

# Reading the signs

## Warm up

Ask students to stand up. Tell them that you are going to give them some very short instructions. They must **show** they understand the instruction by miming the action. To help those who don't understand an instruction, point to a student who is doing the correct mime: *Look at what Anna is doing*. Of course, if no one understands the instruction, show by example and test again later. Choose from the following instructions or think of others:

*Push. Pull. Press. Lift. Twist. Lock. Unlock. Shake. Pick up. Put down.*

*Press the button. Turn the handle clockwise. Turn the handle anti-clockwise.*

*Shake the bottle well before opening. Twist off the cap. Replace the cap firmly after use.*

*Light the candles. Blow out the candles. Fasten your seatbelt. Check your rear view mirror. Ring the bell for assistance.*

*Insert coins and select option. Sign your name.*

*Fold the paper in half. Pump up the tyres. Blow up the balloon. Look both ways before crossing the road. Peel the potatoes. Cut the cheese into cubes. Now wash your hands. Shake excess water from hands and rub hands gently in air stream. Bell out of order, please knock. Switch off light before leaving.*

*Bell out of order, please knock. Switch off light before leaving.*

Repeat the instructions in a different order. As you do so, discuss where and when you might hear or see such instructions, and why you might follow them.

## Main activities

Students can do these activities in pairs or small groups.

- 1** Ask students what types of signs or notices they might see in a street, a public building and a park.  
 Give out the activity sheets.  
 After doing the exercise, discuss with students what the signs and notices mean. For example: FOR SALE and TO LET can both be signs outside a house or flat. The first one indicates that the owner wants to **sell** the property, and the second one that the owner is looking for a tenant to **rent** the property.

### Answers

In a street: Closed; No parking; To let; For sale

In a building: Way out; Visitors must report to reception; Fire exit

In a park: No bathing; Keep off the flowerbeds; Dogs must be kept on a lead

- 2** The symbols are a convenient way of conveying information that can also be expressed verbally.

### Suggested answers

- A** Information: At a station or airport or a public event like an exhibition  
**B** Men's and women's toilets: On the doors of toilets/washrooms  
**C** No entry (one-way street): A traffic sign at the entrance to a road  
**D** No smoking: In public buildings, buses, trains, etc.

**E** Recycle: On recycling bins and at collection points; on public information leaflets

**F** Refreshments (food and drink): In a museum; on a motorway

**G** First aid: In a public building, e.g. a school or college

**H** Baby care: In a public building, perhaps on the door of the facility

**I** Children crossing: A traffic sign on a road

### 3

#### Answers

**1** D Theatre    **2** A Hotel    **3** H Hospital

**4** C Construction site    **5** F Supermarket

**6** E Station platform    **7** B Motorway    **8** G Airport

### 4

#### Answers

**1** 7 S    **2** 8 D    **3** 4 S    **4** 1 D    **5** 3 S

**6** 5 D    **7** 6 D    **8** 2 D

## Follow up

- Ask students to look again at the iconic symbols in exercise **2** before they start drawing. (Desk top icons on the computer are also an excellent example of this pictorial shorthand.) Make a class display of the students' work. Students can vote on the best icon.
- Most word-processing software programs include some kind of clip art or image library. You might like to print some of these out for a similar discussion activity.

### EXAM PART

Reading Part 1

### EXAM SKILLS

Understanding signs, notices and instructions

Matching synonymous sentences

### TOPIC

Signs and notices in public places

### TIME

50 minutes

### KEY LANGUAGE

Synonyms and antonyms

Concrete nouns and action verbs

### PREPARATION

One photocopy of the activity page for each student

Reading Part 1 Activity 1

# Reading the signs

**1** Where might you see these signs?  
 • in a street • in a building • in a park  
 What do the signs mean?



**2** What do these symbols mean? Where might you see them?



**3** You can see the following notices in different places. Match the notices 1–8 with the places A–H.

- 1 There will be one interval of 15 minutes.
- 2 PLEASE LEAVE YOUR ROOM BY 11 AM.
- 3 Visiting hours 10.00 am–11.30 am and 5.00 pm–6.30 pm.
- 4 HARD HATS MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES.
- 5 Buy two and get the second half price.
- 6 PLEASE STAND BEHIND THE YELLOW LINE.
- 7 Tiredness can kill: take a break.
- 8 Flight now boarding at gate 17.

