

## CHAPTER 3

READING  
PART B

### Format of Reading Part B

In your work as a healthcare professional, you often need to read a lot of workplace communications such as guidelines, manuals, emails, memos and policy documents. The purpose of these communications is to help you work according to the standards of an organisation, and to understand changes and updates to existing workplace requirements. Part B focuses on workplace communications and assesses a range of reading skills, particularly your ability to recognise their main message, purpose and details.

There are six extracts, each about 100–140 words. These may be complete, for example, an email on a change in policy, or a part of a longer text, such as a policy on patient safety.

Part B contains only six questions, all in a three-option multiple choice format. There is a total of six marks, each question carrying one mark. To answer, you need to shade the circle next to the option you believe is correct, in a separate answer booklet that will be given to you with your question paper. The total time available for both Parts B and C is 45 minutes, so you need to manage your time effectively. Part C has more questions than Part B, so you need to leave more time for Part C.

### Preparing for Reading Part B

You can expect to read a variety of workplace communications in the test, so a good way to approach these questions is to think about what kind of information the communication contains, and what your purpose for reading it might be in a healthcare setting. Just like any other part of the Reading sub-test, questions in Part B reflect the real-life purpose of reading, so approaching it from that point of view

will help you prepare. For example, if a patient refuses to allow marking of the surgical site before an operation, you would check the pre-operative guidelines to see what you should do. A Part B question on pre-operative guidelines may ask you to identify what the guidelines say about what to do if patients refuse pre-operative surgical site marking.

You are always told what type of communication the extract in a Part B question is taken from, so you will know what you're reading about. You will also be given some background information in the context sentence, which will help you understand its setting. Take time to understand the context before reading the extract and answering the question. A good strategy is to focus on what the extract as a whole is conveying, and on what the question is asking you to do.

To do this, ask yourself:

- What kind of extract is this and who are the intended readers?
- Why would the readers need to read this sort of communication?
- What is the question asking me to do?

Use the context given in the extract and the question before deciding on your answer. Once you read the extract with the context in mind, you'll be able to focus on its meaning, rather than approach it in isolation.

## Reading questions and answer options

Workplace communications typically contain specific verbs that carry subtle but significant differences in meaning. It's important to pay attention to these words when reading extracts and answer options, because they can help you better understand the meaning of the text or the question.

For example, the words 'supervise' and 'delegate' are typically used in the context of communications for staff in charge of a department, and although related, they mean different things. For example, if a notice instructs senior nurses to *delegate* certain tasks during busy periods, then a senior nurse would need to decide which tasks are suitable for *delegating* (giving) to other members of staff, and would then need to *supervise* (oversee) these staff to ensure they were carrying out the delegated tasks properly. Understanding the difference in meaning between these two words is crucial.

Similarly, answer options in Part B questions may also contain verbs that could help you understand what the question is asking. Look at the following short extract from an email to nurses in charge of operating rooms, and a sample question.

Charge nurses are instructed to assign responsibility of assessing availability of rooms and room allocation to another nurse in the Operating Room (OR) team. However, please continue to oversee patient flow from other units into the OR. It is imperative to continue all other work related to scheduling of patients with the attending anaesthesiologist.

The email asks charge nurses to

- (A) *delegate* distribution of rooms.
- (B) *supervise* the anaesthesiologist.
- (C) *authorise* OR team members to perform surgery.

If you understand the meaning of the three verbs in italics, you'll be able to answer the question since you can connect the meaning in the answer options to the meaning of the extract. In this example, the answer is Option A since the only responsibility charge nurses can 'delegate', or give away, to another team member is assessing the availability and distribution of rooms.

### Task 1

Match the verbs with their meanings.

