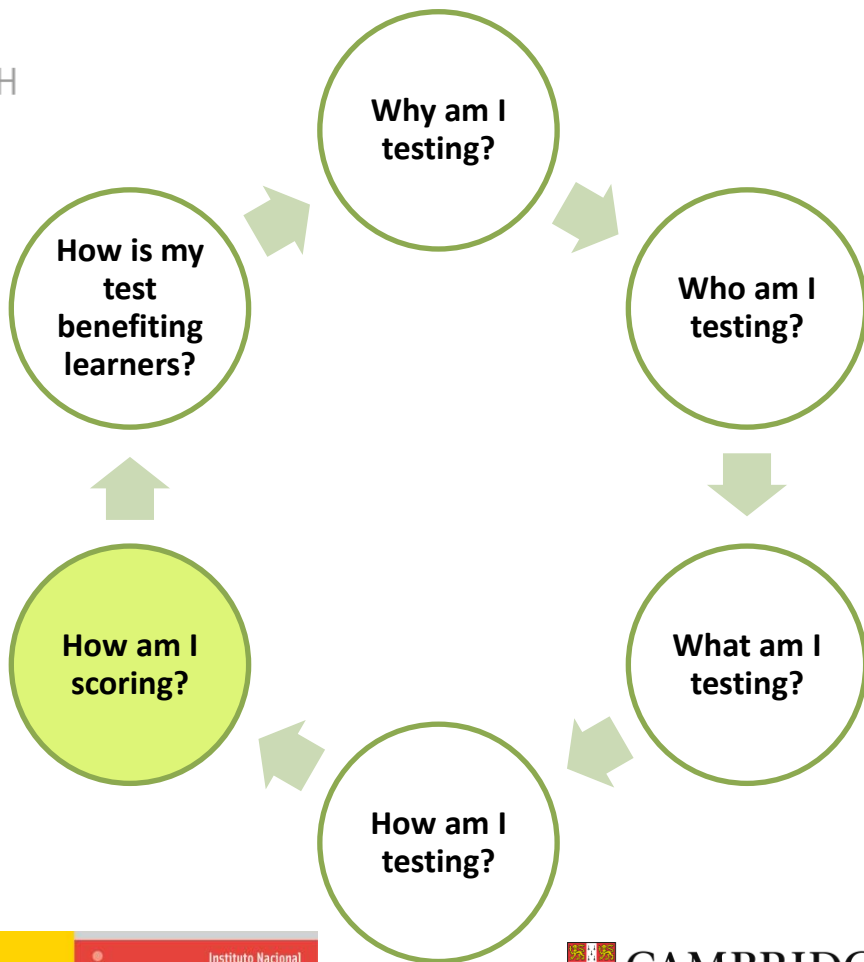


Our aim today





Our aim today





When creating a reading task, what should you be aware of?



**the aspects of
the skill to
assess**

**scoring
questions**

**students'
characteristics**

**the
characteristics
of the texts**

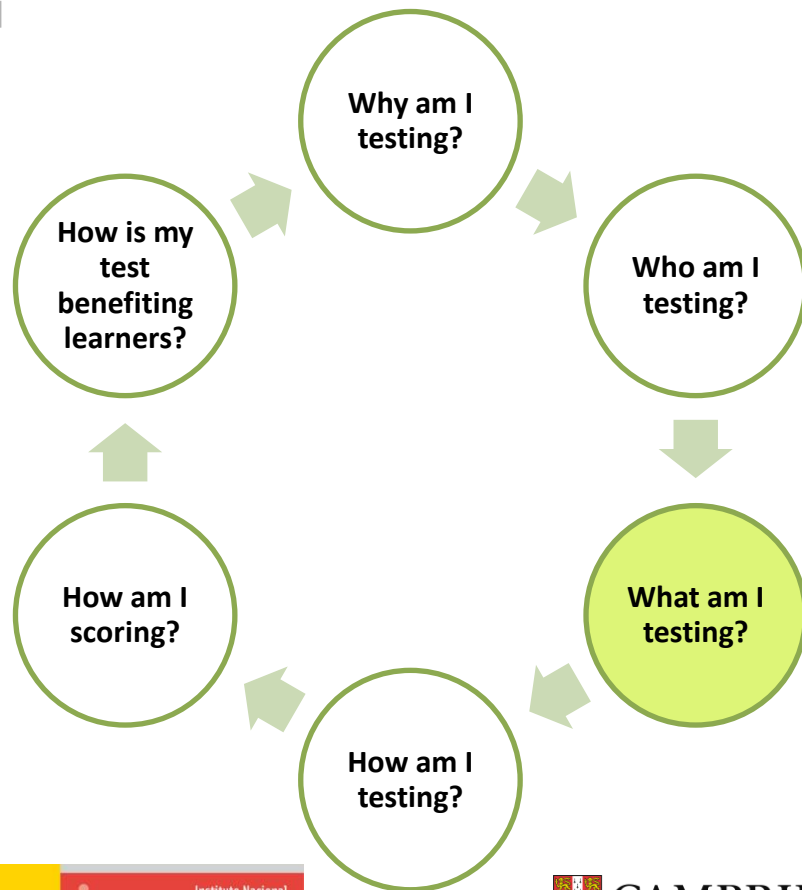
**advantages and
disadvantages of
different task
types**

**assessing students
at different levels
of ability**





Our aim today





How do we read in real life?

Which reading skills do you use when you read:

A. a timetable?





How do we read in real life?

Which reading skills do you use when you read:

- A. a timetable?
- B. a newspaper?





How do we read in real life?

Which reading skills do you use when you read:

- A. a timetable?
- B. a newspaper?
- C. a poem?





Types of reading

Careful
reading

Linear
and slow

Fast
reading

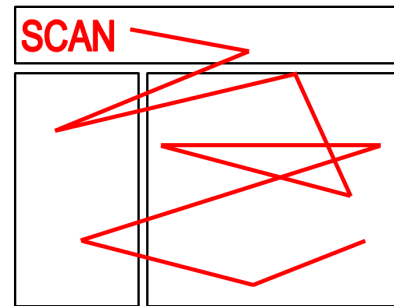
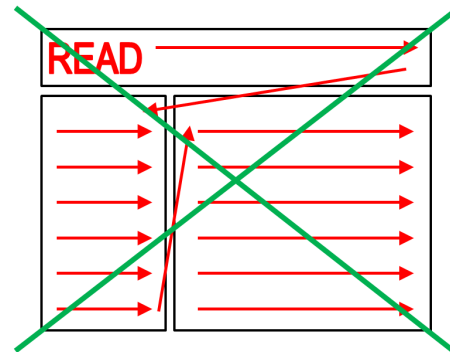
Skimming

Scanning

Search
reading



What am I testing?





