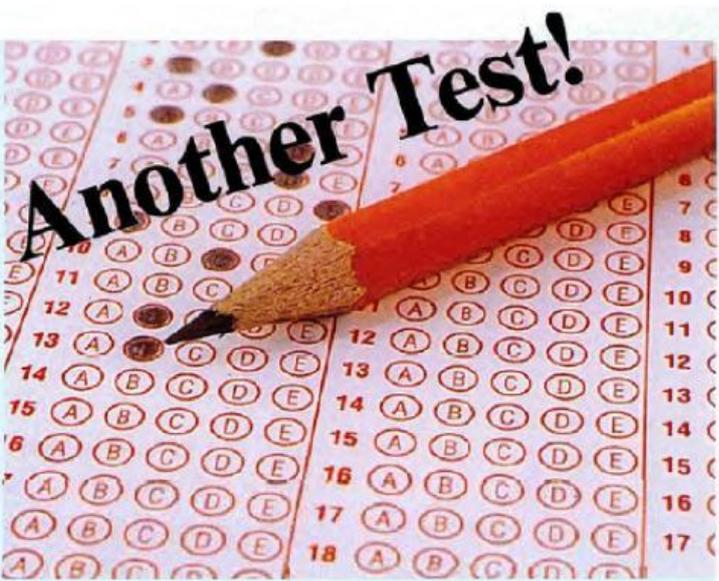


UNIT 2: AT SCHOOL

Lesson 9: Reading practice

Oh, No! Not Another Test!



- 1 Think about the last test you took. How much of what you learned for the test do you still remember? Many people take tests to pass a course or get a promotion, but they often forget the information afterward! This is especially the case for people taking large international tests like TOEFL or IELTS. These tests usually involve multiple-choice questions, and people often study to increase their scores, not to learn important information. In fact, educators are divided on whether these kinds of tests are the most effective way to **assess** a person's abilities.
- 2 Those who support such tests say they are the only way for educators and employers to compare people based on their test scores. However, there are people trying to **reform** this system. They believe that standard tests aren't the best way to **measure** a person's ability. These reformers also believe that intelligent people are not always good at taking tests or **memorizing** facts. A multiple-choice test cannot always tell what people have learned, or whether they can **apply** that knowledge in the future.
- 3 Reformers believe that other types of evaluation achieve better results. Tests that contain a mix of written and spoken questions give a more complete assessment of what the person is capable of. A portfolio, or a collection of work done throughout a course, can show how much the student has improved individually. Group interviews, where a group of people are interviewed at the same time, can also be useful for employers, since they show how people **interact** with others.
- 4 **Alternative** educational institutions such as Montessori and Waldorf schools don't believe that education should be focused on testing. At these schools, the classroom is very relaxed and "free," with students learning from each other as much as they learn from teachers. Some of these schools even allow students to choose what they study. Teachers create activities designed to let students show their abilities or knowledge of a certain subject. In these schools, the focus is on learning by experiencing and doing things.
- 5 The **debate** on testing continues, and educators have yet to find a perfect method of evaluating learning. Until that day comes, old test methods will be used and new test methods will continue to develop. But one thing's for sure, testing will continue to play an important part in all our lives—so study hard!

Reading Skill

Identifying Main and Supporting Ideas

Every paragraph has a main idea, or topic. Often, you will find the main idea is given in the first or second sentence of a paragraph. Supporting ideas usually follow the main idea. Sentences with supporting ideas explain or give more information about the main idea.

A Read paragraph 1 of the passage on the next page. Underline the sentence that best describes the main idea. Circle at least one supporting idea in the paragraph. Discuss your answers with a partner.

B Skim the rest of the passage, then read the following sentences. Circle the sentence that best describes the main idea of each paragraph.

Paragraph 2

- a Multiple-choice style tests are not very effective.
- b Tests are easy to grade but the scores might not be useful.

Paragraph 3

- a Reformers say that other assessment methods are better than tests.
- b Group interviews and portfolios are two ways to assess a person's abilities.

Paragraph 4

- a Some schools do not focus on giving tests to their students.
- b Students can learn from other students as well their teachers.

Paragraph 5

- a New test methods will continue to develop.
- b There is no one best way to test learners.

Reading Comprehension

Check Your Understanding

A Match the sentence parts to make correct statements.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1 ____ Multiple choice tests | a want to find better ways to evaluate students' abilities. |
| 2 ____ Portfolios | b let people demonstrate how they interact with others. |
| 3 ____ Assessments | c have scores that are easy to compare. |
| 4 ____ Educational reformers | d are examples of a student's work. |
| 5 ____ Group interviews | e are tests that measure how much a person has learned. |

B Read the following sentences. Who would agree with each sentence? Check (✓) supporters (S) or reformers (R).

	S	R
1 Multiple-choice tests are a good way to evaluate intelligence.		
2 It is important to see how students communicate with other people.		
3 Students learn better by experiencing instead of memorizing.		
4 A good test should allow examiners to easily compare people.		
5 The classroom should be a place where students prepare for tests.		

Vocabulary Comprehension

Definitions

A Match each word with its definition. The words in blue are from the passage.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1 _____ apply | a discussion about opinions on a topic |
| 2 _____ reform | b to judge or evaluate someone or something |
| 3 _____ measure | c to talk to each other or work together |
| 4 _____ memorize | d different than what is usual or expected |
| 5 _____ assess | e to determine the size or amount of something |
| 6 _____ interact | f to change or improve something |
| 7 _____ alternative | g remember something |
| 8 _____ debate | h to use an idea or skill for a particular situation |

B Complete the following sentences with the words in blue from A. You might have to change the form of the words.

- 1 You can tell she'll be a good mother from the way she _____ with children.
- 2 In a school _____, two teams will discuss the benefits and issues of a certain topic.
- 3 The new principal was considered a(n) _____. His main goal was to change the school's testing system and make it better.
- 4 The only way to learn irregular verb forms is to _____ them.

A Look at the following words and use the suffix *-ize* to write the verb form next to each one. Use your dictionary to help you with spelling.

- 1 standard _____
- 2 theory _____
- 3 modern _____
- 4 revolution _____
- 5 fantasy _____

B Match each verb above to its definition below.

- 1 _____: to form an idea or explanation about something
- 2 _____: to imagine or dream of having things you desire
- 3 _____: to change the way of doing something completely
- 4 _____: to bring something up-to-date; to make it current
- 5 _____: to make things the same or to fit a certain measurement

C Complete the following questions with a verb from A. Make sure you use the correct verb tense. Then answer the questions with a partner.

- 1 What would you do to _____ the look of your apartment?
- 2 Do you ever _____ about where you will live in the future?
- 3 Do you think the Internet has _____ the way people learn?

Vocabulary Skill

The Suffix *-ize*

In this chapter you read the verb *memorize*. One common suffix in English is *-ize* (spelled *-ise* in British English), which means *to make* or *cause to become*.