Verb	Meaning	Answer
1. install	a. watch regularly to find out what's happening	1 – b
2. set up	b. fix or connect equipment, usually for the first time	
3. supervise	c. give part of your work or duties to someone else	
4. delegate	d. use a tool to find the exact size or amount of something	
5. authorise	e. make something ready to use	
6. adjust	f. examine something to find out if it's working properly	
7. measure	g. approve or give permission to something	
8. monitor	h. check that someone is doing something correctly	
9. check	i. begin	
10. initiate	j. change something to make it more accurate	

### Reading details in workplace communication

Every organisation communicates to its employees through emails, memos, guidelines or policies. The way you read them depends on your purpose for doing so. For example, you usually consult guidelines or policies when faced with a problem or unusual situation and want to know what to do. When looking for advice in a guideline or policy, you read one or two details carefully. Some Part B questions test your ability to read for detail. This means you read some pieces of information very carefully, paying attention to the meaning of a particular part of the text.

#### Guidelines

Guideline extracts in Part B typically deal with work practices related to the administration and implementation of safety procedures. In Part B, you may read a small part of a set of such guidelines on a subject. This guideline extract has a heading, and is usually numbered to show that it's part of a bigger set of guidelines.

When you read these kinds of guidelines, you probably look for what they say on a particular issue, so it's often the case that in these types of questions you need to read certain sentences of the extract more carefully than others. For example, you may be asked to read a detail relating to

- when to do something
- how to do something
- why it is important to do something

When answering these questions, focus on a part of the extract rather than the whole text, and read the question carefully to understand exactly what you need to look for.

## Task 2

Read these sentences from Part B extracts from guidelines that will be used in the tasks in this Chapter. Identify whether the sentence tells you when to do something, how to do something, or why it's important to do something.

What the guideline says ...	When, how or why?
a. Patients must be referred to a doctor and evaluated immediately should their oxygen saturation levels fall suddenly.	When it is necessary to refer a patient to a doctor
b. A patient's oxygen saturation levels must be recorded at the same time as their vital signs, as frequently as their condition requires.	
c. Deterioration in a patient's condition can be assessed by observing their skin colour and respiratory rate.	
d. 'Standing' is offered to patients post-discharge after first introducing the procedure during their hospital admission.	
e. Chlorhexidine mouthwashes can reduce the level of plaque and bacteria, but should not be used more than twice a day because of their alcohol content.	

Look at an example of a question about guideline extract 4.2.3 on the next page.

### Part B Question 1

1. The extract from the guidelines reminds nurses to monitor oxygen saturation levels
- (A) when a patient's condition changes unexpectedly.
  - (B) less frequently in patients with certain conditions.
  - (C) with other observations to assess a patient's condition.

If you think about the wording of question 1 and its implications, this kind of guideline extract would probably be consulted by nurses when they want to check whether they're doing something correctly. The question asks what the guidelines 'remind' nurses to do. Their purpose for reading is to look for the reminder about what they must do. In the question, the word 'monitor' means observing or checking over a period of time, so they're looking for guidance on *when* to do something. In this case, they need to look for guidance on when to monitor oxygen saturation levels.

The extract explains that patients should be referred to a doctor if their saturation levels drop. It also describes how to tell if a patient's condition has deteriorated. However, there is only one sentence that explains when to record their oxygen saturation levels.

Now, read the extract with this context in mind and then answer the question.

### 4.2.3 Oxygen saturation levels

Patients must be referred to a doctor and evaluated immediately should their oxygen saturation levels fall suddenly. The Early Warning Score (EWS) protocol gives medical and nursing staff guidance about which oxygen saturation levels should be reported (< 90%). A patient's oxygen saturation levels must be recorded at the same time as their vital signs as frequently as their condition requires. Deterioration in a patient's condition can be assessed by observing a patient's skin colour and respiratory rate. A bluish tinge to the skin can indicate peripheral cyanosis whilst a respiratory rate of less than 8, or more than 25, is outside the normal respiratory rate range.

