



Part 1: Travel and sport

Unit 1: Reading Comprehension

This unit focuses on reading for gist and for specific information, on the selection of key points for summary, and on writers' choice of language.



KEY POINT

You should always read unseen passages twice. First, **skim** the text to get the **gist** (the main ideas and features); then **scan** for specific information to answer the question. When reading papers it is a good idea to spend up to ten minutes reading the passages. There will probably be passages that are written in a fictional **style** and contain description, as well as those that are factual and informative. If there are two passages, you are advised to answer the questions on the first passage before you read the second passage so that there is no confusion between the two, especially if they are on a similar topic.

- 1 You are going to read a passage about an island. To get you in the mood, with your partner jot down words associated with islands. Create a **mind map** to connect all the ideas that you can think of.
- 2 Looking at your mind map, think about possible answers to the following questions and contribute to class discussion:
 - a Which islands or types of island are you imagining?
 - b Why are islands generally considered attractive?
 - c What are the disadvantages of living on or being on an island?
- 3 Skim-read the passage below, which is an **informative** piece about the island of Tenerife.



KEY POINT

A summary is a reduced version of a text and its aim is informative. When you **summarise** a passage, you need to identify the key words in the text (single words or **phrases** which tell you what each part of the text is about). It is useful to have a highlighter with you in an exam so that you can annotate the reading passage to select material for any summary questions. Highlight only the essential points rather than whole sentences or paragraphs.

These are the parts of a passage **not** to use in your response to Activity 6: repetitions, minor details, quotations or **direct speech**, **imagery**, examples, lists.



KEY POINT

Paragraphing is a logical way of dividing text. Paragraphs usually consist of several sentences which group similar information together. A break between paragraphs shows a change of topic, time or place. As well as being necessary for structuring text, paragraphs are a courtesy to the reader to aid their understanding.

VOCABULARY

archipelago: group of islands

- 4 Without looking at the passage, answer the following general questions on Tenerife. Compare your answers with those of a partner, then check the passage to see who is right.
 - a What are the most noticeable features of the scenery?
 - b What can tourists spend their time doing?
 - c What is the temperature like?
 - d What contributes to the economy?
 - e What is there to see?
- 5 Scan the passage and find the single word in each paragraph which could be used as a topic heading for that paragraph. Are your choices the same as your partner's?

Taking a trip round

Tenerife

The Spanish island of Tenerife lies about 300 km off the West African coast, and is the largest, most populous and most productive of the seven Canary Islands, believed to be named after the ferocious dogs (*canaria*) found there by early explorers. Santa Cruz is its capital, and the shared capital (with Las Palmas) of the whole **archipelago**.

This rugged, rocky and steep island looks up to El Teide, the third largest volcano in the world and the highest point in Spain at 3718 m. Its often snow-covered peak gave the island its name, which means 'white mountain'. Ravines and valleys are another striking feature of the island's terrain, some of them formed by volcanic eruptions, four of which were recorded between 1704 and 1909. The island has 342 km of coastline and boasts nearly 70 km of beach, the ones on the northern coast consisting of black sand rather than the lighter, finer sand of the south. The island

has two distinct landscapes and atmospheres: the lush, green north and the barren, developed south.

Tenerife is known as the 'Island of Eternal Spring'; since it is on the same latitude as the Sahara Desert, it enjoys a warm climate and plenty of sunshine all year round. However, the trade winds create cloud and cold sea currents, keeping temperatures moderate, with an average of 13–18 °C in the winter and 24–28 °C in the summer.

The Canaries are one of the major tourist destinations in the world and tourism is Tenerife's main industry, with about five million visitors each year using one of its two airports. There are two main highways crossing the island, as well as dizzying narrow mountain roads in the north. Tourists mainly visit the south of the island, which is hotter and drier and has many resorts, such as Playa de las Americas and Los Cristianos. The only new hotels





KEY POINT

If you are asked to respond to a question ‘in your own words’, be careful to avoid ‘lifting’ from the text, i.e. copying whole phrases or sentences. This gives the impression that you have not understood the passage. It is not necessary to change every single word, however.

