



Reading comprehension

Lev. B1 (337 words)

The English tasks you are going to do are aimed at verifying your reading comprehension skills. The directions before each question will introduce the task to you and will explain how to answer. So pay attention and read them carefully. The first question is always an example.

■ Task 16 questions: 1-9 Fill in the gaps /10-16 True or False



Education

The boundaries between education and entertainment are beginning to blur, and a new type of learning, in which education merges with entertainment, is emerging – “edutainment”²..... But now US television company AMC has teamed up with the University of California to produce an online course based on the TV show, The Walking Dead, which features a post-apocalyptic world ridden with zombies.

With an audience of 10 million, student numbers for the course are expected to be in the hundreds of thousands

Academics from the University of California say that the online course will be a “legitimate educational experience” and tackle serious issues from the fields of science, public health, nutrition, psychology and sociology However, students will gain no formal qualifications or credits on successful completion of the course.

..... It insisted that all modules had been made as academically rigorous as those taught on the university grounds. One lecturer in social science stated that the university already used contemporary media examples to make theories more relevant to students, and this course was merely taking this concept one step further. “The curriculum is very real,” says Josh Coates, head of Infrastructure and designer of the online platform “The fact that the context is this fictional world of an apocalypse is incidental. This course gives us the opportunity to educate people about the science of disasters.”

The market for massive open online courses, or MOOCs, is rapidly expanding However, millions fail to complete the courses, suggesting that they pose a real challenge to online learners The university is taking this opportunity to hone the way it delivers online courses With the increasing demand for online courses, these are issues that universities looking to invest in online learning are increasingly having to face.



..... They believe that TV shows may serve to attract students, but the academic element still needs to outweigh the entertainment value for a university course to be officially recognised and respected.

1 Read the text and choose the correct location in it for the following sentences. The first one has been made for you.

1. We have local apocalypses in our world today, in the form of earthquakes, hurricanes and terrorist attacks.
2. **TV shows have long launched spin-off products in the form of merchandise and video games.**
3. If successful, the edutainment experiment could spawn a huge range of other TV show/university hybrid courses.
4. Part of this experiment is to find out whether the power of television can reduce the high drop-out rate characteristic of MOOCs.
5. Until now, online learning experiences have been able to deliver great videos and quizzes, but student interaction was minimal and the experience for learners has been impersonal.
6. Experts from the Centre for Education and Employment have reservations about the value of such online courses where there is no formal assessment or contact between the students and those delivering the courses.
7. The course will consist of eight modules including a physics module on ‘the science of decay’, a public health module on the study of epidemics and a mathematics module on population dynamics.
8. The University of California, which has a huge reputation to uphold, said that there had been no dumping down in the design of the course.
9. Millions of students sign up for online education courses each year.

2 Referring to the text, decide if the statements from 10 to 16 are True (T), False (F) or Not Mentioned (NM). Put a cross (X) on the proper space. The first one (0) is an example.

| | T | F | NM |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. “Edutainment” stands for education and entertainment. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. US TV is working alone on an online project. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. The source of this course is the TV series “The Walking Dead”. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. The project is expected to be a great success. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. The project was born because a lot of students spend their time online. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. The modules will be softer than the real university ones. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. The choice of an apocalyptic scenario is done on purpose. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Nowadays there are more online students than ones attending courses at university. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Listening

Lev. B1

The English tasks you are going to do are aimed at verifying your listening comprehension skills. At the beginning of each task a speaker will read the text concerning the questions you are asked to answer.

We remind you that:

- you won't be able to go back in listening to the passage;
- the passage cannot be paused;
- if you decide not to answer a question, you will have to wait for the set time for that task to pass anyway; only at that moment the next task will be displayed.

The directions before each question will introduce the task to you and will explain how to answer. So pay attention and read them carefully. The first question is always an example.

First you will have 1 minute to study the task below, then you will hear the recording twice.

While listening, answer the questions from 1 to 6.

The first one (0) has been done for you. After the second listening, you will have 1 minute to check your answers.

■ Title: **Accommodation**

■ Task **14** questions: **1-6** Multiple choice questions/**7-14** Short answers

1 After listening to a student, Mark, discussing accommodation with the accommodation officer at a university, choose the correct answer. The first one has been done for you.