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| A Hotel             | E Station platform |
| B Motorway          | F Supermarket      |
| C Construction site | G Airport          |
| D Theatre           | H Hospital         |

**4** Read the notices in exercise 3 again. Match each of the following sentences with one of the notices. If the sentence means the same as the notice, write S; if it means something different, write D. The first one is done as an example.

- 1 It's dangerous to drive when you're tired.  7  S
- 2 You've got plenty of time for shopping before your plane leaves.
- 3 In this place you could be injured if you don't protect your head.
- 4 The play will be performed in one act, without a break.
- 5 You can come to visit a patient in the morning or in the evening.
- 6 If you buy two bags of oranges you can have the second bag free.
- 7 Please let passengers get off the train before you try to get on.
- 8 You cannot leave your room before 11 am.

### Follow up

Draw simple icons to represent the following:

No dogs permitted in the shop • Silence in the library, please • No flash photography • Beware of the dog • No fishing • Music room • Film club • Poisonous

## Reading Part 1 Activity 2

# Didn't you notice the notice?

## Warm up

- Point to one or two examples of signs and notices in the classroom. If they are in English, cover them and test students' recall of them. If they are not in English, write on the board a few signs or notices that might be found in public places. Ask students where they might see them and what they mean. For example:  
*Please do not touch the exhibits.* (A museum or art gallery: don't touch the objects on display, they are valuable!)  
*You must be this height to go on this ride.* (A fairground or theme park: you have to be a certain age to go on this ride. Rather than ask for ID, your size is taken as the measure of your maturity.)  
*All breakages must be paid for.* (A shop selling breakable goods such as china or glassware: if you accidentally break something in the shop you'll have to pay for it.)  
*Your tray table should be in the upright position for take-off and landing.* (An aeroplane: part of the safety instructions/announcement. The little table in front of your seat must be folded away before the plane takes off or lands.)  
*This week only: fantastic bargains on sportswear and swimwear.* (Shop or store selling clothes: the prices of some types of items are reduced for this period.)  
 OR
- Ask students to imagine they are living for a while in an English-speaking country. What signs, notices or instructions might they see in a supermarket, restaurant, museum, or at a swimming pool, railway station, doctor's surgery or internet café?

## Main activities

Students can do these activities in pairs or small groups.

### 1 Give out the activity sheets.

This exercise practises antonyms. It's better not to say too much about the vocabulary before students start to correct the notices/instructions. The meaning of items like *batteries*, *lift* and *feed* should be clear from the pictures. Words like *heat*, *rinse* and *give up* may need explaining afterwards, when checking the answers.

#### Answers

- Remove the **old** batteries and then insert the **new** ones.
- Heat well **before** serving.
- Safety notice: no **more** than 8 persons in this lift.
- Rinse well with **clean** water.
- Special offer: **two** for the price of **one**.
- Please switch **off** your mobile phone before coming into class.
- Please **do not** feed the animals at the zoo.
- It is an offence to travel **without** a ticket.
- Wanted: waiter/waitress – must be **over** 16.
- Please give up this seat to an **older** passenger.

### 2 Introduce a competitive element: the quickest pair or group to sort out the messages correctly is the winner.

#### Answers

- Only one piece of hand luggage is allowed in the cabin.
- Take one or two tablets before meals. (on medication, i.e. a bottle or packet of pills)
- This machine is temporarily out of order. (on a photocopier or other equipment)
- No food or drink in the classrooms, please. (in a school)
- Security cameras in use around this building. (many types of building, business premises, etc.)
- Please do not leave luggage unattended. (at an airport, station, etc).

### 3 Students write signs and notices to put around the classroom. These should obviously be appropriate to their situation, but here are some possible examples:

PUSH (on one side of the door)  
 PULL (on the other side of the door)  
 DO NOT LEAN OUT OF THE WINDOW  
 ONLY EMPTY DRINK CANS IN THE BIN  
 DO NOT LEAVE VALUABLES UNATTENDED IN THIS ROOM  
 LAST PERSON TO LEAVE, PLEASE SWITCH OFF THE LIGHT  
 CAUTION — ELECTRIC CABLES  
 NO FOOD AND DRINK IN HERE, PLEASE  
 ENGLISH ONLY, PLEASE  
 TEACHERS: PLEASE TAKE BOOKS BACK TO THE RESOURCES ROOM

Encourage them to experiment, and don't worry at this stage if the sign or notice is realistic or not. Humour should be allowed, e.g. QUIET PLEASE: STUDENTS ASLEEP.

Students write drafts of their notices.

Check the notices are correct.

Students write their final draft in large bold letters on the pieces of paper provided and then put them around the classroom.