- 6 With a partner, in pencil or on a copy of the passage put brackets around the material you would **not** use in a summary about the island.
- 7 Skim the passage below about Cape Town, and decide where it should be divided into paragraphs.
- 8 How many paragraphs did you make? Compare and discuss with your partner why you would put breaks in the places you chose.
- 9 Scan the passage and for each of the paragraphs think of a heading to indicate its topic, as if for a tourist **brochure**. This time, instead of using words from the passage, think of **synonyms** (words or phrases with the same meaning) where possible.

permitted to be built must be of 5-star quality to promote environmentally conscious development.

The area known as Costa Adeje has many world-class facilities and leisure activities to offer besides sea and sand, such as quality shopping centres, golf courses, restaurants, waterparks, animal parks and a theatre. In February, visitors can enjoy one of the world’s largest carnivals. The distinctive local craft is Tenerife lace – the embroidery of stretched cloth for table linen – which visitors can see being made. Wildlife attractions are the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, opened in 2013, the botanical gardens in Puerto de la Cruz and a butterfly park in Icod de los Vinos.

Agriculture contributes only 10% to the island’s economy but it supports the landscape and the cultural values of the island. In the coastal areas, tomatoes and bananas are cultivated, and these are exported to mainland Spain and the rest of Europe. At lower and drier altitudes, potatoes, tobacco and maize are the most common crops. Grapes are grown on steep north-facing slopes and onions in the south. Flowers are also produced for the export market. The islands are important to Spain as fishing grounds.

Tenerife has several archaeological sites, consisting mainly of the cave paintings prevalent in the south. Also noteworthy are the buildings called Güímar Pyramids, whose origin is uncertain, and the defensive castles located in the village of San Andrés and elsewhere on the island. There are many other interesting historical buildings, such as the Convent of San Augustin and the Church of San Marcos. Other impressive but more modern structures are the Auditorio de Tenerife, at the entry port to the capital, and the Torres de Santa Cruz, a skyscraper 120 metres high.

There are pretty hill towns to look around, and from one of them, Masca, one can set off on the famous hike down the gorge. This is full of rich vegetation, large and colourful plants, and a range of animal species. Garachico is a small, unspoilt fishing town whose quiet streets are dotted with bars, cafés and gift shops, and there are some superb fish restaurants down by the harbour. Sight-seeing in the nearby smaller town of Icod de los Vinos must include the island’s most prized possession, the Dragon Tree, which stands in a preserved garden and is said to be approximately 1000 years old.



- 10 Summarise in one sentence the attractions Cape Town has for visitors, according to the passage.

CAPE TOWN

DISCOVER SOUTH AFRICA

With its majestic Table Mountain backdrop, Cape Town is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. A harmonious blend of architectural styles reflects the tastes of the past as well as today's more functional requirements. Between the high-rise office blocks, Edwardian and Victorian buildings have been meticulously preserved, and many outstanding examples of Cape Dutch architecture are found. Narrow, cobblestone streets and the strongly Islamic presence of the Bo-Kaap enhance the cosmopolitan ambience of the city. Cape Town's shopping options invite you to endlessly browse. Elegant malls such as the Victoria Wharf at the V & A Waterfront, antique shops, craft markets, flea markets and art galleries abound. Specialist boutiques offer an enticing array of unusual items not readily obtainable elsewhere. One of Cape Town's biggest tourist attractions,

the Waterfront, **evokes** images of the early activities of the harbour. Much of its charm lies in the fact that this busy commercial harbour is set in the midst of a huge entertainment venue with pubs, restaurants, shops, craft markets, theatres and movies. Table Mountain is undeniably the biggest tourist attraction in South Africa, drawing local holidaymakers as well as tourists from the four corners of the globe. The summit can be reached by trails or cable-car, but mountaineers do it the hard way. On a clear day, the spectacular views from the summit (1086 metres above sea level) stretch across the mountainous spine of the Cape Peninsula and beyond Table Bay and Robben Island. Robben Island, which lies about 11 kilometres north of Cape Town, has over the years become synonymous with the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. It was here that activists such as Nelson Mandela and