0. Students should arrange their accommodation for September in...

- January**
- March
- May

1. Now it is...

- January
- March
- May

2. Mark cannot stay in university hall in September because...

- It is too expensive for him
- He will be a 2nd year student
- There aren't any places left

3. Mark dislikes the room on Old Road because...

- There are already too many students at it
- It only has one bathroom
- It is far from the university



- 4. How much is the room on Old Road?
 - a. £75 a week
 - b. £75 a month
 - c. £45 a week

- 5. The accommodation on Jackson Street...
 - a. Is small, but cheap
 - b. Has its own private bathroom
 - c. Has a kitchen and a living room

- 6. What will Mark probably do next?
 - a. Look for accommodation online
 - b. Take the room on Old Road
 - c. Talk to his friends about sharing a house

2 After listening to the conversation, give a short answer to questions 7-14. The first one (0) is an example.

0. What is Mark looking for?

He's looking for accommodation.

7. Why doesn't Mark find any solution for his accommodation?

.....

8. Why hasn't Mark started his research yet?

.....

9. Why would he like to stay in the university halls?

.....

10. Who does university give any remaining accommodation to?

.....

11. How could Mark get to university from Old Road?

.....

12. How much is the room on Jackson Street?

.....

13. According to Mark, what's the main problem of the house on Jackson Street?

.....

14. Which website can have accommodation in?

.....



■ Transcription

Accommodation

Accom Officer: Hello, how can I help you?

Mark: Well, my friends told me they already have accommodation for next year. They said I need to sort out my accommodation too, don't I?

Accom Officer: Yes, you do. In fact, you've left it a bit late. I really don't know if you are still on time. We always tell students to arrange accommodation in January.

Mark: Really? That's very early. I've been really busy with my exams.

Accom Officer: I understand your problems, but consider that by March, there's usually nothing left. And now we're at the end of May. Anyway, let's have a look. Maybe I can find something for you. What sort of accommodation are you looking for?

Mark: Well, I'd like to stay in the university halls again because it's really convenient and I don't waste my time going to and fro.

Accom Officer: What year are you in?

Mark: I'm a first year student.

Accom Officer: So in September you'll be in your second year, aren't you?

Mark: Yes, correct.

Accom Officer: I'm sorry but as you know we don't reserve halls accommodation for second year students. Rooms in halls go to first year students, and if we have any remaining places we give them to final year students.

Mark: Oh no! My God, what can I do?

Accom Officer: Well, most students rent a room in a house. It's often cheaper than halls anyway. You can ask some friends of yours to share a flat or you can look at university advertisement if some students are looking for a roommate.

Mark: For God's sake... I have so little time!

Accom Officer: Don't worry, you will find a solution. Don't you have any friends you'd like to share a house with?

Mark: I don't know... not really. I think they already have plans or arranged their accommodation.

Accom Officer: Well, I'll look on the computer system. There may be a few free rooms in some houses. I'll print a list for you. hmm, there's not very much left. As I told you before, it's really late now! But anyway, this one could be OK for you. Have a look at it!

Mark: What is there?

Accom Officer: There's a room in a house on Old Road. It's with 3 other students, two bathrooms, one kitchen, living room. £75 a week. It could be right for you, couldn't it?

Mark: Old Road? Where's that? I've never heard about

Accom Officer: It's about 7 miles from the campus.



Mark: Seven miles? That's quite far. It takes too much time to get to university from there...

Accom Officer: You can take the bus. The 47 line is really convenient: it leaves from Old Road and it takes 55 minutes to get here. I live nearby and I catch it every day. It's not so far, believe me.

Mark: Isn't there something closer?

Accom Officer: Er... let me see – well, there's one on Jackson Street: small room, with 5 other students, one bathroom, kitchen diner – it doesn't have a living room. This bedroom's very small – only 1,5 metres by 2. It's cheap though – £45 a week, bills included.

Mark: It doesn't sound so good... and the room is really small! And most of all, only one bathroom for 6 people!

Accom Officer: I'm sorry, but there's nothing else close to the campus. You could look for a private room.

Mark: A private room? How do I do that?