Activity 1: which type of reading?

Read the questions first. Then read the next four passages about four cities quickly and selectively to find the answers.

1. In which city was a new theatre built recently?
2. Which city has the largest percentage of postgraduate students?





Activity 2: which type of reading?

You are going to read part of the autobiography of a surfing instructor. For questions 1–9, choose from the sections A–E. You have 5 minutes to complete these questions.

In which section does the writer mention:

1. feeling satisfaction that her determination resulted in better performance?
2. a change that helped her pursue her hobby?





Activity 3: which type of reading?

You have 1 minute to quickly read through the 1,000-word article and respond to the following question:

What is this text about?

- A.
- B.
- C.





Activity 4: which type of reading?

Read this extract from a novel. For questions 31–36 choose the correct answer.

Question 33

What does the writer suggest about Sandy's clothes?

- A. They made it unlikely that she would be spotted.
- B. She was wearing them because she belonged to a skiing team.
- C. They were too heavy for the conditions.
- D. She had chosen them with care.





Practise with your students

Practise
switching
between
careful and fast
reading in one task

Introduce other fast
reading subskills

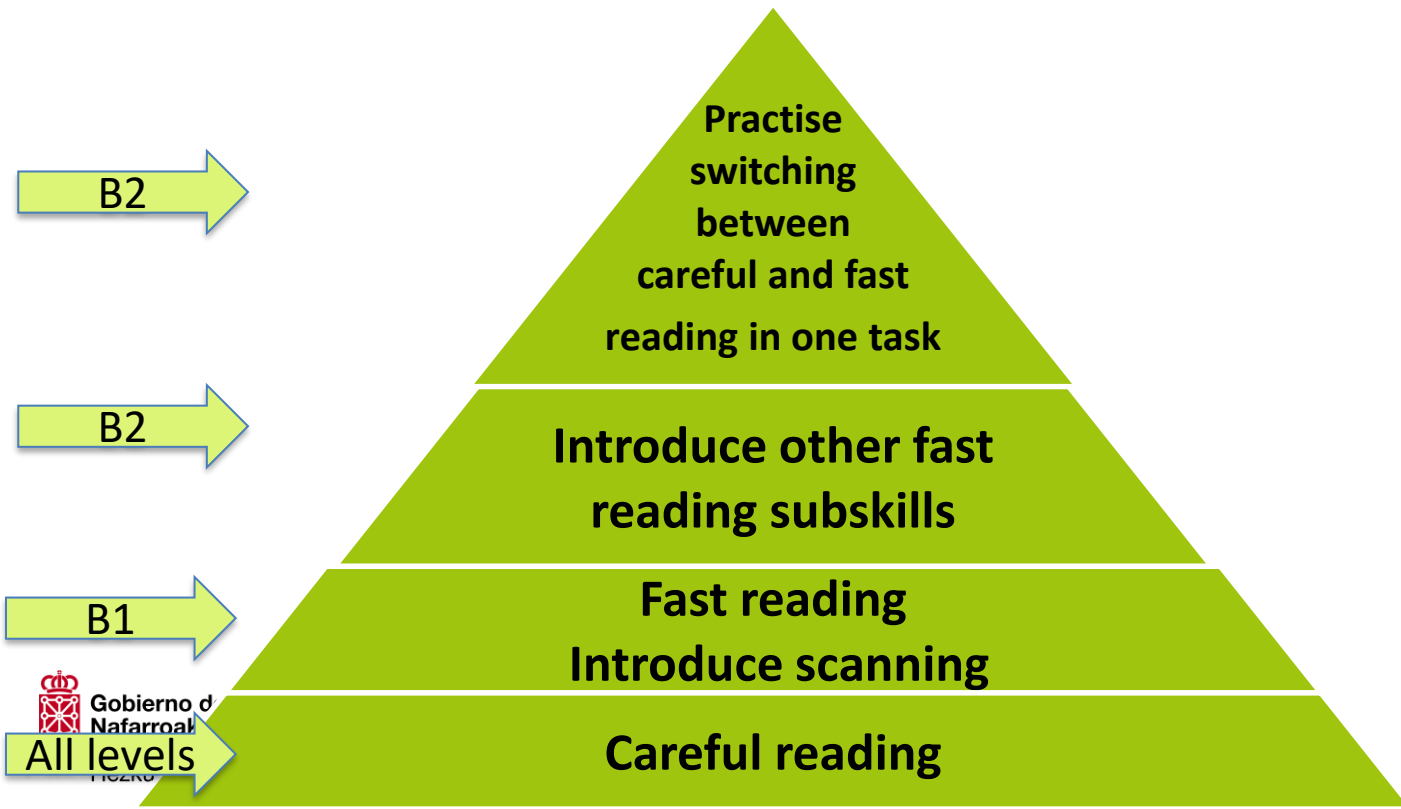
Fast reading
Introduce scanning

Careful reading





Practise with your students





Training scanning

- 1) Departure/arrival point for long journeys
- 2) Mobile home
- 3) A study of the past
- 4) The world-wide web
- 5) The first month of the western calendar
- 6) A get-together for a celebration
- 7) Flowers, herbs, shrubs
- 8) Your arms hang from these!
- 9) Dawn
- 10) Animal footprints

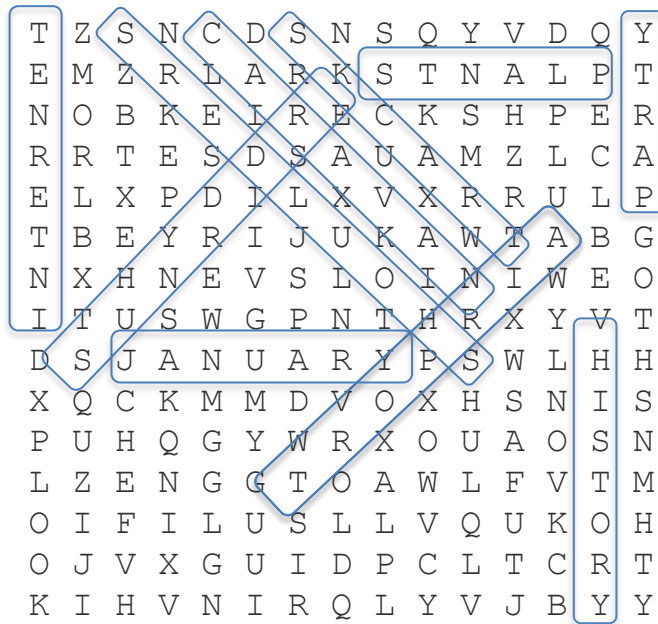
T Z S N C D S N S Q Y V D Q Y
 E M Z R L A R K S T N A L P T
 N O B K E I R E C K S H P E R
 R R T E S D S A U A M Z L C A
 E L X P D I L X V X R R U L P
 T B E Y R I J U K A W T A B G
 N X H N E V S L O I N I W E O
 I T U S W G P N T H R X Y V T
 D S J A N U A R Y P S W L H H
 X Q C K M M D V O X H S N I S
 P U H Q G Y W R X O U A O S N
 L Z E N G G T O A W L F V T M
 O I F I L U S L L V Q U K O H
 O J V X G U I D P C L T C R T
 K I H V N I R Q L Y V J B Y Y





Training scanning

- 1) Departure/arrival point for long journeys
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Improving reading fluency (speed) and accuracy

Not every word is equally as important. Some words are critical to the sentence and cannot be removed, while others can be removed without much loss in meaning. One key to speed reading is learning to identify and prioritise your focus on those important words.

