BRITISH COUNCIL Aptis

Aptis for Teachers: Reading Test Part 3: Opinion matching

In this section you will read a text of four separate paragraphs on a common topic. Each paragraph represents a person's opinions or preferences about the topic. You will be asked to match the people to seven statements provided.

Four people respond in the comments section of an online magazine article about education and work. Read their comments and answer the questions below.

Person A

As you get older, responsibilities like a job and family dominate your life. It can be hard to balance things. Studying at university is demanding. So you should do it at an age when you are independent and carefree. It is also important to learn how the world of business works. Spending unpaid time in a company is a great way to get that experience. Any course that can give you an opportunity to do that is worth considering.

Person B

Life doesn't really get serious until you hit your mid-twenties. Before that, try out different things and get some life experience. It's only as you approach your thirties that you need to get serious about your career. That's the time to start thinking about further education. Many colleges offer inexpensive courses for more mature students. Going back to student life for a year is a great idea and you can then return to the world of work at management level.

Person C

Nowadays it is popular for school leavers to take a break before they think about an occupation or a place at university. I think the most important thing is to start working as soon as you can. You need practical experience for your CV and that can be more valuable than a diploma. Nevertheless, your studies do not have to stop just because you are working. Colleges and universities offer options for people who want to do both.

Person D

I think we should all keep learning, but you don't need a piece of paper from an institution to prove it. There are many free courses available online. Of course, not all are good, but a little research will help you identify which one is best for you. A lot of young people get into debt because they have to pay for their studies. With the resources available online these days, you can take control. You won't regret it.

1. **Who thinks you should study when you are older?**
2. **Who thinks formal qualifications are too expensive?**
3. **Who thinks you should go to university when you are young?**
4. **Who thinks you should study independently?**
5. **Who thinks you should combine a job with studying?**
6. **Who thinks you should choose a course that is practical?**
7. **Who thinks you should get a job immediately after leaving school?**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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Part 3: **Read the four opinions posted on a teacher's forum. Then, answer the questions.**

IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON STUDENTS

Person A

I think it is important to get with the times. Nowadays, students are totally addicted to their smart phones. Instead of fighting them on it, I asked them how I could engage them better. Students answered a few questions about how they wanted to use social media more productively. So, I started a class hashtag. Students can contribute to discussions using it and add links to justify their points. I monitor it and I see them engaging with it to ask questions about homework as well. I also encourage students to use it to tell me what they like and dislike about the lessons.

Person B

I'll admit, I doubted technology's effectiveness in the class. I thought that because I learned without it, it was an unnecessary feature. In fact, I used to make students switch off their phones before entering the room. However, I changed my mind when a fellow teacher showed me a website that she used in class. It allows students to log in with their smartphones in order to play a game as a class. My students love it and it works so well for review lessons and to break up mundane tasks.

Person C

I am a younger teacher, so there is a lot of expectations of me from the senior staff members and management. While they prefer more traditional methods, I have found the greatest success when I use technology in my lesson whether that be showing a video clip, using a slideshow, etc. I don't think I would be able to teach a lesson without it! After my lesson observation, the principal asked me to lead a staff meeting on how to engage students using multimedia in class. It was an honour to be asked. I know it will be a lot of work, but I would love to help my colleagues out in order to make the students' learning experience better.

Person D

When I began teaching teens, I found I was unable to capture their attention. They were constantly texting, or scrolling through social media during lessons and it was hard to establish rules with them. Even when I forbid them from using their mobile phones in class, I would catch them sneakily using them under their desks. I understand that it is important for teens to keep in touch. Thus, if we are able to get through all the material, I permit them to have a 5-minute break on their devices. I have found this to be quite effective.

Read the four opinions posted on a teacher's forum. Then, answer the questions.

1. **incorporates social media in their lessons?**
2. **was hesitant to use smartphones in class?**
3. **learned more about technology from a colleague?**
4. **uses technology as a reward?**
5. **relies on technology in the classroom?**
6. **wants to help teachers adapt?**
7. **accepts regular feedback?**

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Which person ...

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INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Topic: Perspectives on 1:1 Tablet Programs

Person A

"I was initially hesitant, but the ability to provide instant feedback has been revolutionary. I use a shared document system where I can leave comments on their essays in real-time. It has completely eliminated the week-long wait for marked papers, which helps students learn from their mistakes while they are still fresh."

Person B

"For me, the greatest asset is the accessibility. I have several students with dyslexia and visual impairments; being able to adjust font sizes or use text-to-speech software on the fly has levelled the playing field. It's no longer an 'extra' accommodation; it's just part of the workflow."

Person C

"I've noticed a significant shift in how students collaborate. Instead of working in silos, they are constantly sharing resources and peer-editing through cloud-based platforms. My role has shifted from being the sole source of knowledge to a facilitator of their collective inquiry."

Person D

"The biggest hurdle is the 'distraction factor.' I've had to implement very strict monitoring software because the temptation to switch tabs to games or social media is immense. It's a powerful tool, but it requires a much higher level of classroom vigilance than traditional pen-and-paper tasks."

