

Unit 1: Language

Lesson 1.1: Reading and understanding writing

Part 1: Introducing the topic

Task 1

The overall purpose of this section is to get the students thinking about languages, and to practise the four skills which are used in all languages.

Before starting the activity, check with the class that they understand the scale which is being used by asking them, for example, what a score of '2' or '3' would represent.

This activity should be done quickly – allow a maximum of 1 minute for students to complete the table and a further 1–2 minutes for discussion.

Task 2

The purpose of this task is to get students to think more widely about the importance of language around the world – something which they may not have thought about much before. Allow 3–4 minutes for this discussion. Monitor the groups, and help groups which seem to be struggling. If you think your class does not have the knowledge to discuss these questions properly, consider doing it as a class activity with them.

After students have discussed the questions, take class feedback. Really try to push the students to justify each of their answers. Some ideas which you might like to discuss with the class are as follows:

1. Possible languages which might be useful for the students: *Chinese* – because of China's growing economic power and there are 1.2 billion people who speak it, it is a language of the future; *Spanish* – the second most widely spoken language in the world (440 million) and an official UN language; *Arabic* – a UN language and spoken in many countries (around 59).
2. For business use, as it is the common language in many countries. English has over 2 billion speakers as a second language. It is useful for academic life (especially in subjects like law or medicine, for example). However, some people see the dangers of the English language taking over the world and becoming too powerful.

A further idea to mention: Wittgenstein, a philosopher and linguist, said that if we do not have the words to describe something, then we are unable to talk about it – we can only truly know about things which we are able to describe.

Part 2: Preparing for the text

Task 3

Elicit the meaning of *extinct* (= no longer in existence) and *official language* (= language which has legal status in a country) before students do this task. Explain that the students are not expected to know the answers to these questions; rather, they should make intelligent guesses.

When the students have completed the task individually, as an extension activity you could ask a few students to share their answers and to defend their predictions. This is good for developing their critical thinking skills.

When sharing the answers, you should emphasize that they are all estimates to a certain degree. For example, for Q1, the boundary between a dialect and a language is not always clear. Likewise for Q4, it is impossible to get a very precise estimate for this.

Answers

1. Between 6,000 and 7,000
2. Around 100
3. 67
4. Around 54%

Task 4

For this activity, do not let students look the words up in a dictionary. Encourage them to think about prefixes and suffixes when making their guesses, as well as word families. You might give them some examples of this (e.g., *centimeter* for a prefix, *million* for a suffix, *human* for a word family).

When they have made their predictions, do not take feedback at this stage. They will check their predictions when they do the activity.

Answers

1. century: a period of 100 years
2. globalization: a process by which culture, trade, etc., is spread around the world
3. dominance: power, influence
4. native speaker: a person who speaks a particular language from birth
5. billion: a thousand million (1,000,000,000)
6. considerably: significantly, to a large extent
7. humanity: people (in general)
8. minority: a smaller number or part

Task 5

Elicit from students why prediction is an important skill. Take ideas from the class. Focus in particular on the two adjectives in the title (since adjectives can provide a good deal of information about the topic). Again, do not give any specific feedback at this stage – students should read the text to check and find out if they are correct.

Part 3: Reading the text

Task 6

Note: This text is also available as a downloadable audio file (Track 1) at garneteducation.com/caw.

Give a time limit for this activity. The text is 253 words long. Stronger classes will need around 3–4 minutes, weaker classes 5–6 minutes. Emphasize that the students should be reading to get a general idea of the text – they should not be too worried if there are particular words or phrases which they do not understand.

Before students move on to Part 4, put them into pairs or small groups to discuss the main points raised in the article. If you are concerned that several students in the class might not understand, then check together as a class.

Part 4: Understanding the text

Task 7

Give the students 2–3 minutes for this task. Elicit the skills of scanning before they begin this activity (= looking through the text for specific information). Get the students to check their answers in pairs before taking class feedback.

When discussing Q2, in feedback you might give the students the history of the term *lingua franca* (= common language in a particular region – e.g., for trade). You might also provide examples of historical *linguae francae*, such as Latin, Arabic and Swahili. In Q3, you might discuss whether things will change in the future.