Now that you've understood how to read guidelines with a context and purpose, try and answer a Part B question based on a notice using the same approach. To help you understand how to do this, the context and purpose have been described in the table below with the help of three questions.

a. What kind of extract is this, and who are the intended readers?	It is a notice for care home staff.
b. Why would the readers need to read this sort of communication?	The notice may be announcing a new update, informing them of changes, or reminding them to do something.
c. What is the question asking me to do?	It is asking me to find out what care home staff need to do regarding residents who manage their own medication.

Now answer Part B Question 2, referring to the notice below for context and purpose.

### Part B Question 2

2. The notice is informing care home staff of the need to
- (A) supervise residents closely if they're managing their own medication.
  - (B) encourage residents who would like to manage their own medication.
  - (C) monitor residents to ensure that they are able to manage their own medication.

### Self-administration of medications

Care home staff should assume that residents can manage their own medicines, unless a risk assessment indicates otherwise. An individual risk assessment should always be undertaken to determine how much support is needed by a resident to continue their self-administration of medications. Risk assessments take a resident's wishes into consideration as well as deciding whether residents may be harmed, should they continue managing their own medications. Mental capacity plays a part in whether the correct dose and time of administration can be followed, so regular reviews of the risk assessment must be performed. The frequency of the risk assessment will be based on the individual needs of each resident, and must involve both the resident and their family in the decision-making.

## Reading for main ideas in workplace communications

You may also be asked to identify the main idea in a workplace communication. This requires reading for the overall message of the extract rather than for one or two details.

In order to recognise the main idea, identify what each sentence is about. The sentences may be instructions, reasons, examples or descriptions of the main idea. One or two details in the extract may not be related to the main idea, so focus on the overall meaning rather than worrying about one or two details.

## Guidelines

You may consult guidelines when you want to know what to do in a particular situation or when faced with a specific issue.

Look at the following extract from some guidelines on oral hygiene. Think about the key phrases in each sentence. Some words have been highlighted to help you.

### 4.2.1 Oral hygiene

Mouthwash should be available for patients; they may prefer to use their own but those that contain alcohol can have a drying effect on the mouth. Chlorhexidine mouthwashes can reduce the level of plaque and bacteria but should not be used more than twice a day because of their alcohol content. Using 0.9% saline is advised as this does not affect the pH of saliva and is flavourless. Lemon and glycerine swabs are discouraged – the lemon's acidity damages tooth enamel and glycerine draws fluid away from the tissues, reducing saliva production. Glycerol or petroleum jelly can be applied to the lips but can feel sticky; patients' own lip balm or a water-soluble gel can be used.

Most of the sentences in this extract talk about appropriate ways to maintain oral hygiene without affecting saliva.

The main idea of this guideline extract is how to maintain moisture balance in the mouth when using oral hygiene products. Most of the sentences in the extract are about products to use or avoid in order to maintain moisture balance in the mouth.

## Task 3

Look at the following guideline extracts and select the main idea that fits each one best. As you read, pay attention to what the reasons, examples, descriptions or instructions are about.

### Extract 1

#### 5.1.3 Pre-operative ECG

ECG is recommended for patients who are known to have coronary heart disease, significant arrhythmia, peripheral arterial disease, cerebrovascular disease or any other significant structural heart disease – except when undergoing low risk surgery.

ECG is reasonable for patients who are undergoing vascular surgery but have no clinical risk factors, or for patients with one or more clinical risk factors who are scheduled for intermediate risk surgery.

Low risk patients who are undergoing low risk surgeries do not need any ECG; nor do patients undergoing cataract surgery.

1. Which of the following is the best main idea for the extract?

- (A) classification of patients for testing
- (B) exceptions to testing
- (C) precautions to take when testing

### Extract 2

#### 3.2.3 Preparation for surgery: Hand scrub

All staff working on the surgical team must use an antiseptic solution to scrub arms and hands for a minimum of two minutes before the first procedure of the day. For subsequent procedures, a shorter period is acceptable. A thorough cleaning under fingernails is necessary for the first scrub of the day. After the surgical scrub, members of the surgical team are advised to keep their hands up and away from the body to allow water to drip away from the tips of the fingers towards the elbows.