

Unit 6: History

Lesson 6.1: Reading and understanding writing

Part 1: Introducing the topic

Task 1

Introduce the task by asking the students what they know about the British Museum. If they do not have any idea, provide some key information – e.g., it has 8 million works, it was founded in 1753, it is based in London, it contains works from all over the world.

Emphasize that students are not expected to be able to answer the questions, but they should try to make reasonable guesses based on their own level of knowledge. This task would probably work best if done in twos or threes. Once students have shared their thoughts, take class feedback. Do not provide feedback at this stage as they will discover the answers in the reading passage.

To get the students to reflect more deeply on the objects, you might ask them which one they would prefer to own, and why.

Part 2: Preparing for the text

Task 2

Students should complete this activity by themselves and then check with a partner. Encourage them to break the words down to work out the meaning. You might do an obvious one with them (e.g., *afterlife*). If the students find it very difficult, let them look the information up in a dictionary by themselves.

As a brief extension activity, ask the students which objects they think the words will talk about. Again, do one example with them (e.g., *afterlife* – the mummy of Hornedjitef).

Answers

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|---------------|----|--|
| 1. afterlife | h. | the life that some people believe starts after their death on Earth |
| 2. coffin | l. | a box in which people are buried when they die |
| 3. spell | k. | a magic poem or song |
| 4. arthritis | i. | a physical pain in a person's joints (the place where two bones are joined together) |
| 5. smartphone | f. | a mobile phone that can be used as a small computer, which can connect to the internet and uses apps |
| 6. horoscope | c. | a description of what is going to happen to a person, based on the position of the stars and the planets |
| 7. scholar | b. | an expert in an academic subject, usually at a university |
| 8. reform | g. | an improvement |
| 9. tactics | e. | a planned way of doing something |
| 10. pilgrim | a. | a person who makes a journey, often long or difficult, to a religious place |
| 11. symbol | j. | a sign or object which is used to represent something else |
| 12. fidelity | d. | honest, long-term support or faith |

Part 3: Reading the text

Task 3

Note: This text is also available as a downloadable audio file (Track 6) at garneteducation.com/caw.

Introduce the topic and structure of the text by getting the students to read the title and initial paragraph. Check that they understand this background information.

The text is 539 words long. Students will need around 1–2 minutes to read about each object. You can either get the students to read the whole text and then to briefly discuss with a partner afterwards what the main points were, or else get them to read about each object one by one, and then quickly discuss with a partner the main points, then moving on to the next object, and doing the same.

Part 4: Understanding the text

Task 4

Give the students a maximum of 2 minutes to answer these questions. In feedback, ask students to provide evidence if they think the answer is true, and to provide counter-evidence if they think it is false.

Answers

1. a. True
- b. False – only the rich/important were
- c. False – they were invented in ancient Greece
- d. False

Tasks 5 and 6

Students will need about 2 minutes to answer each question. Encourage them to use their own words wherever possible, not just to copy down what is in the text.

As an extension exercise, ask students to state which of the objects they are most interested in and that they would most like to see. Get them to defend and justify their responses.

Task 5 Answers

1. It has words written on it in both Arabic and Hebrew.
2. They threw mirrors into a pool.

Task 6 Answers

1. They thought that they were setting off on a journey to the afterlife and wanted their physical body to be preserved.
2. It was one device which had many different functions.
3. It was a quick and easy way of reaching a mass audience.

Part 5: Understanding the writing point

Task 7

To introduce this task, ask the students (with books closed) to discuss in small groups some of the main problems they have with writing essays, or the most common negative comments they receive in feedback. This will help them to see the purpose and really benefit from the information provided about writing better essays.

Students will need around 5–7 minutes to read all the text. A more effective way of getting them to remember the information is to ask them to read each point, and for them to then close the book, and for you to ask specific questions to check their understanding.

Throughout this process, you should get them to think about their own practice and their own experience, to see whether they are doing any of these things at present. If they are not, ask them why not, and try to understand the reasons for this. This kind of open discussion can be extremely useful for making genuine, long-lasting change.

Task 8

Explain to students that they should try to get into good habits for writing essays, and that having a checklist can be a way of doing that – a series of points which you follow in every piece of writing that you do.

Students should read through all the points, ensuring that they are clear what they mean. Ask the class if there is anything which they need clarifying. Once they understand the points, they should put them in order. Once they have completed this individually, they should compare with a partner and come up with a final agreed list with their partner.

Answers

1. Check with other students on my course about the essay title.
2. Write down things you already know about the topic.
3. Assess the potential sources for your essay.
4. Do some initial reading, focusing in particular on gaps in your knowledge.
5. Write notes on your reading, ensuring you clearly identify where the information comes from.
6. Create a good structure for your essay so that you know the main direction you are going in.
7. Write the essay.
8. Check your grammar and language yourself (or ask a friend to do it).

Part 6: Checking your understanding

Task 9

Briefly discuss/review the importance of research in academic writing before students do this task. Explain that in each case they should state why a source is/is not appropriate. Since the subject matter may be new for many students, it may be better for them to do the activity in pairs so that they can help each other.

Feedback for this task may take a little time, since students may find some of the concepts difficult, and they may not understand the overall framework (e.g., citation in 5 and 6, or original source in 3).