Answers

1.
 - a. The estimated number of languages spoken in the world
 - b. The number of languages it is estimated will be left in the world by the end of the 21st century
 - c. The percentage of languages which may die by the end of the 21st century
 - d. The number of people worldwide who can communicate in English to some extent
2. A common language
3. Chinese

Task 8

Students will need 3–4 minutes for this task. When taking feedback for Q2, as an extension task, ask the students whether they agree with this definition.

Answers

1. Native speakers stop using their own language and use a *lingua franca* like English. When the last known speaker of the language dies, the language is considered dead.
2. As *Americanization*. The author sounds slightly critical.

Task 9

Students will need 5–7 minutes for this task, since the questions are quite complex. If you feel your students will struggle with the task, you could get them to work in pairs on the questions. In feedback, focus in particular on Q3, and ask the students to state their position, ensuring that you get them to defend their view with evidence and support. This is good practice for getting them to write more critically.

Having gone through the answers to all the questions and had discussions about them, it would be good to ask the students about the predictions that they made before, discussing whether these predictions were shown to be correct or not.

As a final activity in this section, you could quickly check their understanding of the key vocabulary outlined in Task 4.

Answers

1. Because there is no specific agreement on what constitutes a ‘language’, and it is also difficult to say exactly when a language dies.

2. It is more important for people to learn English than their mother tongue. The process is also quickened by globalization.
3. Some people think that language death is a natural process, while others think that a small piece of global culture dies when this happens.

Part 5: Understanding the writing point

Task 10

The way in which you approach this section will depend very much on the level of understanding within your class. Some classes may already have a good understanding of this material, while for some the majority of it may be new, meaning that you will have to spend much more time on it. You might want to ask a few introductory questions initially, to assess their level of knowledge (e.g., *What is a phrase? What different types of clause are there? etc.*).

A good activity – to get the students to check with each other how much they know – is to give them two minutes to write down a series of questions about the text, e.g., *What is the difference between a dependent and independent clause?* They should write as many questions as they can. In pairs or small groups. they then ask each other these questions. You should monitor and check the answers being given are correct.

Part 6: Checking your understanding

Task 11

Encourage the students to look back at the points in Part 5 in order to make their decisions in this activity.

For any student who finishes the activity quickly, or for students who would like to practise this more, ask them to write examples of each of the different grammatical structures.

Answers

1. dependent clause
2. verb phrase
3. prepositional phrase
4. independent clause
5. noun phrase
6. dependent clause
7. dependent clause
8. prepositional phrase
9. dependent clause
10. verb phrase

Lesson 1.2: Vocabulary, grammar and practising writing

Part 7: Recapping the last lesson

Task 12

Only allow around 2 minutes for this activity. Students should complete the activity without looking back to the previous lesson. When they have completed the activity, they can then check by themselves.

In feedback, ask the students whether they still have any questions about this topic, or whether there is still anything that is unclear. Try and get the students to answer these questions; however, if a wrong answer is given, or the students do not know the answer, then you should provide the answer.

Answers

Phrases

A phrase is a group of words which works as a single unit. Phrases are often combined in order to make clauses. Phrases can be short or long, although generally they are quite short. Phrases are usually a combination of content words (e.g., nouns and verbs) and structure words (e.g., determiners and prepositions). A phrase cannot exist by itself in a piece of writing because it will not make sense.

Clauses

A clause is a group of words containing at least a noun phrase and a verb phrase. There are two main types of clause in English, independent (main) clauses and dependent (subordinate) clauses. An independent clause shows a complete thought which makes sense by itself, while a dependent clause shows an incomplete thought which does not make sense by itself. Dependent clauses must contain words such as conjunctions and relative pronouns. Relative clauses (using which, who, where, etc.) are a very common type of dependent clause.

Sentences

A sentence is a piece of writing which makes sense by itself. In its most basic form (a 'simple' sentence), a sentence is just an independent clause. A sentence must begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

Part 8: Understanding the grammar points

Task 13

As an optional lead-in to this activity, you could ask the class to close their books, and then together to brainstorm the word classes they know and the function that they have.

Some groups may know how these words function, but they may not know the specific metalanguage used (i.e., they may understand how a preposition works, but they may not know the word *preposition*).

It may be important when checking the students' understanding to point out similarities and differences between English and their mother tongue (if a monolingual class) in order to avoid confusion. Students may have particular problems with prepositions, conjunctions and determiners.

