

Unit 2: Culture

Lesson 2.1: Reading and understanding writing

Part 1: Introducing the topic

Task 1

Ensure that the students understand how this activity works before starting it, especially as some students/groups may never have come across this kind of activity before. It is probably best to do one or two examples with the class before they start. The students should know the words in the activity, but you might want to check or pre-teach *obedience*, *corruption*, *distributed*, *privacy*, *tolerant* and *ambiguity*.

If you want to do this activity quickly, you might divide the class up into four groups and give each group one section to do. You can then get feedback from each of the four groups. If you feel that the groups may struggle with the task both intellectually and conceptually, you might consider doing it as a whole-group activity.

Task 2

In this activity, it is important for students to provide evidence. Try to create an atmosphere in your class where students feel able to express their own views, but emphasize that these views have to be supported by evidence.

Do not spend too long on feedback at this point, since there will be the opportunity for further discussion about these questions later in the unit. Combined, Tasks 1 and 2 should not take longer than 8–10 minutes.

Part 2: Preparing for the text

Task 3

As a fun warmer to this activity, give the students 20 seconds to draw a flag of their own country. They should then share with a partner.

Ask the class which countries the four flags represent, and then get them to do the activity. Groups who have had exposure to foreign countries should have few problems in doing this activity. For groups who do not have this exposure, you may need to do the activity with the group as a whole and guide them through it.

Task 4

When teaching these words, ensure that you also teach the correct emphasis in pronunciation, i.e., *ambiguity*; *dimension*; *perception*; *values*; *hierarchy*; *context*.

Answers

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. ambiguity | c. where there is more than one possible meaning or interpretation |
| 2. dimension | b. a way of thinking about something |
| 3. perception | d. how something is seen or understood |
| 4. values | a. beliefs or views |
| 5. hierarchy | f. a system in which things are organized from top to bottom |
| 6. context | e. the situation within which something happens |

Part 3: Reading the text

Task 5

Note: This text is also available as a downloadable audio file (Track 2) at garneteducation.com/caw.

This text is 363 words long. For weaker groups, allow 6–8 minutes to read it; for stronger groups, allow 4–5 minutes. Emphasize that students do not need to understand the whole text on the first reading – rather, they are skimming to get a good general idea of what the text is about.

If you feel that the majority of the class have a conceptual problem with the text (i.e., they are finding it difficult to understand the main point of the text), you may wish to go through it with them on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis.

Part 4: Understanding the text

Tasks 6, 7, 8

Give the students around 8–10 minutes to answer the questions. If students finish the task early, get them to write a further answer to Q2 in Task 8, saying whether they personally agree or disagree with Hofstede's theory.

Feedback can be done initially in all groups before you take general class feedback afterwards. This will get the students working together more effectively. Encourage them to come up with a set of answers which they are all happy with. This will mean that they have to explain/defend their position to their fellow students, which is a useful skill.

Task 6 Answers

1. **b.** A cultural theorist
2. **a.** masculinity vs. femininity
b. individualism vs. collectivism
c. uncertainty avoidance
d. power distance
3. **a.** False
b. True
c. False
d. True

Task 7 Answers

1. Very influential, in terms of how people see societies, especially within the business context, although there have been some criticisms as well.
2. Similarly.

Task 8 Answers

1. In societies which are poor, people may feel more secure if they have the support of a wider number of people.
2. Some argue that the reality of the values of different societies is different from the theoretical model proposed by Hofstede. People have also questioned whether the people who respond to the questionnaire form an accurate sample of the whole population. Some argue that the dimensions do not properly capture all the cultural values of society, and that others are needed.

Part 5: Understanding the writing point

Task 9

As a lead-in to this activity, ask the class what would be the effect of a piece of writing which used exactly the same sentence structure all the time (i.e., it would be boring and repetitive). Tell the class that it is therefore important to use a range of different sentence types in English in order to say what you want more effectively, and for your writing to be more interesting for readers.

Before students read the information, quickly check with them the key metalanguage used in the text, otherwise they will find it difficult to understand (i.e., *subject, verb, dependent clause, independent clause, conjunction and pronoun*). You could either do this by brainstorming with the class, or by writing the terms on the board and asking the class to discuss in small groups.