Walter Sisulu, among many others, were imprisoned because of their opposition to apartheid. The historical importance of Robben Island (meaning 'Seal Island') can be gauged by its designation as a cultural heritage site. Stretching away from Table Bay Harbour, the Atlantic seafront features virgin beaches along undeveloped frontages to the north, and densely populated Sea Point to the south, leading on to the Clifton, Camps Bay and Llandudno beauty spots, among others. The western coastline is characterised by rocky outcrops and beautiful beaches. Major national and international windsurfing competitions are held at Bloubergstrand. Seal-watching is an amusing diversion. Boat trips around the harbour and along the coast are always popular.

Adapted from www.sa-venues.com



Day 56 - Luxor

- 11 Read the passage below, which is about a stop in Egypt during a journey from the North Pole to the South Pole without using air transport.

At 5.35 in the morning the train pulls into Luxor, known by the Greeks as Thebes, 420 miles south of Cairo, in Upper Egypt. I cannot conceal my excitement at being here for the first time in my life.

Luxor Station is tastefully monumental in decoration, with tall columns, gilded details on the doors, eagle heads and a hieroglyphic design somehow incorporating power stations, railways and ancient history. Figures materialise from the pre-dawn gloom to offer us taxi rides. You will never stand on your own for long in Egypt.

We shall be joining a Nile cruise for the next leg of our journey, and as we drive along the river to find our boat – the *Isis* – I can see ranks of chunky four-storeyed vessels, maybe 100 in all, lined up along the riverbank, awaiting the day the tourists come back.

My guide to Luxor is a tall, straight, matchstick-thin aristocrat of the business whose name is Tadorus but who asks me to call him Peter ... 'It's easier.' I would rather call him Tadorus, but he doesn't look the sort you argue with. He is 83 years old, and as a boy of 14 was present when the archaeologist Howard Carter first pushed open the door of Tutankhamun's tomb.

Peter takes me across on the Nile ferry to a cluster of mud buildings on the West Bank opposite the city. We are driven past fields of sugar cane and alongside an irrigation canal financed by the Russians in 1960.

The greenery ends abruptly as we climb a winding road up into barren, rubble-strewn desert. Then we are into the Valley of the Kings, which resembles a gigantic quarry, littered with rock debris, bleached white by the sun. We leave the bus and walk up towards the tombs in dry and scorching heat.

Peter estimates the temperature at 40° Celsius, 104° Fahrenheit.

This vast necropolis contains the remains of 62 Pharaohs of the New Kingdom, established in Thebes between 3000 and 3500 years ago. It was discovered – 'rediscovered', as Peter corrects me – in 1892. Only 40 of the tombs have been found, and all, bar one, had been emptied by robbers.

(Continued)



**TASK TIP**

It is good style, saves time and words, and avoids repetition to use **complex sentences** when writing English. A complex sentence has at least two **clauses** (groups of words containing **finite verbs**): one **main clause**, which could stand as a sentence on its own, and one or more **subordinate clauses**, which are not grammatically complete as sentences and should usually be separated from the main clause by commas. Subordinate clauses are often introduced by **connectives**, and these can go before or after the main clause. There is an example of a complex sentence at the end of the passage on Luxor.

We walk down into the tomb of Rameses III. The walls are covered in rich paintings and complex inscriptions illustrating the progress of the Pharaoh on his journey through the underworld, filled with wicked serpents, crocodiles and other creatures waiting to devour him. Because of the dry desert air, they are well preserved, an extraordinary historical document.