Task 14

Check with students that they understand the concept of this activity before they do it. When taking feedback, if you have time, ask the students to provide any additional information that they know about these words. For example:

- *The* and *a* are both determiners. Specifically, they are articles – *the* is the definite article, *a* is the indefinite article.
- *Has* and *help* are both verbs. *Has* is being used as an auxiliary verb while *help* is a main verb.

Explain to students that these word classes will be looked at in more detail throughout the course.

Answers

1. The words in red are all determiners.
2. The words in blue are all nouns.
3. The words in black are all adverbs.
4. The words in pink are all prepositions.
5. The words in green are all adjectives.
6. The words in purple are all verbs.
7. The words in grey are all pronouns.
8. The words in brown are all conjunctions.

Tasks 15 and 16

Before the lesson, ensure that you have thought about these questions! It is potentially more complicated than you think. Note down three or four points which you would like to make for each question.

Task 17

You may need to explain some of the metalanguage used in the text, for example *adverbs of frequency* and *indirect objects*. When the students have read through the text, ask a few questions to check what they can remember, for example:

- Is the position of an adverb fixed?
- Can the object ever be put before a verb?
- What happens when more than one adjective comes before a noun?

Task 18

Encourage students to look back at the information they have just read to help them answer this question.

If students are finding this activity difficult, you could consider telling them what the problem is, and then asking them to make the correction.

Answers

Mistake	Problem	Correction
1. Look at the sea blue.	Adjectives must come before nouns.	Look at the blue sea.
2. She swim can really well.	Auxiliary verbs must come before main verbs.	She can swim really well.
3. My parents yesterday visited.	Adverbs of time generally go at the beginning or end.	My parents visited yesterday.
4. It followed me home. The dog was very smelly.	A pronoun should come after the noun it replaces.	The dog followed me home. It was very smelly.
5. We gave to my sister a present.	An indirect object with <i>to</i> must come after a direct object.	We gave a present to my sister (or: We gave my sister a present.).
6. I just bought an red, glass, old jar.	Adjectives must come in a specific order.	I just bought an old, red, glass jar.

Part 9: Understanding the language point

Task 19

As an introduction to this part, you could refer the students back to Part 2. Once they have read the introductory information, refer them to the similar points which could be made for *humanity* (e.g., *human*) and *minority* (e.g., *minor*).

Task 20

Students could potentially try to do this at first from their own knowledge or guesswork. Afterwards they can check in the text.

Answers

1. natural
2. dominance
3. acceptable
4. considerably

Task 21

Explain that in some cases there can be more than one form for each word class (e.g., from the task above, for *dominate* the equivalent noun forms could be *domination* or *dominator*). You may also need to explain what *N/A* means (= not applicable, because there is no common form that exists).

Answers

Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
estimate/estimation	estimate	estimated	(N/A)
communication	communicate	communicable/ communicative	communicatively
extent	extend	extendable/extensive	extensively
inevitability	(N/A)	inevitable	inevitably

Part 10: Creating your own text

Task 22

Initially, quickly check what the students can remember about phrases. Ensure that the class have a good understanding of the term before they start the activity, otherwise they will not get the maximum benefit from it.

Once students have done this activity by themselves, they should check with a partner before you take overall feedback.

Answers

Mixed-up phrase	Phrase in correct word order	Type of phrase
1. single of language benefits the a global	the benefits of a single global language	noun phrase
2. years next twenty within the	within the next twenty years	prepositional phrase
3. aspects the negative loss language of	the negative aspects of language loss	noun phrase
4. same time the at	at the same time	prepositional phrase
5. of the condition improve	improve the condition of	verb phrase

Task 23

As in the last task, elicit from the students what they can remember about sentences before they begin this activity, in order to get the most out of it. Explain to them that the sentence must make conceptual as well as grammatical sense.

Answers

Weaker languages will die if organizations like the UN do not protect them

Recent years have seen the rise of global “superlanguages”, which include English, Chinese and Spanish.

Global institutions such as the United Nations should take responsibility for protecting languages.

Task 24

Explain to students that they should use the information in the text and what they have discussed in the course of these two lessons in order to write these sentences. They

should be careful not to plagiarize sentences already in the text – they can use the same core information, but the sentences should be their own.

Once the students have written their sentences, they should get them checked by one of their fellow students. If time allows, provide feedback in class; otherwise, give written feedback after the class.

Part 11: Consolidating your knowledge

Task 25

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.