<http://hackmystudy.com/how-to-speed-read-and-comprehend-1/>





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Repeated timed readings





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What am I testing?

Repeated timed readings



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What am I testing?

Cognitive processes
during reading
comprehension



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What am I testing?

What do we do when we read?



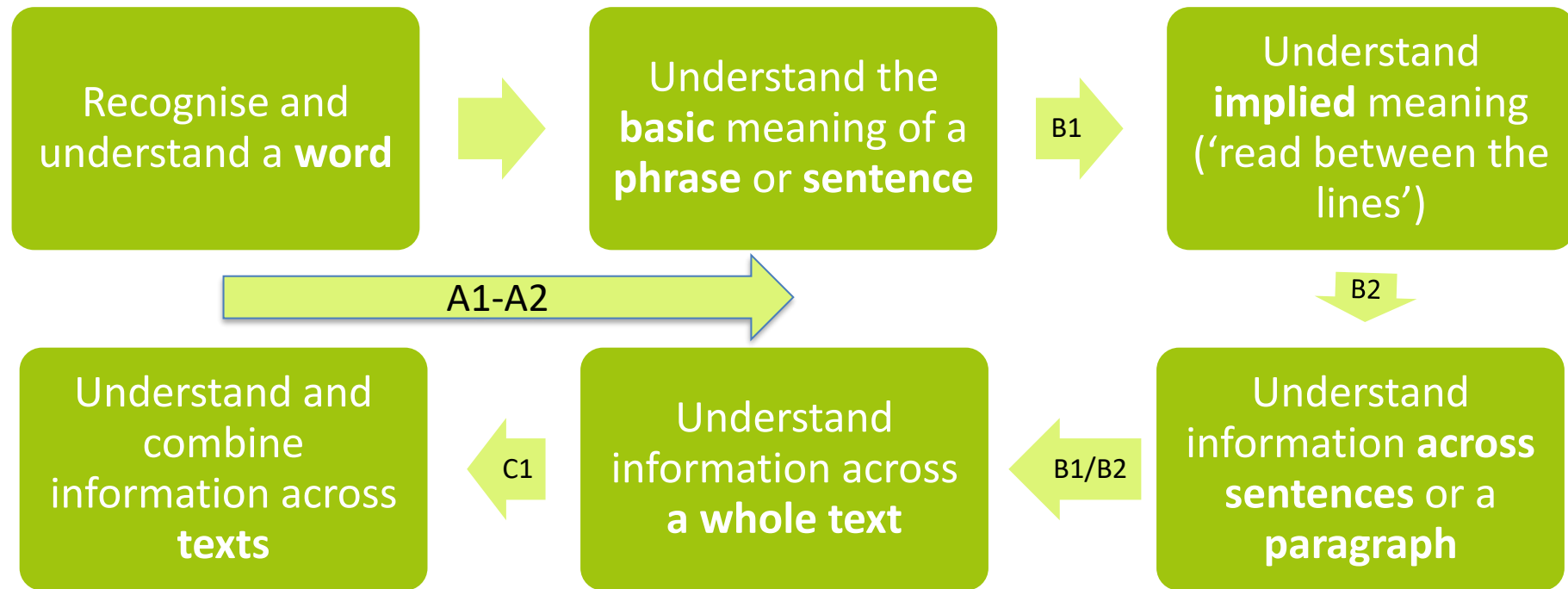
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What do we do when we read?





Skilled readers...

set goals and decide
on skills to use

monitor their own
comprehension

use knowledge and
make predictions

re-read, where
necessary





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Developing reading skills

Spectacled bears



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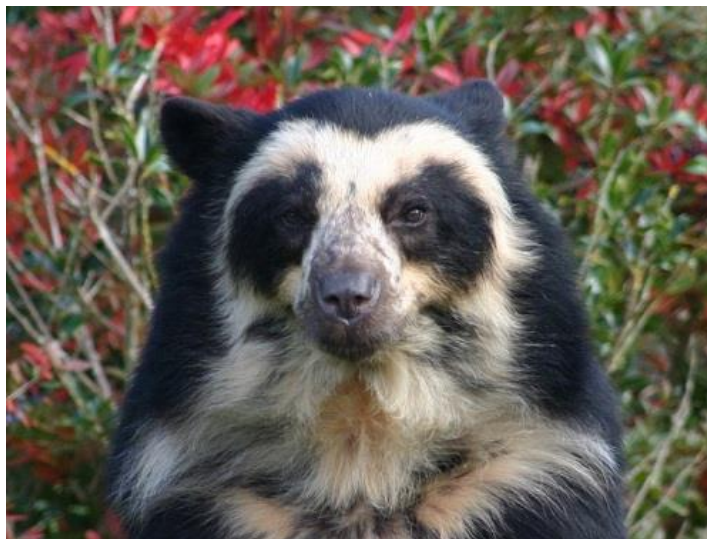


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Developing reading skills

Spectacled bears



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Task 1: which cognitive processes?

‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

From Carroll (1872) Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There

Question 1: What did the toves do?

- a) They wabed.
- b) They gyred and gimbled.
- c) They brilliged.





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Question 1: What did the toves do?

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Task 2: which cognitive processes?

`Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Question 2: Which word describes the raths?





Task 3: which cognitive processes?

'Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!'
He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought.
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

Question 3.

What did the son in this poem intend to do?

- A. He intended to play with the Jabberwock.
- B. He intended to take a nap under the Tumtum tree.
- C. He intended to attack the Jabberwock.





Task 4: which cognitive processes?

You are going to read four reviews of a book. For questions 1–4 choose from reviews A–D.

Which reviewer:

1. has a different opinion from the others on Smith's work?
2. expresses a similar view to reviewer B on modern architecture?





The most challenging task(s)?

Which of the last four tasks is the most challenging?

Task 1

Task 2

Task 3

Task 4





The most challenging task(s)?

Which of the last four tasks is the most challenging?