The sun is setting behind the Valley of the Kings when we return on the ferry. At this indescribably beautiful time of day, when the rich golden brown of the lower sky spills onto the surface of the Nile, turning it an intense amber, and the palm trees along the bank glow for a few precious minutes in the reflection, it is not difficult to imagine the power and spectacle of a funeral procession bearing the God-King's body across this same river, three and a half thousand years ago, at the beginning of his last and most important journey.

Adapted from *Pole to Pole*, by Michael Palin, BBC Publishing, London, 1995.

**KEY POINT**

You can often guess a word's meaning from its context, or by recognising the meaning of the **stem** of the word or its **prefix**. You may not need to understand every word in a passage to be able to write a summary of the parts of it that are specified in the question. It will enable you to expand your vocabulary if you keep a personal list of new words, with examples of their usage, during the course. Writing down words helps you to remember them and to use them in your own writing.





KEY POINT

Try to **paraphrase** the information in texts when gathering points together, and to make your phrases shorter than those in the text (see the example in Activity 15). If you are not sure what a word means, it is safer not to change it, although you can still change other words in the phrase. Technical terms often do not have synonyms, or it would take too many words to paraphrase them (e.g. solar heating, irrigation canal).



KEY POINT

When working under timed conditions you probably won't have time to write a draft for your summary, so group and order your material before you begin to write. The best way to **structure** your response is by bracketing and numbering your list of points. Do not confuse a summary with a commentary: you are not required to present information in the same order as in the passage, or to give your views on the material.



TASK TIP

Rather than using one **simple sentence** for each point, try to combine material into longer and more complex sentences. Avoid beginning each sentence the same way or repeating the same structure (e.g. don't start every sentence with *He*) and avoid the overuse of *and*. Before you write each sentence, plan its structure in your head. Check your summary for omissions, repetitions and inaccuracies of fact.

- 12 **Five** words in the passage are underlined. Can you guess their meaning by looking at their **context** (the other words around them)? Use a dictionary to check your guesses, then write synonyms for the six words in your personal vocabulary list.
- 13 Which words and phrases in the passage best illustrate the appearance of:
 - a the West Bank and the Valley of the Kings (paragraph 5)?
 - b the tomb of Rameses III (paragraph 8)?
 - c the Nile at sunset (paragraph 9)?

For each of your choices, explain why they are effective.

- 14 Scan the passage for the information given about Luxor and identify the key phrases.

- 15 Make a grid as shown below and list the key phrases and your paraphrases.

Key phrase	Point
<i>barren, rubble-strewn desert</i>	<i>wasteland</i>

- 16 Use your answers to Activities 5 and 15 to summarise the characteristics of **a** Tenerife and **b** Luxor in about 100 words *in total*. Use one paragraph for each place.
- 17 As a class, discuss what you already know or think about the following topics:
 - a Robinson Crusoe
 - b desert islands
 - c books, films or television series set on desert islands
 - d survival techniques.
- 18 Read the text below about Robinson Crusoe, which is an extract from a novel written in 1719 that includes journal entries.
- 19 In one sentence, describe the situation of Robinson Crusoe on the Island of Despair by answering these questions in any order:
 - Who is he?
 - What happened to him?
 - When did it happen?
 - Where is he?
 - How did he get there?
- 20 You are going to write a summary of Robinson Crusoe's:
 - needs
 - difficulties
 - fears
 - disappointments.

First, make brief notes under each heading. Then, write a one-paragraph summary, in modern English, using all your notes.

**KEY POINT**

When changing information into your own words and trying to reduce their number, there is a danger that you may express something in a way that is no longer strictly true, for example 'the majority of the island' is not the same as 'many parts of the island'. You need to be careful that the content of your summary is factually accurate.

**KEY POINT**

The skill of understanding implicit meanings and attitudes is an important one to demonstrate when responding to unseen reading passages. Implicit meanings are meanings that you can infer from the text – things that are implied rather than actually stated. One of the ways you can demonstrate an ability to infer ideas from a passage, and so show a deeper level of understanding of it, is by predicting what may happen in the future. Your predictions must be based on material actually contained in the passage.

Robinson Crusoe

September 30, 1659.