## Follow up

- If your students have access to computers and a printer, they could write their notices on the word-processor using a variety of fonts and even clip art images.
- For learners in an English speaking country:* Ask them to go out and do some field work. For example: 'Write down five short examples of notices you have seen in public places, for example, in a street, park, supermarket, restaurant, museum, swimming pool, railway station, internet café or a doctor's surgery.'

## EXAM PART

### Reading Part 1

## EXAM SKILLS

### Understanding signs, notices and instructions

## TOPIC

### Notices and instructions

## TIME

### 30 minutes

## KEY LANGUAGE

### Antonyms

## Word order in instructions and notices

## PREPARATION

One photocopy of the activity page for each student

Pieces of paper for display of notices (see exercise 3)

Reading Part 1 Activity 2

# Didn't you notice the notice?

**1** Look at these notices. They all contain mistakes. Find the mistakes and correct them.

**1** Remove the new batteries and then insert the old ones. Remove the old batteries and then insert the new ones.



**6** Please switch on your mobile phone before coming into class.



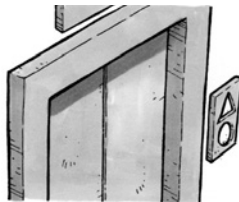
**2** Heat well after serving.



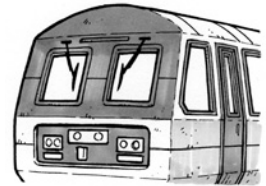
**7** Please feed the animals at the zoo.



**3** Safety notice: no fewer than 8 persons in this lift.



**8** It is an offence to travel with a ticket.



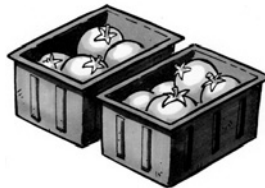
**4** Rinse well with dirty water.



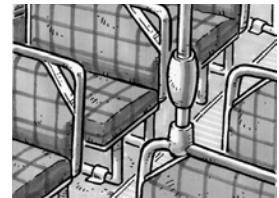
**9** Wanted: waiter/waitress – must be under 16.



**5** Special offer: one for the price of two!



**10** Please give up this seat to a younger passenger.

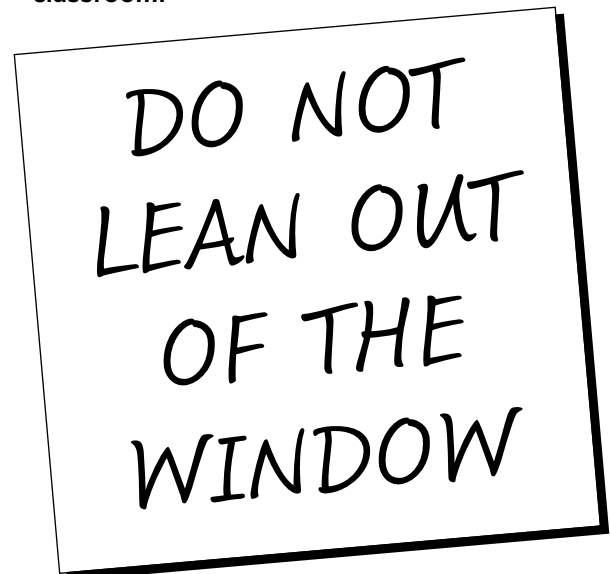


**2** Rearrange the words to make short messages.

- 1** LUGGAGE CABIN IS ONLY THE ONE OF PIECE HAND ALLOWED IN.  
Only one piece of hand luggage is allowed in the cabin.
- 2** ONE MEALS TABLETS OR BEFORE TAKE TWO.
- 3** IS ORDER OF MACHINE THIS OUT TEMPORARILY.
- 4** FOOD PLEASE IN NO THE DRINK OR CLASSROOMS.
- 5** AROUND USE CAMERAS IN BUILDING THIS SECURITY.
- 6** LUGGAGE NOT PLEASE UNATTENDED DO LEAVE.

Where would you see these messages?

**3** Write signs and notices to put up in your classroom.



## Reading Part 1 Activity 3

# Mixed messages

### Warm up

- If you have access to realia in English (authentic functional texts), take in some examples for students to look at and discuss. They could include: a form, some packaging, a timetable, a leaflet (e.g. junk mail), a student ID card, a sticker, a supermarket shopping bill.
- Alternatively, ask students to give examples of types of short text they might read, and possibly write, in everyday life for information and communication. This should elicit some of the following: emails, letters, street signs, notices, advertisements, timetables, recipes, instructions (e.g. with product), post-it notes, postcards, birthday cards, menus. Write suggestions on the board until there is a fairly comprehensive list.

