

Strategies and skills

Identifying attitude and opinion

Questions often ask about the opinion, attitude or feelings of the writer. This is not usually stated directly in the text, but is expressed using different words.

1 Look at the extracts from reading texts and answer the questions.

Although we were determined to give our all in the game, we were only too aware of the difficulty of beating our heavily favoured opponents.

1 Was the writer confident of winning? How do you know?

When the band stepped out onto the stage a few minutes later, I couldn't believe the volume of noise the fans created as they cheered and screamed almost with one voice.

2 Was the writer surprised by the reaction of the audience? How do you know?

After so many months of planning this once-in-a-lifetime trip, I couldn't help feeling that the reality didn't quite live up to my expectations.

3 Was the writer disappointed by the trip? How do you know?

As the train journey continued, the child's behaviour became more and more outrageous, causing even more embarrassment to his mother and father. But I must admit I felt more sorry for the other passengers than I did for the parents, whose efforts to control their child seemed far from adequate.

4 Was the writer sympathetic to the parents? How do you know?

The narrow bridge stretched across the valley, with a drop of around 20 metres to the river below. Although made only of wood and rope, the bridge looked reasonably solid, and I didn't hesitate to follow my fellow travellers across it.

5 Was the writer worried about crossing the bridge? How do you know?

2 Read the sentences (1-6) and choose the word (A-C) that best expresses the writer's opinion, attitude or feeling. Which words or expressions in the sentences confirm this?

- 1 After my third fall, I was beginning to think that maybe skiing wasn't for me and I should stick to something I was good at, like reading or cooking.
A discouraged B ashamed C relieved
- 2 We sat through the play until the end out of a sense of duty, although by the time the final curtain fell the plot was as much of a mystery to us as it had been at the beginning.
A annoyed B suspicious C confused
- 3 As we headed out away from the coast and into deeper water, and the small boat started to rock heavily with the movement of the waves, I began to wonder what the experience would be like.
A determined B unsure C excited
- 4 Working in a small restaurant in Los Angeles definitely has its moments, like the day I walked out of the kitchen and was delighted to find that two well-known Hollywood actors were sitting at one of my tables, waiting to be served!
A thrilled B concerned C proud
- 5 It was day five of the holiday, and, although the activities were interesting and fun, I must admit that some of the group members were definitely beginning to get on my nerves.
A bored B annoyed C worried
- 6 As Ela started to talk about her qualifications and experience, I had to revise my opinion of her. Not many people could claim such a varied and interesting work history.
A fascinated B impressed C jealous

SPEAKING BOOST

Discuss or answer.

- 1 Would you rather live somewhere very hot or very cold? Why?
- 2 In what ways can we use the power of nature to improve our lives?





Deducing the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary

Some questions ask about unfamiliar words and phrases in the text. To answer these, you need to use the context to guess the meaning.

3 Look at the sentences and answer the questions.

- 1 I was alarmed to see **hordes** of angry-looking rugby fans all heading for the same train as me.
Does the word **hordes** indicate a large number or a small number? How do you know?
- 2 After ten years, I was no further on with my ambition to become a professional singer, and found myself becoming more and more **disillusioned** with the entire music industry.
Does the word **disillusioned** describe a positive or a negative feeling? How do you know?
- 3 After ten minutes of **beating about the bush**, I decided to take a more direct approach and asked: 'Are you interested in investing money in the business?'
Does the phrase **beating about the bush** suggest discussing something in a direct or indirect way? How do you know?
- 4 Losing in any sport is disappointing, and each time you lose it becomes more difficult to **pick yourself up** and approach the next game with confidence and optimism.
Does the verb **pick yourself up** refer to feeling better or feeling worse? How do you know?
- 5 Although I loved the educational side of university life, I found the social life difficult as I had a very limited amount of money to live on and couldn't keep up with my more **prosperous** friends.
Does the word **prosperous** relate to money or educational ability? How do you know?
- 6 The final hotel we stayed in had its own gym and sauna, as well as much more comfortable rooms and an excellent restaurant, so it was definitely **a cut above the rest**.
Does the phrase **a cut above the rest** indicate something positive or something negative?

4 Look at the extracts and choose the correct answers (A-D). How do you know?

The stalls were crammed with attractive souvenirs, but I knew from the guidebook that we would find better bargains elsewhere, so I kept my wallet firmly in my pocket to avoid being ripped off.

- 1 The phrase 'ripped off' indicates that the writer
 - A suspects that the prices in the market are too high.
 - B does not feel safe in the market.
 - C does not trust the advice given in the guidebook.
 - D is keen to buy souvenirs.