I, poor miserable Robinson Crusoe, being shipwrecked, during a dreadful storm, came on shore on this dismal unfortunate island, which I called the Island of Despair, all the rest of the ship's company being drowned, and myself almost dead.

All the rest of that day I spent in afflicting myself at the dismal circumstances I was brought to, viz. I had neither food, house, clothes, weapon, or place to fly to; and in despair of any relief, saw nothing but death before me; either that I should be devoured by wild beasts, murdered by savages, or starved to death for want of food. At the approach of night, I slept in a tree for fear of wild creatures, but slept soundly, though it rained all night.

From the 1st of October to the 24th.

All these days entirely spent in many several voyages to get all I could out of the ship, which I brought on shore, every tide of flood, upon rafts. Much rain also in these days, though with some intervals of fair weather; but, it seems, this was the rainy season.

October 26.

I walked about the shore almost all day to find out a place to fix my habitation, greatly concerned to secure myself from an attack in the night, either from wild beasts or men. Towards night I fixed upon a proper place under a rock, and marked out a semicircle for my encampment, which I resolved to strengthen with a work, wall, or fortification ...

The 31st.

in the morning, I went out into the island with my gun to see for some food, and discover the country; when I killed a she-goat, and her kid followed me home, which I afterwards killed also, because it would not feed.

November 1.

I set up my tent under a rock, and lay there for the first night, making it as large as I could, with stakes driven in to swing my hammock upon.

November 17.

This day I began to dig behind my tent into the rock. Note, three things I wanted exceedingly for this work, viz. a pick-axe, a shovel, and a wheelbarrow or basket; so I ceased my work, and began to consider how to supply that want and make me some tools. A spade was so absolutely necessary, that indeed I could do nothing effectually without it; but what kind of one to make, I knew not.



January 1.

Very hot still, but I went abroad early and late with my gun, and lay still in the middle of the day. This evening, going farther into the valleys which lay towards the centre of the island, I found there was plenty of goats, though exceeding shy, and hard to come at. However, I resolved to try if I could not bring my dog to hunt them down.

January 2.

Accordingly, the next day, I went out with my dog, and set him upon the goats; but I was mistaken, for they all faced about upon the dog; and he knew his danger too well, for he would not come near them.

January 3.

I began my fence or wall; which being still fearful of my being attacked by somebody, I resolved to make very thick and strong.

All this time I worked very hard, the rains hindering me many days, nay, sometimes weeks together; but I thought I should never be perfectly secure till this wall was finished. And it is scarce credible what inexpressible labour everything was done with, especially the bringing piles out of the woods, and driving them into the ground; for I made them much bigger than I need to have done.

In the next place, I was at a great loss for candle; so that as soon as ever it was dark, which was generally by seven o'clock, I was obliged to go to bed.

Adapted from *Robinson Crusoe*, by Daniel Defoe.

**KEY POINT**

Reading papers usually ask candidates to select and comment on language from a passage which gives a particular impression to the reader. Select and quote a range of short phrases (usually not more than two or three words each), and make clear that you understand both their meaning and their effect. In Further practice Activity c, your reasons for preferring a destination should be linked to the descriptive phrases which make it seem attractive, and the response each one evokes in you as a reader.

- 21 With your partner, list future incidents or problems which Robinson Crusoe may face later in the novel, based on evidence in the extract. Share and support your predictions with the rest of the class.

+ Further practice

- You have become stranded on a desert island! Write a description of the imaginary island. Think about its landscape, climate, vegetation, wildlife, food and water sources. You can use information from the island passages in Activities 3 and 18 of this unit to give you ideas.
- List the main features of your home town or rural area. Use the list to write an information leaflet for tourists, using bullet points. Group the points, divide them into sections, and give a topic heading to each section (e.g. *Things to see*). The passage in Activity 7 will help you with ideas.
- From what you have read in this unit, would you rather visit Tenerife, Cape Town or Luxor? Write the reasons for your preference, using details from the texts.