

Assessment

CHAPTER SIX Vocabulary Test

It is important to test knowledge of individual vocabulary items for three main reasons:

- 1- They represent one of the principle components of language.
- 2- The testing of individual vocabulary items enables the tester to include a large number of items in the limited time available for any test.
- 3- The testing of individual items allows for greater objectivity in marking which provides a balance for the more subjective assessment in marking writing.

A distinction should be made between the active and passive vocabulary. **Active vocabulary** is tested as a part of integrated skills in the connected writing or speaking questions. While **passive vocabulary** is tested in the comprehension questions.

Techniques for testing vocabulary items

1. Multiple choice concerns completion, antonym, synonym.
2. Matching items
3. Word set
4. Gap filling

CHAPTER SEVEN

Testing Reading Comprehension

In most courses of higher study as well as in the initial stages, the amount of input information presented far exceeds any type of output required from the student. It follows from this in the written mode the receptive skill of reading is probably of students than the productive one of writing. Reading is given greater importance for it is given further weighting in the format used for testing individual grammatical items, vocabulary items and in the questions that act as a transition between the two types of skills.

Reading comprehension involves various important cognitive skills:

- An ability to comprehend the whole despite lack of or incomplete comprehension of some parts.
- An ability to give close attention and follow step by step detail.
- An ability to skim and reject the irrelevant.
- An ability to scan to obtain specifically required information.
- An ability to use language cues to help in comprehension.
- An ability to draw correct conclusions.
- An ability to see the relationship of parts to the whole.
- An ability to transcode information, ie .. translate it from one medium to another.

The usual procedure for testing comprehension is to give the student short texts of varying styles and content, each following by a series of items.

7.2 CHOICE OF THE TEXT

1. The text has to be kept brief; yet there should be sufficient content to construct six comprehension items.
2. The text should not deal with information that is universally known otherwise, the testees may be able to answer the questions correctly without referring to the text.
3. Texts that deal with series of events or including two or more people or objects are more suitable to testing purposes.
4. The text should not be loaded with extremely difficult lexical items or complex syntactical structures. It must suit the testees' level.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR ITEM WRITING

1. Answering the questions should involve interpretation of the text, not merely word matching between the words in the items and the text.
2. The questions should be kept grammatically and lexically as simple as possible since we are concerned with the interpretation of the text, not with questions that are asked about it.

TECHNIQUES FOR ASSESSING READING COMPREHENSION

1. Multiple - choice items
2. True / false items
3. Matching items
4. Rearrangement
5. Cloze test
6. Short - answer questions
7. Completion
8. Transcoding