### Main activities

Students can do some of these activities in pairs or small groups.

- 1** Give out the activity sheets.

If you have done the **Warm up** activity on different short text types, students should understand the categories listed here and be able to match them to the texts. You may want to explain some of the vocabulary before or after the task, for example: *allergies, nuts, time off, current, Human Resources, to schedule, to 'make' a time or an appointment, to be 'into' different hobbies or interests, jewellery, follow-up, unemployment, the 'gang'*.

#### Answers

1 E 2 A 3 B 4 F 5 D 6 C

- 2** Make sure students know they have to find the one correct statement for each message.

#### Answers

Correct statements: 1 F 2 C 3 E 4 D 10 A  
 12 B

Incorrect statements: 5 6 7 8 9 11

- 3** When students have written their messages, ask some of them to read them out to the class.

- 4** Students choose **one** of the two replies to write. Make sure they understand the scenario.

#### Model answers

Hello Tommy,

Thanks for your message about the extra practice. Unfortunately, I can't come on Thursday evening because I'm going to watch my brother take part in a swimming competition. But I'd still like to play against Burwater on Saturday. It's true they are good, but I think we can beat them!  
 Cheers,  
 Karl

Karen,

Thanks for returning the DVD. I'm glad you liked it. Thanks for the suggestion, but actually I've already seen *Greased Lightning*. It's great, so you should go and see it.

I know you like dance – the National Ballet Company are coming to the Arts Centre on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Would you like to go? I could book tickets for us both. Let me know.

All the best,  
 Mike

### Follow up

#### Emailing Dracula

Each student chooses to be a famous historical figure or fictitious character. Students then form pairs. They write messages to each other *in character*. The message can be a request, invitation, apology, etc. They should reply, in character, with another written message. Continue like this, depending on the time available.

In pairs, students read out their 'correspondence'. The class votes on which is the funniest message.

### EXAM PART

Reading Part 1

### EXAM SKILLS

Understanding short messages

### TOPIC

Notes and messages

### TIME

50 minutes

### KEY LANGUAGE

Mixed functions, e.g. inviting and responding to invitations, making arrangements, requests

### PREPARATION

One photocopy of the activity page for each student

Some realia (see **Warm up**)

Small strips of paper (see exercise 3)



# Mixed messages

## 1 Read the messages A–F. Match each message with one of the following descriptions.

- 1 A request for advice/suggestions
- 2 A notice on a restaurant menu
- 3 A message about a phone call
- 4 A note left with an object which is being returned to someone
- 5 An email sent to several different people
- 6 An announcement on a staff noticeboard at work

- E



**A** ALLERGIES: Customers who are concerned about nuts in our food are welcome to ask a member of staff for advice when choosing their meal.

**B** Tina,  
 Emma phoned. She can't meet you on Tuesday evening. Wednesday would be OK, Thursday too, but only after 9 pm.  
 Sally

**C** PLEASE NOTE: AS FROM NEXT JANUARY ALL STAFF WILL BE REQUIRED TO HAVE A CERTIFICATE IN FIRST AID. TIME OFF WILL BE GIVEN TO ATTEND A TWO-DAY TRAINING COURSE. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A CURRENT FIRST AID CERTIFICATE, PLEASE SEE JAN MARKS IN HUMAN RESOURCES TO ARRANGE TRAINING.

**D** Message: To all team members  
 From: Tommy@training.co.uk  
 As Saturday's match against Burwater is going to be a difficult one, I think we should schedule an extra practice this week. I suggest Thursday evening at 6.30 at the sports ground. Could you let me know if you can't make this time – otherwise I'll see you there.

**E** Hannah,  
 It's nice of your sister to invite me to her birthday party. I'd like to buy her a present. You're very close to her – what kinds of things is she into? Does she like reading? Or would she prefer a CD, or maybe a T-shirt, or some jewellery? Could you give me some ideas, please, as soon as possible?  
 Thanks.  
 Rick

**F** Mike,  
 Sorry it's taken me so long to return this DVD. I really enjoyed watching it. Have you seen the follow-up, 'Greased Lightning', which is on at the moment? I've heard it's really good. If you haven't, maybe we could go together?  
 Karen

- 1 Karen hasn't seen *Greased Lightning* yet.  F
- 2 Staff can do a training course during work time.
- 3 Rick is asking Hannah for advice.
- 4 Tommy is sending the same message to all the players.
- 5 Mike borrowed a DVD from Karen.
- 6 There are no nuts in the food at this restaurant.
- 7 Sally can't meet Tina on Tuesday evening.
- 8 The players must email Tommy if they intend to come to the extra practice.
- 9 All staff have done a First Aid training course.
- 10 If you are worried you can ask the waiter's advice.
- 11 Hannah's sister prefers music to reading.
- 12 Emma is not free early on Thursday evening.