Answers

1. This would be a useful and reliable source.
2. Its suitability would depend on what kind of magazine it was. Since magazines are generally less formal/academic, the source would probably not be appropriate – but if it were an academic magazine, it would be.
3. This source would potentially be useful, although it would be important to know who had written it, since it could be biased one way or the other.
4. This would not be appropriate, because it would not be authoritative and there would be the risk of plagiarism.
5. This would be a good source as it is academic and has been cited relatively frequently, which means other scholars think it is authoritative and reliable.
6. This could potentially be a decent source, but it is slightly concerning that it has not been cited very much.

Lesson 6.2: Vocabulary, grammar and practising writing

Part 7: Recapping the last lesson

Task 10

Students should take no longer than 5 minutes to discuss these questions. Once they have had their discussions, they should be allowed to check their answers in the book. Do not spend too long on general class feedback/discussion, but do address any points which appear to be unclear.

Part 8: Understanding the grammar point

Task 11

If you think that your students may already have some understanding of the subject matter, you might introduce this task by writing two sentences on the board which contain the same information, with one in the active voice and the other in the passive voice (e.g., *I made a mistake./Mistakes were made.*). You can then use these sentences as a platform to elicit the learning point.

Students will require 5–7 minutes to read through the information about the passive. After they have read the information, allow them 2–3 minutes to discuss the information with a partner or in small groups. You should circulate and clarify any points which they find difficult.

Task 12

Give the students a strict time limit for this task – around 3 minutes. Once they have identified examples of the passive by themselves, they should share with a partner. If their partner has identified a passive structure which the students has not, they should add it to their list. Depending on the make-up of your class, this could also be done competitively with the whole class – students score 1 point for each passive structure they identify and lose one for underlining a structure which is not in the passive voice.

Answers

Descriptions of four of the objects discussed in the programme **are presented** below.

... they would **be mummified**;

... their body would **be preserved**.

This suggests it **was** most likely **made** for a Jewish scholar living in Spain during the 13th century.

... women, along with the poor and criminals, **were not allowed** to vote.

The Japanese bronze mirror ... **was found** in the 'mirror-pool' at the shrine on Mount Haguro.

The mirror **has been dated** to the 12th century.

... it **was polished** finely in order to create a reflective surface.

... mirrors **were** closely **associated** with Japanese emperors, ...

Task 13

The key point for students to understand in this task is the idea of which is the most appropriate – i.e., all the sentences are correct, but in each case there is one sentence which it is better to use. Explain to students that at this stage of their development, they should be able to know what is correct and incorrect – but to become better, more sophisticated users of English, they now need to think about what is more appropriate.

Answers

- a. The house was built in 1830. – passive
- b. We'll help you later on. – active
- c. The road is being repaired. – passive
- d. Finally, the laws were passed. – passive
- e. Cheese is made throughout the UK. – passive

Part 9: Understanding the language point

Task 14

Students may initially find the concept of hedging language difficult to understand, since they may hold the view that good academic writing should be as direct and unambiguous as possible. One way of trying to explain this to students is to say that much academic writing is about subjects and issues that are not 'black and white', but that there are many 'grey areas'.

Allow students a few minutes to read the text, and then go through it with them. You may need to explain some of the metalanguage used, which may be unfamiliar to them.

An additional task for students, if you have time in the lesson (or as an additional homework activity) to check whether they are able to recognize hedging language is to do the same activity as in Task 12 above (i.e., they go through the text and underline examples of hedging language).

Task 15

In this task, encourage students to look very carefully at the language used in the sentences. Again, it may be helpful for students to underline the specific language which they are looking at, to really try to understand whether the hedging is appropriate or not.

In feedback, ask students to defend and explain their answers. This will help them see why the use of hedging either is or is not correct.

To extend this activity, get students to write their own sentences (potentially modelled on the sentences in the book), which either use or do not use hedging correctly. They then share with different members of the class, who say whether they think the hedging used is appropriate or not. You could then take a sample of these sentences to discuss with the class as a whole, in order to embed the learning further.

Answers

1. Overhedging – this is a fact, so it should read *The Earth is 149.6 million km from the sun.*
2. Underhedging – this sentence can only be a prediction; therefore, the verb *prove* is too strong.
3. Correct – appropriate hedging.
4. Unbalanced hedging – *always* is an extremely strong word, whereas *tendency* is weak.
5. Unbalanced hedging – the mix of *undoubtedly* and *may* does not work.

Part 10: Creating your own text

Task 16

Introduce this activity by getting the students to look at the picture of the Rosetta Stone, and to say what they think it is or what it represents. Point out that it is one of the most important artefacts in the British Museum.

When students write their paragraph, emphasize that they should ensure that they follow the key principles outlined in previous units – e.g., about paragraph structure, good writing and so on, while also paying special attention to hedging language and voice.

An optional extra which you could add to this task is to allow students to do their own research about the Rosetta Stone online. They can then incorporate some additional knowledge into their writing. This would also enable you to see whether they are able to use sources appropriately.

Answers

Sample answer:

The Rosetta Stone is generally considered to be one of the most famous objects in the British Museum. It is a medium-sized stone, about 1 metre high and 70 centimetres across, which weighs around 760 kilogrammes. It was made in roughly 196 BCE, but it was only rediscovered in 1799 by Napoleon during his invasion of Egypt. The Rosetta Stone is an important object primarily because of the writing that it contains. The inscription is written in Greek, hieroglyphs and demotic Egyptian, which enabled scholars to translate hieroglyphs for the first time, because they knew the other two languages. Because of this, it has been described as the key to understanding ancient Egypt.

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.