Task 1

Task 2

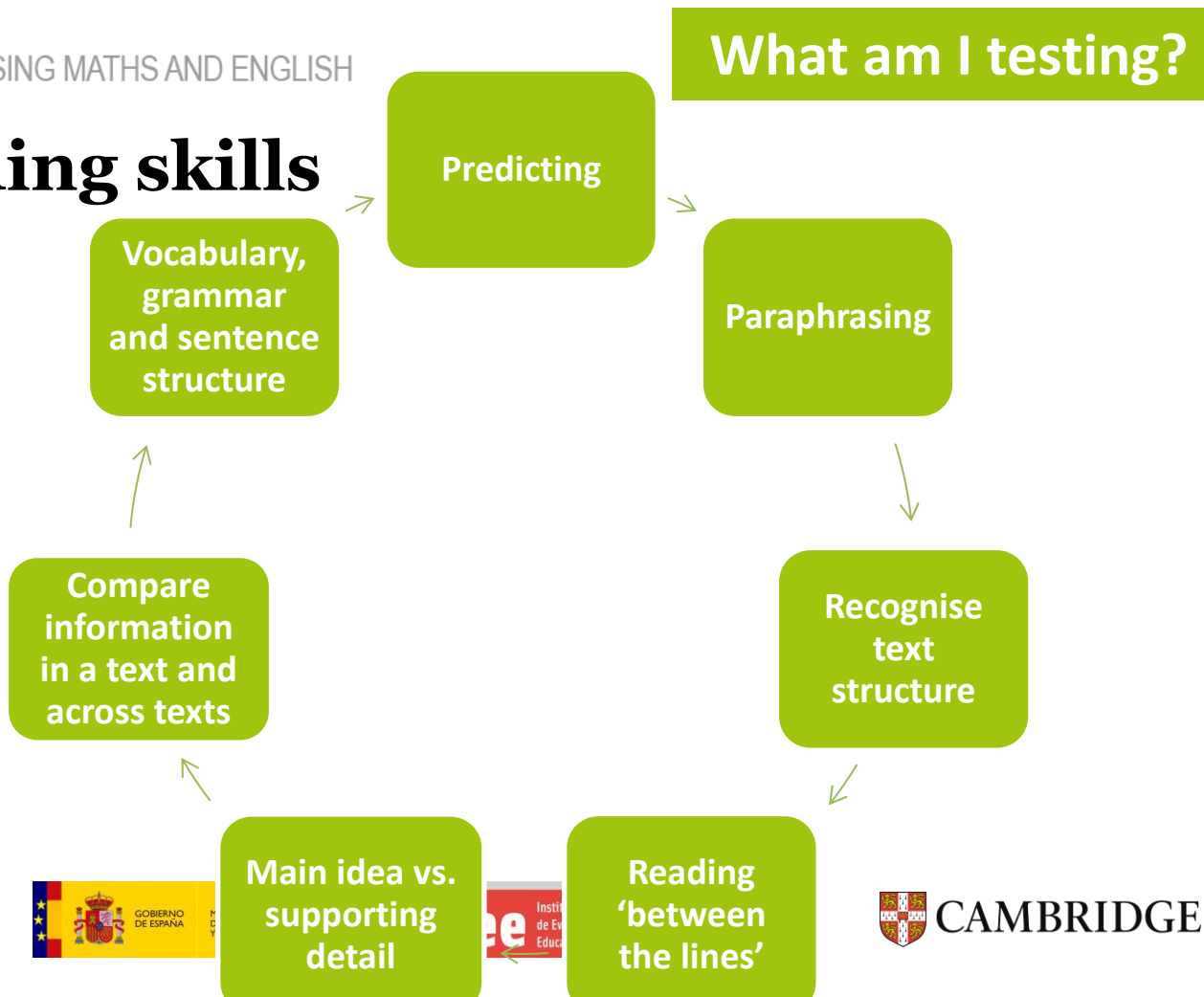
Task 3

Task 4





Practising reading skills





Practising metacognitive skills: predicting content

What helps your students predict the content of a text?





Practising metacognitive skills: predicting content

Title

Pictures

What helps your students predict the content of a text?

Text type

Background knowledge





Practising metacognitive skills: setting goals

How should I read
this text? Carefully?
Quickly?

Are there any clues
that I can use?

Do I have to pull
information from the
entire text rather
than just from one
sentence or
paragraph?





Practising metacognitive skills: setting goals

How did the writer's attitude change during the passage?





Practising metacognitive skills: monitoring understanding

- ✓ Predict
- ✓ Set goals
- ✓ Monitor your own understanding
- ✓ Reread, if necessary





Practising metacognitive skills: monitoring understanding

- ✓ Predict
- ✓ Set goals
- ✓ Monitor your own understanding
- ✓ Reread, if necessary

but...

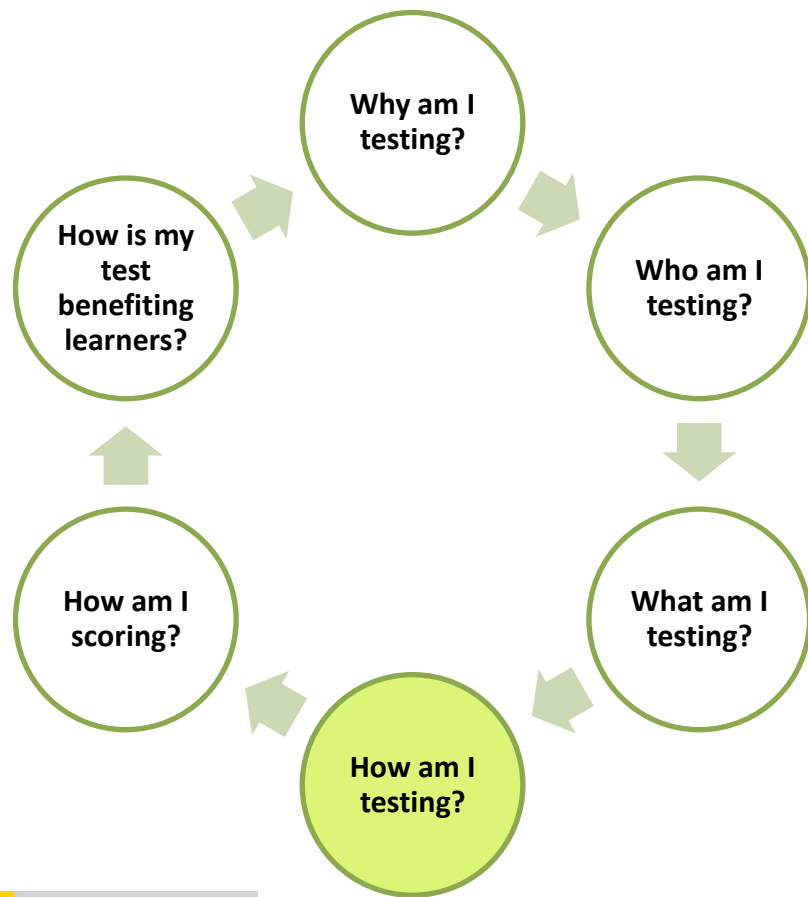
- ✓ Don't dwell on unfamiliar words





How am I testing?