Match the statements to the person:

1. **Highlights how technology facilitates a more inclusive environment for learners with special needs. (Person B)**
2. **Notes that the teacher's role has evolved from a lecturer to a guide. (Person C)**
3. **Emphasizes the benefit of students receiving evaluations immediately. (Person A)**
4. **Argues that digital tools necessitate a more intense focus on student supervision. (Person D)**
5. **Points out that the speed of the feedback loop prevents students from forgetting the context of their work. (Person A)**
6. **Mentions that students are now more likely to work together and review each other's work. (Person C)**
7. **Believes that technology has integrated support features so seamlessly that they no longer feel like special treatment. (Person B)**

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ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Topic: The Move Toward "No-Grade" Feedback

Person A

"When students see a letter or a percentage, they stop reading my comments. By removing the grade entirely and only providing descriptive feedback, I've forced them to actually engage with the 'how' of their improvement. Their subsequent work shows a much deeper understanding of the rubrics."

Person B

"I see the value in comments, but grades provide a necessary benchmark for parents and the administration. Without a numerical value, it's very difficult to track progress over a school year or identify students who are slipping behind the national average. We need a balance of both."

Person C

"I've started using 'minimal grading,' which uses simple symbols to indicate if a task is mastered or needs revision. This reduces the anxiety associated with traditional marks and encourages a growth mindset. Students are much more willing to take risks when they aren't afraid of a 'C' or 'D'."

Person D

"The workload involved in writing detailed narrative feedback for every single student is unsustainable. I have five classes of thirty students. While the theory of 'no-grades' is noble, it ignores the practical reality of teacher burnout. We need automated systems to help manage this."

Match the statements to the person:

1. **Concerned that descriptive feedback is too time-consuming for teachers with large cohorts. (Person D)**
2. **Claims that traditional marks act as a distraction that prevents students from focusing on advice. (Person A)**
3. **Suggests that simplified symbols can help lower student stress and encourage experimentation. (Person C)**
4. **Argues that quantitative data is essential for communicating progress to external stakeholders like parents. (Person B)**
5. **Believes that a lack of specific scores makes it harder to compare student performance against standardized goals. (Person B)**
6. **Observes that students have developed a better grasp of assessment criteria since the removal of grades. (Person A)**
7. **Points out that the current educational system fails to account for the physical time required to give personalized comments. (Person D**

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BILINGUALISM AND EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE)

Topic: Supporting Students Who Speak Multiple Languages

Person A: "I find that allowing students to use their first language for brainstorming is incredibly effective. When they discuss complex concepts in their native tongue before translating them into English, the quality of their creative output is much higher. It's about valuing their linguistic heritage as an asset rather than a barrier."

Person B: "The real challenge is the vocabulary gap in specialized subjects like Science or History. I've started creating bilingual glossaries for my lessons. It provides a scaffold that allows EAL students to access the curriculum alongside their peers, ensuring they don't fall behind in content knowledge while they are still mastering the English language."

Person C: "I prioritize the social-emotional side of language learning. New arrivals often feel isolated, so I implement a 'buddy system' pairing them with fluent speakers who share their background. This peer support builds confidence far faster than any formal grammar intervention or software program could."

Person D: "I'm a proponent of 'visual literacy.' For my EAL learners, I rely heavily on infographics, diagrams, and video clips to convey instructions. By minimizing the heavy reliance on dense text, I can assess their actual understanding of the subject matter without their English proficiency—or lack thereof—getting in the way."

Match the statements to the person:

1. **Believes that social integration with peers is the most efficient way to boost a student's confidence. (Person C)**
2. **Suggests that using a student's primary language during the initial stages of a task improves the final result. (Person A)**
3. **Argues that non-textual aids are the best way to separate subject knowledge from language ability. (Person D)**
4. **Focuses on preventing students from falling behind in specific academic subjects through translated terminology. (Person B)**
5. **Views a student's home language as a helpful tool rather than an obstacle to learning. (Person A)**
6. **Advocates for the use of pictorial representations to bypass the difficulties of complex reading materials. (Person D)**
7. **Mentions that providing technical definitions in two languages helps bridge the gap in academic achievement. (Person B)**

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THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

Topic: Modernizing the School Learning Resource Center (LRC)

Person A

"The library should be the 'maker-space' of the school. I've pushed for the installation of 3D printers and coding stations. It's no longer just a silent repository for books; it needs to be a loud, vibrant hub where students can physically build projects and collaborate on multimedia presentations."

Person B

"I worry that in our rush to digitize everything, we are losing the 'quiet' needed for deep reading. I've kept a dedicated section of the library as a tech-free zone. Students need a sanctuary from the constant notifications of their devices—a place where they can sustain focus on a single long-form text for an hour."

Person C

"Our focus has shifted toward 'information literacy.' With the rise of AI and misinformation, the librarian's job is now to teach students how to vet sources. We run workshops on identifying bias and checking the credibility of online authors, which is a far more vital skill today than knowing how to use a card catalogue."

