

## 4.5 Keeping it brief

### Teaching notes

**To practise** Writing a memo or fax after skimming and scanning a text.

**Level** Elementary or intermediate/upper-intermediate.

**Pre-experience learners** No special preparation needed.

**Class size** Two plus.

**One-to-one** Yes.

**Overall timing** Elementary: 75–90 minutes.  
 Intermediate/upper-intermediate:  
 45–75 minutes.

**Potentially difficult vocabulary** Elementary: *squid, prawns, trout, cod, pastry*

**You will need** One copy of the appropriate level **Questions** (p54–5) and a **Worksheet** (p56–7) per student. The two sets of questions for that level on either separate OHTs or different sheets of a flipchart/poster. A newspaper or company report and a local transport timetable. Blank OHTs and non-permanent pens.

### Procedure

**1** Introduce the topic of skim reading by opening the newspaper/report and flipping the pages. Ask if students sometimes do the same thing when they read a paper, to get a general idea of its contents. Give them a brief run down of the impression you receive by skimming. Now use the timetable to explain what scan reading is. Ask if students would ever read the whole thing in detail, and why not. Elicit the idea of scan reading for a select piece of information.

**2** Provide each student with a **Questions** sheet and a **Worksheet**, face down so they cannot see it. Write the first question (from A) on the board (or reveal it if you are using an OHT). Now give your students 30 seconds to check the answer by turning over their sheets and skimming the information there.

**Answers**

Elementary: 1) No (3 courses).

Intermediate/Upper-intermediate: 1) Yes (good choice of meals, sports, dance and theatre).

**3** Now reveal all the **part A** questions and provide a time limit for students to answer the 'scan' questions (about three to five minutes).

**Answers**

Elementary: 2) Soup, melon, garlic mushrooms, vegetarian *vol-au-vent* and all desserts. 3) Fisherman's pie or trout. 4) Cheese and biscuits/fruit salad without ice cream. 5) Squid, *vol-au-vent*, trout or spaghetti.

Intermediate/Upper-intermediate: 2) No, VAT is excluded. 3) Single rooms, the crèche, audio-visual equipment and the conference banquet. 4) 10 basic rooms = £600 for one night. 5) £10. 6) £20. 7) 45 minutes (7.15–8.00 am).

**4** When the time is up, students compare their answers in pairs, then give you feedback.

**5** Tell students they now have to write an urgent memo (for elementary level) or fax (for intermediate/upper-intermediate level). It will be based on the text they have been scanning. Display **Questions part B**. Emphasize the time limit (30 minutes, elementary; 20, intermediate/upper-intermediate). This will encourage students to scan and skim read. Students should work in pairs or threes, with one person as secretary. If possible, give students an OHT and pens so their work can be discussed with the class as soon as they have finished.

### Feedback

With texts written on OHT, display to the class, praise good language and invite peer/self-correction of errors. If the texts are on paper,

take them in, mark and provide group feedback next session (see section on this).

## Questions: Elementary

### Part A

- 1 Are four courses offered on this menu?
- 2 If you do not eat meat or fish, what can you eat at this restaurant?
- 3 What would you ask for if you liked fish?
- 4 Which is the best dessert if you do not like sweet food?
- 5 If you like salad with your main course, what should you order?

### Part B

#### Writing a memo

Your manager is going to have some visitors next week and wants to take them out for an informal lunch locally.

She has asked you to find out what *The Jolly Robin* offers and send her a memo today. The memo should be as brief as possible and answer the manager's questions:

- 1 The company wants to pay a maximum of £17.00 per person.  
How much would an average three course lunch with drinks be at *The Jolly Robin*?
- 2 Is there a reasonable choice of dishes, including at least one vegetarian option?
- 3 Can we book for a party of 15 people the day before? (The visitors' schedule has to be flexible.)

Note: You have an important meeting in half an hour, so you must write this memo before then.

So for starters, that's four melons, one without the cherry, one with a strawberry instead of a cherry ...



## Questions: Intermediate/upper-intermediate

### Part A

- 1 Does the venue seem to offer a good range of catering and leisure facilities?
- 2 Are all prices inclusive?
- 3 Which facilities do you have to book in advance?
- 4 What's the cheapest way to accommodate a group of 40 people together for one night?
- 5 What's the price difference between the cheapest twin room and the most expensive single room?
- 6 If you ordered three meals a day plus morning coffee and full afternoon tea, how much would be the catering cost per person, per day?
- 7 If a train arrived at Wigglington station at 7.15 am, how long would participants have to wait for the first special conference coach?

### Part B

#### Writing a fax

A small group of Scandinavian employees from your Swedish and Danish subsidiaries are coming to visit next week and wish to hold a three-day conference to present ideas and information to managers from your head office. They have heard that Wigglington Hall may be suitable and have asked you to check. The leaflet from the Hall has been on your desk for over a week and now your secretary has left you this urgent message.



URGENT! 10.15 am

Mr Kastrup from the Danish subsidiary called.