Part 6: Checking your understanding

Task 10

Before students do this task, explain that the sentences must make sense not only grammatically but also conceptually. You might give the class some advice about how to approach this, especially if they are finding the task difficult. For example:

- Go through the list and write *DC* or *IC* next to each line depending on whether it is a dependent or independent clause.
- Identify subordinating/coordinating conjunctions.
- Try to identify which of the parts are talking about the same topic.

As an extension task, if students finish early, or if there is time left at the end of the lesson, or as a piece of homework, students could try to write examples of each sentence type by themselves.

Answers

Two complex sentences

Many Asian, African and Arab countries have a high power distance score, which shows that they have dominant hierarchies.

Some scholars added extra dimensions to Hofstede's theory because they thought it was incomplete.

Two compound sentences

Cultural differences can cause problems in the business context, yet people still value them.

Masculinity scores low in Nordic countries, so it can be inferred that these countries place more emphasis on cooperation.

One complex-compound sentence

It is important to be aware of cultural differences so that communication can be effective, although many companies do not recognize this fact.

Lesson 2.2: Vocabulary, grammar and practising writing

Part 7: Recapping the last lesson

Task 11

Give students 1–2 minutes to go through this section by themselves. Go through the answers with the whole class. Get students to justify their answers and to identify the particular clauses which provide the answers.

Answers

1. complex
2. compound
3. simple
4. complex-compound
5. complex

Part 8: Understanding the grammar points

Task 12

One option for introducing this activity is to ask the students to close their books, and to discuss with a partner the following questions: *What are some of the main rules for using verbs in English?* and *What are the main problems you have in using verbs in English?* Following these discussions, write up the key points made on the board.

Students then read through the points in the book. There is some metalanguage used here (e.g., *inflection, tense, aspect, base form*), so ensure you are confident in being able to explain them. If your class is monolingual, it may be helpful (if they are really struggling to understand some of the points) to provide a brief explanation in the mother tongue.

Task 13

For weaker groups, do the example of *look* together with the whole class so that they understand the task.

Put a challenging time limit on this activity (maximum 2 minutes) – it should be relatively quick as it should not be too difficult.

As an optional extra, you could ask students to create their own tables (with gaps), using different verbs, and setting this as work for their fellow students. This would help to embed the learning more deeply.

Answers

Base form	Present simple, 3 rd -person singular	Past simple	Past participle	Present participle
look	<i>looks</i>	looked	<i>looked</i>	looking
<i>eat</i>	eats	<i>ate</i>	<i>eaten</i>	<i>eating</i>
<i>walk</i>	walks	walked	<i>walked</i>	<i>walking</i>
<i>go</i>	<i>goes</i>	went	<i>gone</i>	going
see	<i>sees</i>	<i>saw</i>	<i>seen</i>	<i>seeing</i>
<i>help</i>	<i>helps</i>	<i>helped</i>	helped	<i>helping</i>

Task 14

It is important to emphasize that the sentences here are incorrect. You might want to check that the students are clear about what they have to do for this activity. Students should complete this activity individually before checking with a partner.

In class feedback, one good strategy to use might be to write the sentences on the board, and to get the students up to correct the sentences.

Answers

1. The second dimension concerns s 'individualism' and 'collectivism'. *Missing third person 's'*
2. In feminine societies, men and women share similar views and act in similar ways. *Wrong aspect used. The present simple, rather than the present continuous, is needed because the emphasis is on a general state rather than an unfinished activity.*
3. Geert Hofstede is a well-known writer and thinker about culture. *Every sentence must have a verb (and a subject). Verbs – especially 'to be' – can sometimes be forgotten and left out by mistake.*
4. While some people have criticized Hofstede's theory, it is still very influential nearly 50 years after it was developed. *The wrong time is being referred to here – the present, not the future is needed.*

Part 9: Understanding the language point

Task 15

Once the students have read through the list of information (c. 1–2 minutes), discuss it with them. When you go through each point, ensure that the students understand the headings which are used. To check students' understanding, elicit an example of one word in each section being used in context. If the students cannot do this, provide an example.