As I approached the kitchen, I could hear the muffled voices of Hugh and Dona coming from behind the closed door, but they were too unclear for me to tell whether they were arguing or just chatting.

- 2 The word 'muffled' suggests that the voices
 - A sounded angry.
 - B were very loud.
 - C weren't easy to hear.
 - D weren't in the kitchen.

The company did well. Our products were new and innovative, and proved instantly popular. But we knew that we had to establish our brand quickly because it wouldn't take long for others to jump on the bandwagon with their own versions.

- 3 The phrase 'jump on the bandwagon' suggests that
 - A the company's products would continue to be popular.
 - B other companies would copy their ideas.
 - C the company needed to keep developing new ideas.
 - D their company would continue to grow quickly.

I hadn't seen my aunt and uncle for at least 15 years, so I wasn't exactly thrilled when I was told they were coming to visit my city and I would have the dubious pleasure of showing them around.

- 4 The word 'dubious' suggests that the writer
 - A was looking forward to seeing her aunt and uncle.
 - B wasn't sure she would enjoy seeing her aunt and uncle.
 - C felt bad about not meeting her aunt and uncle.
 - D felt very excited at the thought of meeting her aunt and uncle.

Matching meaning

It is important to read the relevant part of the text very carefully to match the exact meaning in the text to the meaning in the correct answer.

- 5 Read the extracts carefully and decide if the sentences (A-D) are true or false, according to the text. How do you know?

TIP: If an answer option mentions something that does not appear in the text, it cannot be the correct answer (or true, according to the text).

- 1 As we prepared for the race across the desert, one of our biggest challenges was to find suitable team members. Not only did they have to be physically fit, but they also had to have personalities and habits that wouldn't drive us mad.
 - A The writer wanted to find people to take part in a race.
 - B It was easy to find team members.
 - C Team members had to be strong and healthy.
 - D They needed team members that they could get on well with.

- 2 The Isle of Skye, off the northwest coast of Scotland, is fast becoming a victim of its own success. Having advertised its beautiful and remote landscape in an attempt to attract visitors, it now faces a crisis. Tourists are now flocking to the island in such numbers each year that they risk destroying the very peacefulness they hope to enjoy.
 - A The Isle of Skye never encouraged tourists.
 - B A lot of tourists now come to the island.
 - C The problem of too many visitors is now very serious.
 - D Tourists are damaging the beautiful landscape on the island.

- 3 The first indication we had that there were flying fish in the water was the occasional 'plop' as they dropped back below the surface. It was only a few moments later that Joe caught sight of some and called out excitedly to me. I turned my head to see a small group of them, as clear as day as they emerged from beneath the waves and then quickly returned.
 - A The writer was very excited to see the flying fish.
 - B The writer couldn't see the flying fish very clearly.
 - C They heard the flying fish before they saw them.
 - D The flying fish stayed out of the water for a long time.

- 4 It was her passion for landscape photography that first took Amber to Canada, and it was only a chance day trip on a sailing boat that gave her a first sighting of humpback and minke whales. But this encounter changed her life, and she resolved to play whatever part she could in bringing these magnificent creatures back from the verge of extinction.
 - A Amber's visit to Canada gave her an interest in photography.
 - B Amber travelled to Canada in order to see whales.
 - C Amber discovered a new interest during her time in Canada.
 - D Amber managed to take some wonderful photos of whales.

- 6 Read the first paragraph of an article about Jack Thomson's experience of studying an active volcano. Answer the questions (1-5).

VOLCANO WATCH

It was February 2012. I'd flown from London to Rwanda, driven nearly 200 kilometres through the Democratic Republic of the Congo on rough tracks, then fought my way on foot through eight exhausting kilometres of hot and humid rainforest to reach the Nyamuragira Volcano. I was a young researcher and this was my first experience of an active volcano. The thrill of finally arriving was mixed with a certain nervousness on realising the awesome natural power of what was in front of us. There was a fierce energy somehow in the air, and the low, steady rumble of explosions was accompanied by occasional terrifying bursts of smoke and flames. I was very relieved that I wasn't alone.



- 1 What do we learn about the writer's journey to the volcano?
- 2 Does the writer say how he felt during the journey?
- 3 What do we learn about the writer's background?
- 4 What emotions did the writer experience when he arrived at the volcano?
- 5 What signs were there that the volcano was active?