What are the Reading test tasks?





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Reading comprehension: text types



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What do you read in everyday life?

What do you usually read? (in English or another language)?





What do you read in everyday life?

What do you usually read? (in English or another language)?

extracts from
books (fiction &
non-fiction)

correspondence:
text messages,
emails...

newspaper &
magazine
articles

public signs and
notices

advertisements

informational
material:
brochures,
guides, manuals





What do you read in everyday life?

What are the differences between the types of material you read?





What do you read in everyday life?

subject matter
(specialised /
general)

style (formal /
informal)

text structure

length

nature of
information
(concrete /
abstract)

language

purpose





Task difficulty: topic / type of information

LESS DIFFICULT

MORE DIFFICULT



Personal

Non-personal

Familiar

Unfamiliar

Concrete

Abstract

No specialist knowledge
required

Specialist knowledge
required



Task difficulty: language

LESS DIFFICULT

MORE DIFFICULT



Simple sentences only

Complex sentences

Short sentences only

Long sentences

Common, highly frequent words
only

Complex and sophisticated
words





Task difficulty: discourse mode

LESS DIFFICULT

MORE DIFFICULT



Simple text structure and
language

Description

Narration

Instruction

Complex text structure and
language

Description

Narration

Instruction

Exposition

Argumentation





Task difficulty: example

Museum trip

Students who have not booked this trip should come to school as normal.

Abstract information

Reviews of a book about how architecture can affect the emotions

The Architecture of Happiness

Four reviewers comment on philosopher Alain De Botton's book

A

Alain de Botton is a brave and highly intelligent writer who writes about complex subjects, clarifying the arcane for the layman. Now, with typical self-assurance, he has turned to the subject of architecture. The essential theme of his book is how architecture influences mood and behaviour. It is not about the specifically architectural characteristics of space and design, but much more about the emotions that architecture inspires in the users of buildings. Yet architects do not normally talk nowadays very much about emotion and beauty. They talk about design and function. De Botton's message, then, is fairly simple but worthwhile precisely because it is simple, readable and timely. His commendable aim is to encourage architects, and society more generally, to pay more attention to the psychological consequences of design in architecture: architecture should be treated as something that affects all our lives, our happiness and well-being.

B

Alain de Botton raises important, previously unasked, questions concerning the quest for beauty in architecture, or its rejection or denial. Yet one is left with the feeling that he needed the help and support of earlier authors on the subject to walk him across the daunting threshold of architecture itself. And he is given to making extraordinary claims: 'Architecture is perplexing ... in how inconsistent is its capacity to generate the happiness on which its claim to our attention is founded.' If architecture's capacity to generate happiness is inconsistent, this might be because happiness has rarely been something architects think about. De Botton never once discusses the importance of such dull, yet determining, matters as finance or planning laws, much less inventions such as the lift or reinforced concrete. He appears to believe that architects are still masters of their art, when increasingly they are cogs in a global machine for building in which beauty, and how de Botton feels about it, are increasingly beside the point.

C

In *The Architecture of Happiness*, Alain de Botton has a great time making bold and amusing judgements about architecture, with lavish and imaginative references, but anyone in search of privileged insights into the substance of building design should be warned that he is not looking at drain schedules or pipe runs. He worries away, as many architects do, at how inert material things can convey meaning and alter consciousness. Although he is a rigorous thinker, most of de Botton's





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Reading comprehension: task types



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Selected-response task types

- Multiple choice
- Multiple matching
- True / False or Right / Wrong / Doesn't say
- Gapped text tasks with missing words / sentences / paragraphs and fixed answer options





(Semi-) productive task types

- Gapped text tasks with missing words or phrases
- Gapped text information transfer





Productive task types

- Short answer questions
- Integrated reading and writing or reading and speaking





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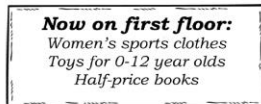
Which task type is this?

Questions 1 – 6

For each question, choose the correct answer.

Part 1

1



Go upstairs if you want to

- A buy a dress for a party.
- B pay less for something to read.
- C find a game for a teenager.



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Part 5

You are going to read the introduction to a book about the history of colour. For questions 31 – 36, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Introduction to a book about the history of colour

This book examines how the ever-changing role of colour in society has been reflected in manuscripts, stained glass, clothing, paintings and popular culture. Colour is a natural phenomenon, of course, but it is also a complex cultural construct that resists generalization and, indeed, analysis itself. No doubt this is why serious works devoted to colour are rare, and rarer still are those that aim to study it in historical context. Many authors search for the universal or archetypal truths they imagine reside in colour, but for the historian, such truths do not exist. Colour is first and foremost a social phenomenon. There is no transcultural truth to colour perception, despite what many books based on poorly grasped neurobiology or – even worse – on pseudoscientific pop psychology would have us believe. Such books unfortunately clutter the bibliography on the subject, and even do it harm.

The silence of historians on the subject of colour, or more particularly their difficulty in conceiving colour as a subject separate from other historical phenomena, is the result of three different sets of problems. The first concerns documentation and preservation. We see the colours transmitted to us by the past as time has altered them and not as they were originally. Moreover, we see them under light conditions that often are entirely different from those known by past societies. And finally, over the decades we have developed the habit of looking at objects from the past in black-and-white photographs and, despite the current diffusion of colour photography, our ways of thinking about and reacting to these objects seem to have remained more or less black and white.

The second set of problems concerns methodology. As soon as the historian seeks to study colour, he must grapple with a host of factors all at once: physics, chemistry, materials, and techniques of production, as well as iconography, ideology, and the symbolic meanings that colours convey. How to make sense of all of these elements? How can one establish an analytical model facilitating the study of images and coloured objects? No researcher, no method, has yet been able to resolve these problems, because among the numerous facts pertaining to colour, a researcher tends to select those facts that support his study and to conveniently forget those that contradict it. This is clearly a poor way to conduct research. And it is made worse by the temptation to apply to the objects and images of a given historical period information found in texts of that period. The proper method – at least in the first phase of analysis – is to proceed as do palaeontologists (who must study cave paintings without the aid of texts) by extrapolating from the images and the objects themselves a logic and a system based on various concrete factors such as the rate of occurrence of particular objects and motifs, their distribution and disposition. In short, one undertakes the internal structural analysis with which any study of an image or coloured object should begin.