If your class is quite advanced and shows a good understanding of these words already, you can go a bit deeper and ask students the different ways in which these words are used grammatically. The main point to focus on here is that some of these words link dependent clauses (i.e., within a sentence) while others link independent clauses (i.e., sentences to other sentences). *Whereas* and *while* would be examples of the first, and *however* and *in contrast* of the latter.

You might also discuss with your class the benefits of www.sketchengine.co.uk, a website where students can insert these words into a search engine, and get back sentences from published academic work in which the search term is used.

Follow-up extension questions which you might ask the class after completing this activity are:

- What would be the effect on your writing if you did not use connectors? (It would sound like a series of bullet points.)
- How many connectors should you use in each paragraph? (4–6 would be a typical number – less than this and the text may feel ‘choppy’, while more than this and the text may feel overloaded.)

A further extension activity would be to ask students to look at a piece of formal/academic text and to underline any connectors they find there.

Task 16

Emphasize to the students that this piece of text is new, i.e., they haven’t seen it before. You should also check that they understand that more than one option may be possible in the spaces. Explain to students that if they find the activity difficult, or they are unsure which connector to use, they should ask themselves the following two questions:

- What is the relationship between the two components (e.g., is it cause and effect, a comparison or a time relationship)?
- What, grammatically, is being linked (i.e., a dependent or independent clause)?

You should allow students 2–3 minute to complete the activity. If the class finds the activity difficult, you might help them by going through the activity with them and answering the two questions above. This will help to lead them to an appropriate answer.

As an extension activity, if you have time, you might also discuss the actual content of the paragraph – but this is of less importance than understanding it from a language and grammar context.

Answers

In 1991, Hofstede added a fifth dimension to his index, although the main research for this was conducted by Michael Bond. Specifically, this new dimension was called ‘long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation’, and it shows the connection of the past to current and future actions. A lower score would show that tradition is important, while/whereas a high score would show pragmatism. For example, short-term oriented societies believe that the most important events in one’s life occurred in the past, or are taking place now. With respect to/Regarding/With regard to long-term oriented societies, they believe that the most important events will take place in the future. After the introduction of this dimension, some previous critics felt that it had become more robust. On the other hand, other critics still felt that the theory had fundamental problems.

Part 10: Creating your own text

Task 17

Before starting this activity, quickly brainstorm with the students the core information concerning the different types of sentences. For weaker classes, you might write up some of this information on the board, or even allow them to look back to earlier in the unit.

Direct the students towards the sentences in the book. For each sentence, ask them to explain why they are that type of sentence (e.g., *Hofstede created the 'cultural dimensions' theory* is a simple sentence because it contains only one independent clause).

Ensure that students are clear that they are developing the simple sentence in each case. The reason for them doing this is so that they can really concentrate on the structural and grammatical elements.

If you think the students are able, ask them to check their partner's sentences to see if they are correct. If you do not think they are able, do it in class, or else by yourself, as there is the danger that students will be given incorrect feedback.

Answers

Please note that these are just sample answers.

1. *Simple*: The Arab World has a high power distance score.

Compound: The Arab World has a high power distance score, but it has a low femininity score.

Complex: The Arab World has a high power distance score, which is indicated by the number of monarchies in the region.

Complex-compound: The Arab World has a high power distance score, which is indicated by the number of monarchies in the region, but it has a low femininity score.

2. *Simple*: In Japan, teachers are expected to be in control in the classroom.

Compound: In Japan, teachers are expected to be in control in the classroom, so discipline is strict.

Complex: In Japan, teachers are expected to be in control in the classroom because schools are formal places.

Complex-compound: In Japan, teachers are expected to be in control in the classroom because schools are formal places, so discipline is strict.

3. *Simple*: In collectivist societies, grandparents will generally live with the rest of the family.

Compound: In collectivist societies, grandparents will generally live with the rest of the family or they will live nearby.

Complex: In collectivist societies, which emphasize the importance of the extended family, grandparents will generally live with the rest of the family.

Complex-compound: In collectivist societies, which emphasize the importance of the extended family, grandparents will generally live with the rest of the family or they will live nearby.

Part 11: Consolidating your knowledge
Task 18

Once students have discussed together, take brief general feedback to ensure that all members of the class are clear about these key points. Where possible, try to get students to explain the points to each other, rather than you doing it. This could also be done as a piece of written homework as well.