7 Now read the exam question about the paragraph in Ex 6 and choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

TIP: Words or ideas in the options often occur in the text, but this does not mean that the option is correct. They may be distractors, placed there to catch you out if you don't read the text carefully enough. Read the relevant part of the text very carefully to see if the meaning matches.

What was the writer's main impression when he arrived at the volcano?

- A how uncomfortable the weather conditions were
- B how relieved he was to finally be there
- C how powerful and dangerous the volcano was
- D how lonely he felt

Understanding reference words

Some questions ask about reference words in the text. To answer these, you need to read the part of the text before the reference word very carefully to find out which noun or verb the reference word refers back to.

TIP: The reference word is usually the subject or object of a verb. Think about which nouns make sense as the subject or object.

8 Look at the bold reference words in the extracts (1-3). Then look at the highlighted words. Answer the questions (A-C).

- 1 There were customers at all the tables, waiting patiently as skilful waiters hurried around handing **them** large plates of delicious-looking food.
 - A Who was handing out plates?
 - B Who were they handing the plates to?
 - C Which highlighted word does 'them' refer to?
- 2 There was a slight mist in the air as we headed for the truck to go on our tiger-watching trip, but **that** only added to the sense of excitement that we felt.
 - A How does the writer feel about the trip?
 - B What made that feeling stronger?
 - C Which highlighted word does 'that' refer to?
- 3 Young people queue up each year to take part in TV talent shows, dreaming of the chance to become celebrities, but very **few** ever achieve their ambitions.
 - A Who wants to become celebrities?
 - B Who wants to achieve their ambitions?
 - C Which highlighted word does 'few' refer to?

9 Look at the extracts and choose the correct answer (A-D).

TIP: Reference words always refer back to earlier nouns or verbs, not to later nouns or verbs.

Working as a newly qualified teacher can be daunting. Lesson preparation seems to take forever, and marking students' work is even more demanding on time. Then there is the huge issue of learning how to keep control of an uninterested and often unwilling class of teenagers. It takes years to achieve **this** and become a confident and effective teacher.

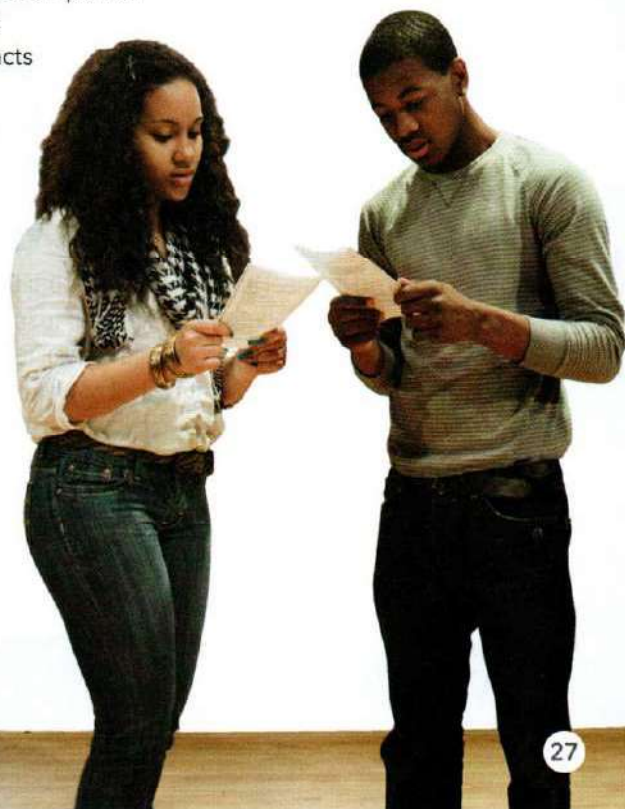
- 1 What does 'this' refer to?
 - A preparing lessons
 - B keeping control of the class
 - C marking students' work
 - D becoming a confident and effective teacher

'How do I get to your house?' I asked. 'Just go along the main road until you get to the traffic lights, then turn left. **It's** simple,' Ana replied. 'You could get the bus if you don't want to walk.'

- 2 What does 'it' refer to?
 - A getting to Ana's house
 - B going along the main road
 - C turning left
 - D getting the bus

Life is not easy for young actors. Well-paid jobs are few and far between, and most theatre companies don't offer regular contracts. For this reason, **many** give up and turn to alternative careers.