The third set of problems is philosophical: it is wrong to project our own conceptions and definitions of colour onto the images, objects and monuments of past centuries. Our judgements and values are not those of previous societies (and no doubt they will change again in the future). For the writer-historian looking at the definitions and taxonomy of colour, the danger of anachronism is very real. For example, the spectrum with its natural order of colours was unknown before the seventeenth century, while the notion of primary and secondary colours did not become common until the nineteenth century. These are not eternal notions but stages in the ever-changing history of knowledge.

I have reflected on such issues at greater length in my previous work, so while the present book does address certain of them, for the most part it is devoted to other topics. Nor is it concerned only with the history of colour in images and artworks – in any case that area still has many gaps to be filled. Rather, the aim of this book is to examine all kinds of objects in order to consider the different facets of the history of colour and to show how far beyond the artistic sphere this history reaches. The history of painting is one thing; that of colour is another, much larger, question. Most studies devoted to the history of colour err in considering only the pictorial, artistic or scientific realms. But the lessons to be learned from colour and its real interest lie elsewhere.

How am I testing?

31 What problem regarding colour does the writer explain in the first paragraph?

- A Our view of colour is strongly affected by changing fashion.
- B Analysis is complicated by the bewildering number of natural colours.
- C Colours can have different associations in different parts of the world.
- D Certain popular books have dismissed colour as insignificant.

32 What is the first reason the writer gives for the lack of academic work on the history of colour?

- A There are problems of reliability associated with the artefacts available.
- B Historians have seen colour as being outside their field of expertise.
- C Colour has been rather looked down upon as a fit subject for academic study.
- D Very little documentation exists for historians to use.

33 The writer suggests that the priority when conducting historical research on colour is to

- A ignore the interpretations of other modern day historians.
- B focus one's interest as far back as the prehistoric era.
- C find some way of organising the mass of available data.
- D relate pictures to information from other sources.

34 In the fourth paragraph, the writer says that the historian writing about colour should be careful

- A not to analyse in an old-fashioned way.
- B when making basic distinctions between key ideas.
- C not to make unwelcome predictions.
- D when using certain terms and concepts.

35 In the fifth paragraph, the writer says there needs to be further research done on

- A the history of colour in relation to objects in the world around us.
- B the concerns he has raised in an earlier publication.
- C the many ways in which artists have used colour over the years.
- D the relationship between artistic works and the history of colour.

36 An idea recurring in the text is that people who have studied colour have

- A failed to keep up with scientific developments.
- B not understood its global significance.
- C found it difficult to be fully objective.
- D been muddled about their basic aims.



Which task type is this?

Questions 1 – 6

Part 1

For each question, choose the correct answer.

1

Now on first floor:
Women's sports clothes
Toys for 0-12 year olds
Half-price books

Go upstairs if you want to

- A buy a dress for a party.
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Part 5

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- A ignore the interpretations of other modern day historians.
- B focus one's interest as far back as the prehistoric era.
- C find some way of organising the mass of available data.
- D relate pictures to information from other sources.

34 In the fourth paragraph, the writer says that the historian writing about colour should be careful

- A not to analyse in an old-fashioned way.
- B when making basic distinctions between key ideas.
- C not to make unwise predictions.
- D when using certain terms and concepts.

35 In the fifth paragraph, the writer says there needs to be further research done on

- A the history of colour in relation to objects in the world around us.
- B the concerns he has raised in an earlier publication.
- C the many ways in which artists have used colour over the years.
- D the relationship between artistic works and the history of colour.

36 An idea recurring in the text is that people who have studied colour have

- A failed to keep up with scientific developments.
- B not understood its global significance.
- C found it difficult to be fully objective.
- D been muddled about their basic aims.



Which task type is this?

Part 6

You are going to read an extract from a magazine article. Seven paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragraphs A – H the one which fits each gap (37 – 43). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use. Mark your answers on the **separate answer sheet**.

Cowboys of Madagascar

The anthropologist Luke Freeman joins a group of young Malagasy men on the cattle trail.

As a socio-cultural anthropologist, I've lived in Madagascar for more than three years and I know the people, the language and the culture well. The cattle drives undertaken by young Malagasy men have fascinated me ever since I lived in a remote rice-farming village in the central highlands.

37

This gives an indication of how much the Malagasy love cattle. They are potent symbols on the island and it is common practice for young men to trade in them prior to marriage.

To fulfil my ambition, I headed for the frontier town of Tsironomandidy looking for a group of drovers with whom to share life on the road. Here I met Vonjy, a young man who had spent most of his life driving cattle across the island.

38

Our destination sat in the middle of nowhere, abandoned in a landscape of wide plains, where nothing grows but tall, swaying savannah grass. Undulating hills dip and rise to the horizon, the monotony broken only by the broad red scars of soil erosion. There is often no sign of life for miles. This was the land we were to cross with our herd of 52 zebu steers, the long-horned cattle found all over East Africa and the Indian subcontinent.

39

Far off in the darkness glowed the orange rings of bushfires lit to burn off the old dry grass and bring forth new green shoots. Ground that seemed flat in the daylight became treacherously uneven on a moonless night. Some of us formed a line either side of our cattle as we struggled to keep the herd together, shouting warnings to the drovers behind us. On one occasion we stopped to discover that two of our steers had disappeared.

40

The next morning we awoke, dew-damp, on a cloudy hilltop, not far from our destination. The cattle mooched slowly in the tall, wet grass. It was just dawn, but a woman and her daughter who had walked

16 kilometres to set up shop were already selling coffee and cakes wrapped in leaves.

Tsironomandidy hosts the largest cattle market in Madagascar. Every Wednesday, a huge cloud of dust hangs over the town, raised by the hundreds of cattle pressed into the wooden corrals.

41

This was an easier journey, a slow wandering over the highest peaks of central Madagascar. The head drover was a laid-back languorous man who didn't raise an eyebrow when he heard I was joining his team; we nicknamed him the President. Our somewhat haphazard meanderings through the hinterland came to a sudden end when, passing through a village near Firavahana, the President found a buyer for his cattle. It would take a couple of days to sort out the paperwork, so Vonjy and I decided to leave him to it.

42

From there, we got a lift 400 kilometres by road down to Madagascar's second biggest cattle market at Ambalavato, where Vonjy had more family in the trade. We joined them on another cattle drive up through the central highlands along Madagascar's main north-south road.

The highlands are the most crowded part of the island; every last hectare of land has been carved into neat rice terraces that scale the hillsides. From here, our journey took us eastwards into the forest.

43

I learnt that such minor hardships were easily overcome as my body became conditioned to the rhythm of the road: walking at cattle pace, prodding and coaxing the beasts; listening to the drovers' soft talk.