Please send him a fax today by 12 noon.

(Fax no: +45-12-348790.) He needs to know about these things:

- Facilities for children and families
- Single room options
- Flexible catering or fixed meals included in price of room? (Prefers flexibility.)
- Small meeting rooms for up to 28 people (must have audio-visual equipment and word processors).

It is now 11.30 am. You have about 20 minutes to write the fax, allowing ten minutes to send it. (The machine is sometimes busy.) Scan the leaflet for the information you want to include and write the fax.

## Worksheet: Elementary

 <i>The Jolly Robin</i> 	
<b>Menu</b>	
<b>Starters</b>	
 <b>Melon boat</b> – half a melon with cherry and a slice of orange	£1.75 
<b>Cream of mushroom soup</b>	£1.50
 <b>Prawn cocktail</b> – seafood favourite with tangy mayonnaise	£2.35 
<b>Pâté and toast</b> – made with lamb's liver	£2.00
<b>Garlic mushrooms</b> – gently cooked in butter, garlic and herbs	£1.90
<b>Main Courses</b>	
 <b>Deep fried squid</b> with chips and salad	£7.80 
<b>Steak au poivre</b> with baked potato and two vegetables	£8.95
 <b>Shepherd's pie</b> – minced beef, onion and tomatoes topped with crispy mashed potato; served with two vegetables	£5.95 
<b>Fisherman's pie</b> – cod in a creamy sauce with mashed potato and cheese topping	£5.95
<b>Vegetarian vol-au-vent</b> – a mixture of fresh vegetables in a light, puff pastry case served with a large salad	£5.95
<b>Trout with almonds</b> accompanied by bread and butter and a green salad	£7.95
 <b>Spaghetti supreme</b> – beef in a tomato, mushroom and onion sauce on a bed of fresh pasta; served with salad	£6.45 
<b>Desserts</b>	
<b>Double chocolate gâteau</b> served with fresh cream	£2.50
<b>Fresh fruit salad</b> (plus ice cream, 50p extra)	£2.35
 <b>English trifle</b> (sponge cake with sherry, fruit, custard and cream)	£3.00 
<b>Fruit sorbet</b> – a frozen dessert made with fruit, sugar and water	£2.50
<b>A selection of cheese and biscuits</b>	£3.00
<b>Drinks</b>	
 Wines ranging from £7.00 per bottle for house red or white to £20 for champagne. See wine list.	
Fruit juices, minerals and sparkling water	90p
Coffee	£1.10
Tea	£1.00
Herbal teas	£1.10
 A full range of liqueurs available from £2.20–£3.50 each	
<b>PARTY BOOKINGS WELCOMED. (Please book at least 24 hours in advance)</b>	

**Worksheet: Intermediate/upper-intermediate**


## WIGGLINGTON HALL

### CONFERENCE FACILITIES

#### Accommodation

Lecture hall ( <i>seats 300</i> )	£500 per day
Minor hall ( <i>seats 50</i> )	£100 per day
Lecture rooms ( <i>15 available, seat 25 people</i> )	£25 per day
20 twin standard* rooms for two people	£40 one night
Four single standard* rooms	£35 one night
Five luxury twin rooms with ensuite bathroom	£60 one night
Two luxury single rooms with ensuite bathroom	£50 one night
15 basic rooms for four people sharing with washing facilities outside the room	£60 one night
Five family rooms ( <i>double bed plus bunk beds</i> )	£65 one night

\*Standard rooms have their own washbasin but no shower or bath.

Single room provision is limited; please book well in advance.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT PRICES ARE PER ROOM, NOT PER PERSON.**

#### Leisure

Dance hall with disco facilities	£300 per day
Theatre ( <i>seats 350</i> )	£600 per day
Gymnasium ( <i>price includes staffing</i> )	£400 per day
Use of swimming pool, sauna and jacuzzi	£200 per day

VAT at 17.5% will be added to all bills.

Audio-visual equipment may be reserved in advance at no extra charge.

All room prices include supervised car parking, 24-hour security, clean linen and room service, as well as a supply of tea and coffee in all standard and luxury rooms.



#### Catering

(All prices for one day.)	per person
Continental breakfast	£4.00
Half board – breakfast and evening meal	£9.00
Full board – three meals per day	£15.00
Morning coffee	£1.50
Tea and biscuits	£1.50
Full afternoon tea (with fresh pastries)	£3.50
Conference special banquet (please book at least one month ahead)	£25.00

#### Extra facilities

Coach transportation from the railway station (holds 52 persons)  
 Arrives at the station on the hour and half-past the hour.

Half-day service (8.00 – 13.00)	£175
Full-day service (8.00 – 21.00)	£400

Crèche facilities for children age three to ten years are available from 9.00 – 16.00 each day. Cost: £4.00 per child per day. MUST BE BOOKED WELL IN ADVANCE AS THERE IS A LIMITED NUMBER OF PLACES.