

Unit 4: Environment

Lesson 4.1: Reading and understanding writing

Part 1: Introducing the topic

Task 1

To introduce this activity, ask the students to individually write a one-sentence definition of a *river*, a *lake* and a *sea/ocean*. They should then compare with a partner. Take class feedback to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of the terms. If you think that your students may struggle with this activity, do it together as a class.

In feedback, be prepared to tell your students where each of the bodies of water are located, as they are very likely to ask. Try to personalize the task by asking if any of the students have seen (or swum in) any of those mentioned.

Answers

Lakes: Superior; Victoria; Dead Sea; Aral; Michigan

Rivers: Euphrates; Ganges; Nile; Jordan; Thames

Seas/oceans: Mediterranean; Red; Atlantic; Pacific; South China

Part 2: Preparing for the text

Task 2

Explain to students the importance of prediction as a skill – that it can help in understanding what the main focus of a text is going to be. This can help when you are planning what research you would like to do for an essay, for example, or in an exam situation in understanding what the main theme of a text is.

Note: The title of the text refers to a famous poem by the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) called *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Task 3

A common problem faced by students is encountering new words which they do not know. They can sometimes panic in such situations. Explain to students that one useful strategy is to build on words which they already understand, and to use this knowledge to make reasonable guesses. This is what this activity practises.

Once they have completed the task individually, students can check in pairs, or else look up the word online or in a dictionary. They can then check this meaning when they read the text and see the word in context.

Answers

1. semi-arid a type of climate where there is little rain, but it is not completely dry
2. river basin the land that water flows across or under on its way to a river. A river basin sends all the water in it to a central river, which in turn flows out into a sea or ocean
3. desertification the process by which a piece of land turns into a desert, increasingly as a result of climate change
4. transboundary going across different boundaries

Part 3: Reading the text

Task 4

Note: This text is also available as a downloadable audio file (Track 4) at garneteducation.com/caw.

This text is 508 words long. Students will need 5–7 minutes to read it, depending on their level and ability. As students read, ask them to pay special attention to the paragraph structure, as a way of confirming what they read about in the previous unit.

Part 4: Understanding the text

Tasks 5, 6 and 7

The questions in this unit should not take more than 6–8 minutes to complete, so it probably makes sense to ask the students to complete them all at once, and then to check in pairs.

For Q2 in Task 5, you might quickly check with students how they do a scanning activity (this has been done before, so they should be able to identify this immediately).

In feedback to Task 7, you might point out to the class that some of the points now being looked at are more complex than before. This may help to motivate them, and to start to see writing as a more enjoyable process rather than just sticking random sentences together. The issue of 'style' is being introduced. Doing this will feed in to the next task.

Task 5 Answers

1. They are all reliant on the waters of the Nile.
2.
 - a. The size by which harvests in Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan have decreased in recent years.
 - b. The lower estimate of the percentage of land in the Nile region which is at risk from desertification.
 - c. The year the NGO Strategic Foresight published *Blue Peace for the Nile*.
 - d. The higher estimate as to how many degrees the temperature in the region will increase by 2050.

Task 6 Answers

1. The rains become shorter and more intense.
2. There will be a significant reduction in the availability of agricultural land.

Task 7 Answers

1. To get the reader interested in the text and to show the wide-ranging scope of the article.
2. It talks about how the problem of water conflicts can be minimized, and how peace can be achieved through good transborder water management.
3. Political borders are 'man-made' and do not really exist in the natural world.

Part 5: Understanding the writing point

Task 8

As an introduction to this task, elicit from the whole class some of the key aspects of a good paragraph, learnt in the previous unit. You might also write them on the board in note

form. Explain that the focus of this section is on developing their understanding of paragraphs by improving their writing style.

This might be the first time that some of the students have really started thinking about writing in this way, and so they may find some of the ideas contained in this section new and confusing. As such, it is probably best to ask students to read it point by point. After each point, discuss the key information as a class.

It is important also to spend time discussing the sample paragraph provided, as this will help students to see the evidence for the claims being made. If possible, show this as a slide or on a computer so that you can make clear reference to it when discussing in class. As an extension activity, you might look at another body paragraph in the text and do the same thing.

Part 6: Checking your understanding

Task 9

When doing the task, it is important that students think of the ‘macro’ first (i.e., the ‘big picture’) rather than just the individual sentences. Students may be more familiar with looking at and correcting individual sentences, so it is important to emphasize this point.

If you think that your students may find this task difficult, discuss some of the main points in class together, and write these points on the board. Students can then try to rewrite the paragraph by themselves. There is also the option of students doing the rewrite in pairs.

When going through the sample answer, ensure that students are clear that this is not *the* answer, but it is just one way of doing it. Ensure that you explain the reasons behind all the changes made in each case.

Answers

A better version of the text is presented below.