If there's a lesson to be learnt from the young men with whom I travelled, it's just how simple travelling can be. Over the hundreds of kilometres I travelled with the drovers, I never heard a cross word or an argument. You don't need a whole lot to be happy on such a journey.

Complete the email.

Write ONE word for each space.

For questions 41 – 50, write the words on your answer sheet.

Example:

0

has

From:

Jessie

To:

Carmen

Thanks for your email.

This month (0) been quite boring for me. I haven't had the time to do any (41) the things I like. Our new teacher gives us too (42) homework and the weather's been terrible (43) the weekends. I haven't played tennis (44) three weeks now! But (45) is some good news! I can come and stay (46) you in the summer. Mum and Dad have said yes! I (47) so pleased.

The best time for me is (48) second half of July. (49) this okay? Please ask (50) mum and dad and email me back. Then I can get my plane ticket.





Multiple choice: pros and cons



Advantages

- Relatively easy to construct
- Quick to administer and mark
- Objective
- Wide coverage of reading skills
- Multiple observations of each aspect of ability



Disadvantages

- Receptive skills only
- Not a real-life task
- Open to guessing
- Negative impact on teaching and learning



Information transfer: pros and cons



Advantages

- Relatively realistic
- Tests understanding of process, classification or narrative sequence



Disadvantages

- Clear guidance for task completion is required
- Learner should be aware of predetermined assessment criteria





Integrated skills tasks: pros and cons



Advantages

- Realistic
- Motivating
- Variety of reading skills and processes
- More like learning than testing



Disadvantages

- Somewhat inefficient
- Difficult to score
- Subjective judgement
- Cross-task / ability contamination





No 'best' way to test reading comprehension

- No right or wrong task type as:
 - each has advantages and limitations
 - each is suitable for different purposes.
- A variety of task types in a test
 - avoids advantaging or disadvantaging your learners
 - allows coverage of a broad range of reading skills.





VI Symposium

ASSESSING MATHS AND ENGLISH

How am I testing?

Factors which affect task fairness



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Nafarroako Gobernua
Departamento de Educación
Hezkuntza Departamentua



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Factors which affect task fairness

- Are the **tasks** at the right level of difficulty?





Factors which affect task fairness

- Are the **tasks** at the right level of difficulty?
- Are the **instructions** clear?





Factors which affect task fairness

- Are the **tasks** at the right level of difficulty?
- Are the **instructions** clear?
- Is there a **range** of tasks?





Factors which affect task fairness

- Are the **tasks** at the right level of difficulty?
- Are the **instructions** clear?
- Is there a **range** of tasks?
- Are the items / tasks in a justifiable **order**?





Factors which affect task fairness

- Are the **tasks** at the right level of difficulty?
- Are the **instructions** clear?
- Is there a **range** of tasks?
- Are the items / tasks in a justifiable **order**?
- Is the **timing** for each part of the test appropriate?





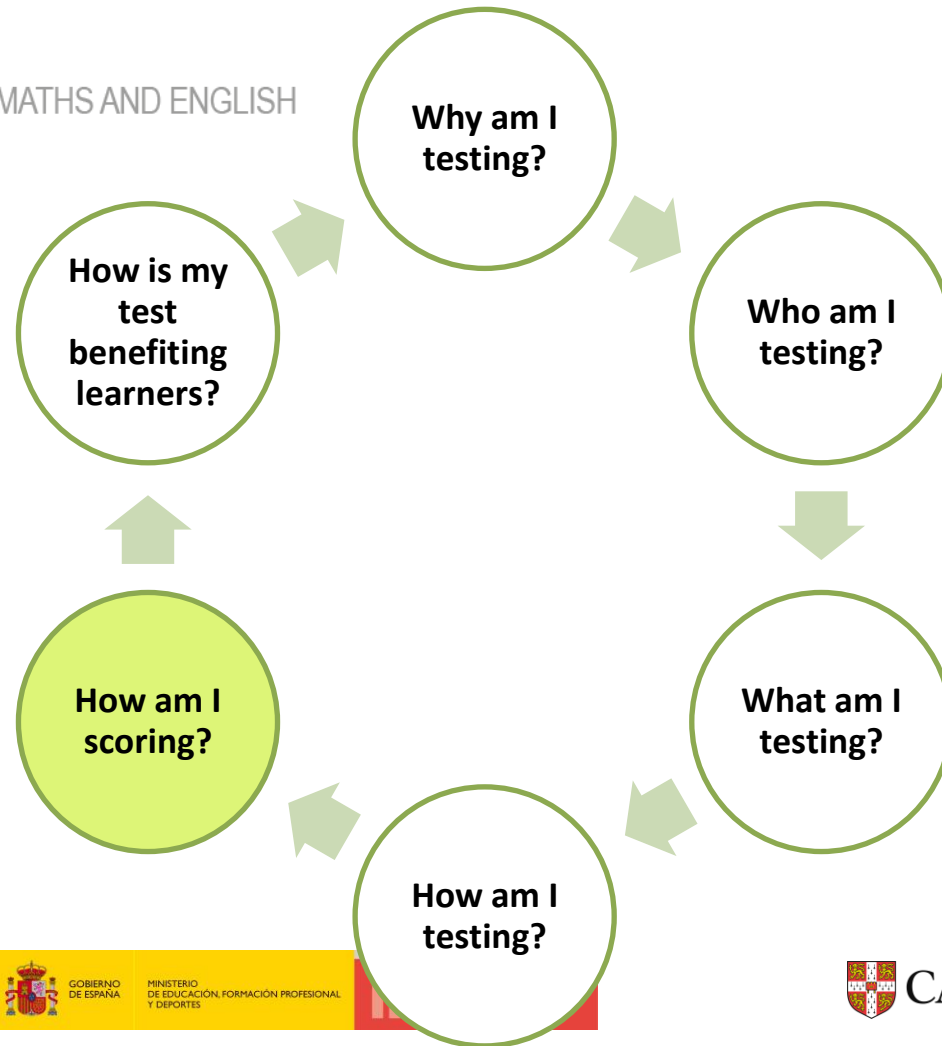
Factors which affect task fairness

- Are the **tasks** at the right level of difficulty?
- Are the **instructions** clear?
- Is there a **range** of tasks?
- Are the items / tasks in a justifiable **order**?
- Is the **timing** for each part of the test appropriate?
- Are the **marking criteria** clear to the test takers?