Accom Officer: Check the local papers, look online – The Cambridge Forum website often has accommodation in it. Someone might want a lodger, or have a room to rent. Or as I told you before, look at adverts at university, a lot of students put them on the notice board and if you are lucky you can find someone renting a room or looking for a roommate.

Mark: Okay, I'll try the Cambridge Forum. Thanks for your help. You have been really kind indeed.



Reading comprehension

Lev. B2 (465 words)

The English tasks you are going to do are aimed at verifying your reading comprehension skills. The directions before each question will introduce the task to you and will explain how to answer. So pay attention and read them carefully. The first question is always an example.

■ Task: **13** questions: **1-6** Match sentences/**7-13** Short answers



Facebook faces Federal Trade Commission privacy inquiry

The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) will investigate Facebook over how private data on millions of users was given to Cambridge Analytica.

The social network has been criticised for letting the analysis firm scoop up data on 50 million users. The information is believed to have been used to help Donald Trump's 2016 campaign for US president.

The FTC said its probe would determine whether Facebook had "failed" to protect users' privacy. Tom Pahl, acting director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, said it took the reports about user data going astray "very seriously".

He said the FTC regularly took "enforcement action" against firms that caused substantial injury to consumers by breaking laws that govern how personal information should be kept safe.

Facebook is required by law to notify users and get their permission before data is shared beyond their preferred privacy settings in what is known as the "consent decree".

David Vladeck, the former director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, said that the penalty for each violation of the consent decree is \$40,000.

If the data of 50 million people were indeed compromised, the social network's financial exposure to fines could run into trillions of dollars, Mr Vladeck told the Washington Post.

Rob Sherman, deputy chief privacy officer for Facebook, told CNBC it would "appreciate the opportunity to answer questions the FTC may have".

The data was grabbed via an app that let people take a personality quiz. Although only 270,000 people completed the quiz, the app was able to exploit the way Facebook held data to get at information about millions more.

Facebook says it has changed its rules on user consent to stop other third parties harvesting data in the same way.

The social network is also facing a probe by UK data protection regulators and the European Commission.

The announcement comes after Facebook placed adverts in US and UK newspapers apologising for losing control of the data.

In the ads, Facebook boss, Mark Zuckerberg, said the company could have done more to stop the data on millions of users going astray: "This was a breach of trust, and I am sorry," the back-page ads said.



The company said it was taking steps to ensure the same type of data loss could not happen again. In separate development, the Republican chairman of a powerful senate committee said that he had invited Mr Zuckerberg to testify to a hearing “regarding the protection and monitoring of consumer data”.

Senator Chuck Grassley, chairman of the upper chamber’s judiciary committee, said he had also invited representatives from Twitter and Google to discuss “how such data may be misused or improperly transferred and what steps companies like Facebook can take to better protect personal information of users and ensure more transparency in the process”.

(Adapted) article by: www.bbcnews.com

1 Who is who? After reading the text, match each name (1-6) to his identity (a-g). The first one has been done for you.

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 0. Donald Trump | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | a. Social network |
| 1. Chuck Grassley | <input type="checkbox"/> | b. Director of US FTC’s Bureau of Consumer Protection |
| 2. Facebook | <input type="checkbox"/> | c. US President |
| 3. Rob Sherman | <input type="checkbox"/> | d. Vice chief privacy officer for Facebook |
| 4. Tom Pahl | <input type="checkbox"/> | e. Facebook owner |
| 5. David Vladeck | <input type="checkbox"/> | f. Presiding officer of the upper chamber’s judiciary committee |
| 6. Mark Zuckerberg | <input type="checkbox"/> | g. Previous Director of US FTC’s Bureau of Consumer Protection |

2 After reading the text, give a short answer to questions 7-13. The first one (0) is an example.

0. Why will FTC investigate Facebook?

Because millions of private data were given to Cambridge Analytica

7. How many users have had their private data violated?

.....

8. What is the alleged reason why users’ personal data has been shared?

.....

9. What must Facebook do before sharing its users’ personal information?

.....

10. How much is the fine Facebook should pay for each violation?

.....

11. How was the personal data gained?

.....



12. How many people finished the game?

.....

13. In addition to Facebook, what social networks have been invited to discuss about the protection of personal data?

.....