It can be seen that water overuse is damaging the environment in many major river basins. High overuse tends to occur in regions heavily dependent on agriculture which uses irrigation, such as the Indo-Gangetic Plain in South Asia. This is also occurring in areas undergoing rapid industrial development. As such, it is a fact that millions of people in water-stressed areas are now struggling with day-to-day life.

Lesson 4.2: Vocabulary, grammar and practising writing

Part 7: Recapping the last lesson

Task 10

Where possible, students should try to do this task without looking back at the previous lesson. After 2–3 minutes of discussion, or when the majority of the class seems to have finished, let them look back and check/find out the answers. When this is done, quickly run through the questions in a whole-class situation, eliciting answers and clarifying as necessary.

You can explain to students that it might be useful for them to have this kind of checklist in their minds when they write their own paragraphs, to ensure that they are making their writing as good as it can be.

Part 8: Understanding the grammar point

Task 11

An optional lead-in for this task is to write three or four common prepositions on the board, and ask the students what these words are, and what they have in common. Elicit from the class what they already know about prepositions.

Students will need 3–5 minutes to read through and understand the 10 points about prepositions. When they have done so, to check their understanding, consider doing the following activity. Ask the students to write the words *True* and *False* in large writing on separate pieces of paper. You then make a statement about prepositions, e.g., *Prepositions are a closed class of words*. Students must then hold up the piece of paper which they think is correct (here, it should be *True*). You can then discuss what this actually means. You can then repeat this with other statements. In strong classes, the students themselves could create the statements.

Task 12

Students should complete the task individually without looking back at the text. After about 2 minutes, let them check their answers by themselves by looking back in the text.

Task 13

In this activity, encourage students to use their ‘gut feeling’ if they are not sure about an answer – i.e., they should make an intelligent guess. As in the last task, students should complete this by themselves initially. You might then ask the students to compare their answers in pairs before they check their answers in the text.

When going through the task with the class, elicit the reasons why each preposition is used in each case.

An additional task to give to your students is to get them to modify the sentences in order to understand more deeply how the prepositions are used. Do an example with the class – e.g., write the following phrase on the board: *The grounds for this claim are that ...* and get the students to complete with their own ideas.

Part 9: Understanding the language point

Task 14

To introduce this task, you might write the phrase *cause and effect* on the board, which some of the class may have heard before. Elicit what this phrase means. Ask the class why they think it is important in academic English.

Give students 3–5 minutes to read through the five points. After this, ask them to have a quick chat with a partner to check they have understood. You should monitor/circulate and clarify anything as necessary. In particular, students may find point 5 difficult.

Task 15

Set a challenging time limit for this activity (maximum 3 minutes) to keep the students interested. They should be scanning the text to look for these words and structures. You might consider doing one or two examples with the class initially if you feel they may be confused by the activity.

After the time has elapsed, put them together in groups of three and ask them to compare their answers. Students should add to their own list having seen what their colleagues have done. Finally, go through the whole text together and elicit as many examples as possible.

Task 16

Ensure students are clear that the information in brackets describes the kind of information they should be including. Explain that in some cases, more than one answer may be possible.

Answers

1. Climate change is a growing problem across the world. As such, governments should do something about it.
2. If more dams were built, more electricity would be produced.
3. One common explanation for climate change is the growing demand for electricity in China and India.
4. As a result of climate change, migration patterns are likely to change.
5. If the world population increases as expected, challenges will follow.

Part 10: Creating your own text

Task 17

If you think that students may not have much background information about the topic, have a brief discussion with them in class beforehand. You might also direct them to websites for further information, such as <http://www.unwater.org/sdgs/> and <http://www.wateraid.org/>.

Direct students back to Unit 3 if they wish to refresh their general understanding of how paragraphs are structured and how they should be written. Encourage students to plan their paragraph before they start writing it.

When giving feedback, it would be useful to be able to display the sample paragraph on the board, or else to provide a printed-out copy to students. Ask students to compare their own paragraphs with the sample paragraphs and to notice any differences. It might be

useful, especially if students found the activity difficult, to talk through the sample paragraph with the students, explaining its good aspects.

Answer

In September 2015, the UN adopted the 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs), which succeeded the 'Millennium Development Goals'. The SDGs adopted a specific water-related goal, since water is at the core of sustainable development. They argued that water – and more widely, sanitation – was crucial for people to survive and to live good lives. They argued that water was also central to the challenge of climate change, and that ignoring this aspect would lead to severe water scarcity in some parts of the world, and the risk of flooding in others. There were a number of specific targets set, with perhaps the most important being the goal to 'achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all' by 2030. As a result of the progress made in the MDG water targets, this goal may be achievable. However, if governments in the developed world do not commit appropriate levels of funding, the goal will not be met.

Part 11: Consolidating your knowledge

Task 17

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.