- 3 What does 'many' refer to?
 - A careers
 - B theatre companies
 - C actors
 - D contracts



The ultimate challenge

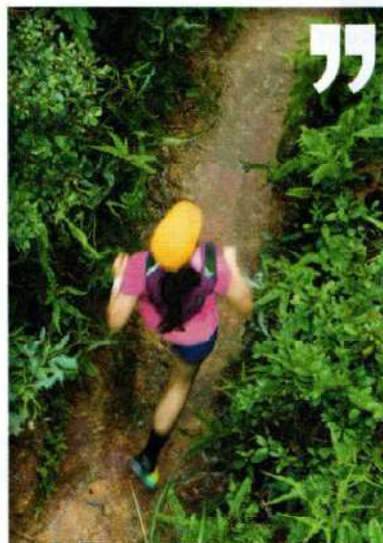
The ultramarathon in the Amazon is one of the toughest footraces in the world. You run 230 kilometres over four days through dense jungle, carrying your kit on your back, in temperatures up to 30 degrees. Why would anyone want to do this? Of course, there's a competitive element, and most runners have at least some desire to win. There's also the personal satisfaction of pushing your body to its limits. But these are secondary to the main motivation, which is simply the pleasure of running. This is what really drives people to compete in these extreme events.

My running career had followed a fairly established path, graduating from a relaxed 5k in my local park to a half marathon and, finally, what I saw at the time as my ultimate challenge, the New York Marathon. Except that when I crossed the finish line, **it** didn't feel like such a big achievement. I'd trained so well and got so fit that running 42 kilometres no longer felt like a big deal, and I felt I needed more. A friend suggested an ultramarathon, so I signed up for one in the Amazon.

My training programme involved running in the heat and rain as well as building up my fitness. One challenge was to get used to running with a backpack. I knew I would have to carry at least 2.5 litres of water every day, and that's a lot of weight! Luckily, the human body can adapt quickly. Covering more kilometres in a day wasn't a huge problem for me. But the tough thing about ultra-running is getting up day after day and persuading your tired, aching body to perform again. This was what really tested me.



Why would anyone want to do this?



I arrived at the base camp on 31 May, three days before the start of the race. My journey there had been long but fairly straightforward, and I had got a reasonable amount of rest along the way. The tents provided for us were quite big and fairly comfortable. The weather wasn't brilliant, but the forecast was good, so it wasn't a huge concern. I spent a lot of time over those few days chatting to the other competitors, comparing notes about training and experience. They were all very friendly and keen to offer help and support, which I hadn't expected. Then it was time for the race itself.

I knew I would have to deal with running over rough ground, with lots of ups and downs and sometimes in the dark. I was also well prepared for the psychological highs and lows, the inner battle that all runners experience, with one voice in your head telling you to just give up and go home, while the other urges you forward. What I **hadn't bargained for** was the physical effect of running with wet feet, due to the many streams we had to cross. My feet were sore and bleeding by the end of day one. In the end, though, it was my legs that let me down. On the third day, they simply couldn't do any more and I had to stop.

Of course, failing at anything is not as good as winning, but, to my mind, having a go at one of the toughest challenges in the world, even if it ends in failure, is hardly something to be ashamed of. I travelled home with no medal, but by no means defeated. And when friends asked me, 'Are you going to try an ultramarathon again?' I had no hesitation in saying 'no'. I am not sorry that I took part, but have accepted that I have my limits and in future I will be happy to stick to standard marathons!

You are going to read an article about a woman's experience of preparing for an extreme marathon. For questions 1-6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

- 1 **According to the writer, people take part in ultramarathons mainly because**
 - A they are determined to win.
 - B they find them enjoyable.
 - C they want to see how much their body can achieve.
 - D they want to prove that they can do it.

- 2 **The word 'it' in line 20 refers to**
 - A the writer's running career.
 - B a big achievement.
 - C completing the New York Marathon.
 - D training so well.

- 3 **Which part of training for the ultramarathon did the writer find the most difficult?**
 - A learning to run while carrying a heavy weight
 - B running much longer distances
 - C learning to run even when she was exhausted
 - D practising running in difficult weather conditions

- 4 **How did the writer feel at the base camp, before the race?**
 - A tired after a difficult journey
 - B surprised at the attitude of other runners
 - C disappointed about the accommodation
 - D worried about the weather conditions

- 5 **The phrase 'hadn't bargained for' (line 57) suggests that running with wet feet**
 - A caused some unexpected problems.
 - B was not a particularly difficult challenge.
 - C had been part of the writer's training.
 - D was not as unpleasant as the writer expected.

- 6 **What feeling does the writer have now?**
 - A determination to succeed in an ultramarathon one day
 - B pride at having taken part
 - C disappointment at having failed to complete the race
 - D regret at trying to do something too challenging