How am I scoring:

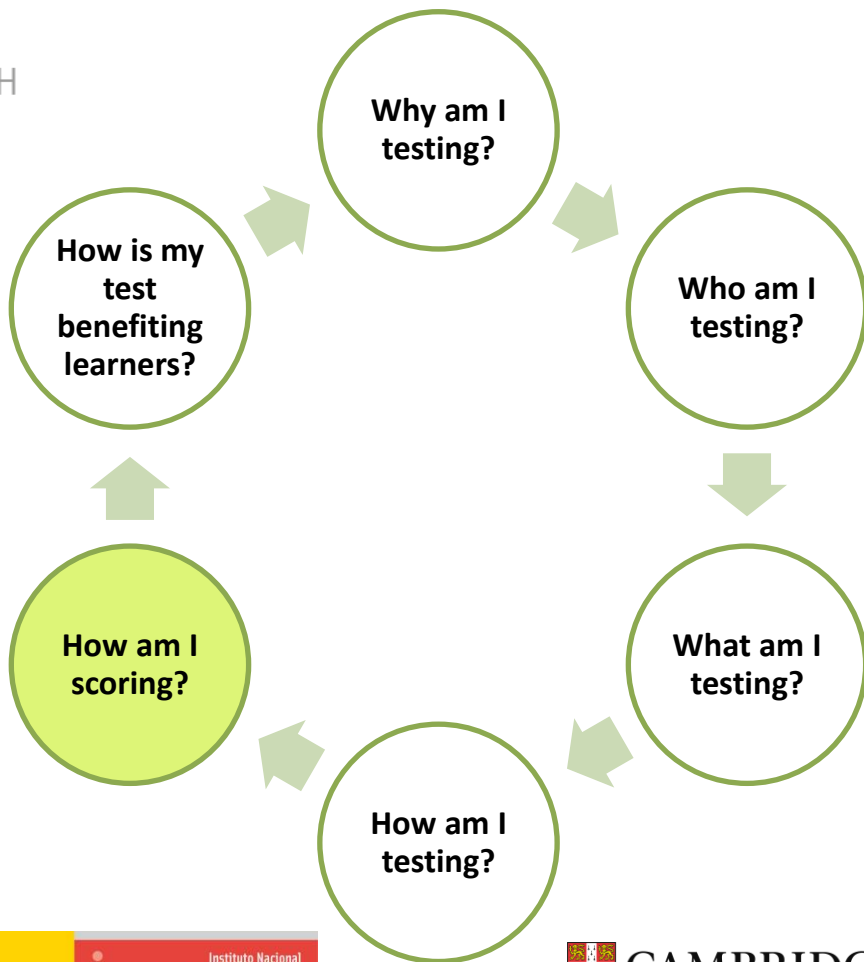
- What are the criteria?
- How do we weight tasks?
- How can we make sure that tests are reliably marked?





How am I scoring?

- What are the criteria?
- How do we weight tasks?
- How can we make sure that tests are reliably marked?



Scoring

How should you score a multiple-choice question?

- a correct answer?
- an incorrect answer?



Weighting



Incorrect answers

- 0 marks



Correct answer

- 1 mark
- 2 marks



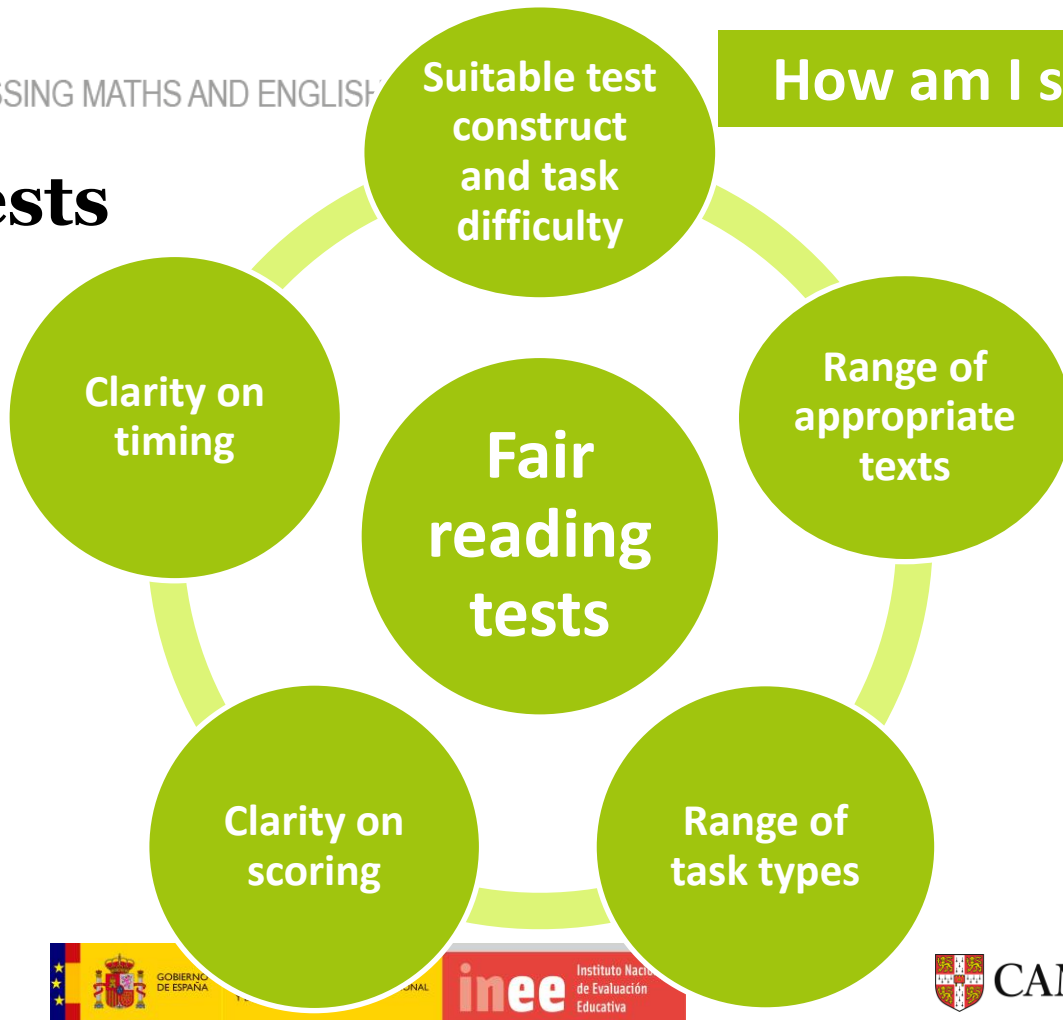
Scoring guidance

- Spelling
 - alternative spelling (colour / color)
 - misspelling
- Punctuation
 - capitalisation
- Grammar





Fair reading tests



How am I scoring?





Reading tasks

- Read and Improve:

<https://readandimprove.englishlanguageitutoring.com/>





VI Symposium

ASSESSING MATHS AND ENGLISH



Thank you!

Any questions?



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