## 3 Work in pairs. Each of you should choose one of the messages A–F in exercise 1. On a small piece of paper, write two sentences about the message you have chosen, one correct and one incorrect. Give the paper to your partner, who must:

- find which message it refers to
- decide which of your sentences is correct.

## 4 Write an email message to Tommy (text D) to tell him that you won't be able to come to the extra training. Apologise, and explain that you would still like to play in the match against Burwater.

OR

You are Mike (text F). Write your reply to Karen. Thank her for returning the DVD. Explain that you have already seen the film *Greased Lightning*, which you enjoyed very much. You know that Karen likes dance, so suggest a trip to see the National Ballet Company on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

## 2 Here is a list of statements about the six messages. They are in a different order from the messages. There are two statements for each message, but only one of them is correct for each message. Find the correct statement and write the letter next to the appropriate message.

## Reading Part 1 Activity 4

# Exam-style task

### Hints and tips for Reading Part 1

#### What you have to do

- Read six short texts (the first one is an example).
- Read the multiple-choice questions that go with each text.
- Choose your answer from the three options, A, B, C.

#### How to approach it

- First read the text carefully. Where might you see it? Why was it written?
- The style or format of the text (e.g. a postcard) may help you to understand its purpose.
- Read all three options and compare them with the text before choosing your answer.

- Reread your answer and the text again to make sure they express the same idea.

#### How to prepare yourself

- The texts can be notices, signs, messages, postcards or instructions. Try to look at as many examples as you can of this type of text. (You can find some in *Insight into PET* pages 10–11 and *Objective PET* pages 102–103, both published by Cambridge University Press.)
- If possible, follow your own interests – music, sport, fashion, films, whatever they are – by looking at websites and magazines in English.

## PART 1

### Questions 1–5

- Look at the text in each question.
- What does it say?
- Mark the letter next to the correct explanation – A, B or C.

#### Example:

**Unfortunately, tonight's show has been cancelled owing to illness. Tickets can be exchanged or refunded at the box office.**

- A People with tickets for tonight's show can get their money back. ✓
- B Tickets for tonight's show can be bought at the box office.
- C Tickets for tonight's show can be used for a later performance.

1

#### GUITAR LESSONS

*Patient and friendly teacher is taking new students of all levels for acoustic and electric guitar lessons. All styles of music can be covered, plus music theory for those who are interested. Call Jeff on 01982 886510.*



#### Jeff teaches music theory

- A if the student has covered all styles of music.
- B if the student is new to the class.
- C if the student wants to learn it.

**Reading Part 1 Activity 4**

**2** **Thameslink will offer a revised service from Brighton to London. Some early services will be replaced by bus between Brighton and Three Bridges.**

- A** If you travel early you may have to travel part of your journey by bus.
- B** From Three Bridges station you will be taken by bus to London.
- C** There will not be any Thameslink trains from Brighton to Three Bridges.


**3** *Please make sure all your child's school clothes are marked with their name. This helps us to return lost items to the children.*

- A** Children's clothes must have the name of the school on them.
- B** The school will mark clothes with the children's names.
- C** School clothes should have the child's name on them.

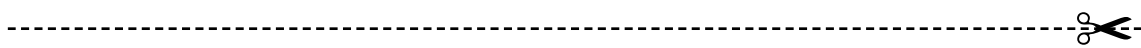
**4** *Dear Annette,*  
*You were right — Daleport is lovely. I'm so glad we listened to you and not to John. I wonder why he disliked it so much.*  
*Love, Meg*

- A** Meg is surprised that John liked Daleport.
- B** Meg thinks John should visit Daleport.
- C** Meg followed Annette's advice.

**5** **Children with a bus ID card pay only 25% of the full fare on schooldays up until 6 pm. And if they're travelling with an adult, the same discount applies at weekends too.**



- A** Adults with children pay only 25% fare at the weekends.
- B** With a bus ID card travel is cheaper for children going to and from school.
- C** Children cannot use their bus ID cards at the weekend.



**Answers**  
 1 C 2 A 3 C 4 C 5 B