Person D

"Budget constraints mean we have to be creative. I've moved toward a 'digital-first' collection. E-books and online databases are more cost-effective and accessible for students at home. While it's sad to see fewer physical shelves, the reach of our resources has doubled since we went virtual."

Match the statements to the person:

1. **Emphasizes the importance of teaching students to critically evaluate the reliability of digital content. (Person C)**
2. **Suggests that the library should be an active environment for hands-on creation and technology. (Person A)**
3. **Notes that moving resources online has significantly increased the availability of materials for students. (Person D)**
4. **Advocates for the preservation of a silent environment to encourage concentrated, traditional reading. (Person B)**
5. **Argues that the ability to detect prejudice in writing is a modern essential skill for learners. (Person C)**
6. **Believes that physical books and a lack of technology are necessary to provide a break from digital distractions. (Person B)**
7. **Points out that financial limitations have influenced the shift toward a more virtual library catalog. (Person D)**

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TEACHER WELLBEING AND WORKLOAD

Topic: Strategies for Maintaining a Work-Life Balance

Person A

"I used to spend every Sunday evening marking books and planning for the week ahead, but I eventually hit a wall of total exhaustion. Now, I've set a strict 'no-email' policy after 6:00 PM. I've realized that if I don't prioritize my own mental health, I can't possibly provide the energy and enthusiasm my students deserve. It was hard to step back at first, but my classroom performance has actually improved because I'm more refreshed."

Person B

"The key for me has been 'collaborative planning.' Instead of every teacher in the department creating their own individual resources from scratch, we now share the load. Each person takes a unit of work and designs the materials for the whole team. It has cut my preparation time by nearly forty percent. It requires a lot of trust in your colleagues' work, but the reduction in stress levels across the office is palpable."

Person C

"I find that the physical environment makes a huge difference. I make a point of leaving the school building during my lunch break, even if it's just for a ten-minute walk around the local park. Staying trapped in the staffroom often leads to 'venting' sessions about difficult classes, which only increases anxiety. Getting some fresh air and a change of scenery allows me to reset my brain before the afternoon sessions begin."

Person D

"I've embraced 'live marking' as a way to reclaim my weekends. I provide verbal feedback and small written codes while the students are actually working in the lesson. By the time the bell rings, I've already assessed the majority of the class's progress. It means I don't have to carry a heavy bag of notebooks home every night, and the students get the feedback when it is most relevant to them."

Match the statements to the person:

1. **Believes that taking a physical break away from the workplace helps clear the mind. (Person C)**
2. **Claims that sharing the responsibility of lesson preparation has significantly lowered their workload. (Person B)**
3. **Argues that a teacher's personal health directly impacts their effectiveness in the classroom. (Person A)**
4. **Uses a strategy that involves grading student work during the actual class period. (Person D)**
5. **Suggests that staffroom conversations can sometimes have a negative effect on one's mood. (Person C)**
6. **Admits that they had to overcome an initial feeling of difficulty when setting professional boundaries. (Person A)**
7. **Mentions that their time-saving method relies on having confidence in the abilities of their coworkers. (Person B)**

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THE USE OF STANDARDIZED TESTING
Topic: Perspectives on National Exams in Primary Schools

Person A
"While I understand the need for data, I feel these exams create an 'exam-factory' culture. We spend months teaching students how to pass a specific test rather than exploring the subjects in depth. We are narrowing the curriculum to focus only on Literacy and Numeracy because those are the scores the government looks at. It robs the children of a broad and balanced education during their most formative years."

Person B
"Standardized tests are a vital diagnostic tool. Without them, it would be much harder to identify which schools are struggling and need extra funding or support. They provide an objective benchmark that allows us to see how different demographics are performing. It isn't about judging individual children; it's about ensuring the educational system is equitable and that no child is falling through the cracks unnoticed."

Person C
"The biggest issue is the psychological impact on the pupils. We are seeing an unprecedented rise in anxiety among ten and eleven-year-olds. They feel an immense pressure to perform, even though these results often have very little impact on their future career paths. We should be focusing on building their self-esteem and a love for learning, rather than making them feel like a failure based on a single morning's performance."

Person D
"I believe the tests are necessary, but the way we report the results is the problem. Instead of league tables that rank schools against each other, we should use the data internally to improve teaching strategies. The tests themselves are quite well-designed; it's the public 'shaming' of schools that underperform that causes teachers to feel stressed and forced to 'teach to the test'."

Match the statements to the person:

1. **Is concerned that the current testing system causes a significant amount of stress for young children. (Person C)**
2. **Suggests that exams are helpful for determining which institutions require more financial resources. (Person B)**
3. **Argues that the focus on test results leads to a more limited range of subjects being taught. (Person A)**
4. **Believes that the data from tests should be kept private for school improvement rather than public ranking. (Person D)**
5. **Points out that standardized assessments help in maintaining fairness across the education system. (Person B)**
6. **Thinks that schools are prioritizing test-taking techniques over a genuine exploration of topics. (Person A)**
7. **Claims that a child's confidence is more important than their results on a one-off exam. (Person C)**

LIVEWORKSHEETS