Functional Skills
English
Level 1

Learning Resource 5
Reading for Understanding
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You need to make sure that your notes make sense and are useful for you but ... you must not make your notes too long.

You need to cut down the number of words that you use so that your notes are much shorter than the original piece of writing.

Here are some hints that might help you make your notes short but useful!

- Make sure you read through the piece before you start taking notes. This helps you get used to what the writing is about and means you’re more likely to be able to understand and use the information.

- When you’ve read it through once to get a basic idea of what it’s about, read it through again carefully. This will deepen your understanding of what you’re reading and mean you’re able to use the information for your assignment work.

- You shouldn’t copy whole sentences (unless you’re going to use the words as quotations in your writing).

- If you can, highlight the important ideas, facts or points in the piece of writing. This helps you to pick out the useful information that you can use for your assignment work.
There are two main ways of making notes:

1. linear notes;
2. web notes.

Linear notes are the most common way of making notes. The word 'linear' basically means in a straight line and that’s exactly how linear notes are written – in straight lines across the page.

In linear notes you can also use headings, subheadings, underlining and indenting to make your notes easy to read and use. If you don’t know what all these words mean, use the glossary page in this workbook to look up the meanings. The example of linear notes on the next page shows you where and how each of these things can be used in your notes.

It is also a good idea to use abbreviations in your notes. Abbreviations are shortened versions of words. If a word is used a lot in your notes, you can abbreviate it so it takes less time and effort to write. The abbreviations used in the piece on the next page are marked clearly so you can see what they can look like.

The following example shows how linear notes can look. The notes are about bullying.

You’ll notice the sentences have some words missing – this is because we have cut down the number of words used so the notes are short but still make sense.
Bullying (heading)

Why do some people get bullied? (subheading)

No such thing as typical victim, all different.
But – often victim is physically weaker or younger than bully.
People get picked on for all sorts of reasons.
Bully will use any excuse for 1st attack (abbreviation)

Response

Whether bullying goes on depends how victim responds.

- Confident response will often deflect the attack (indented)

What B wants is victim to show fear. If show fear, B will sense weak spot and repeat the attack over and over again. (abbreviation)

Why do some people bully? (Use of bullet points)

- some think it’s fun to tease or upset by threatening;
- makes bully feel powerful;
- some are v. jealous and pick on others (abbreviation);
- some attacks are racist;
- many bullies are unhappy/insecure – bully as way of making up for this;
- some are bullied themselves at home and grow up thinking bullying is how you look after yourself;
- is evidence too that children who are victims of bullying at school have higher than average chance of becoming bullies themselves.
Web Notes are more like a plan or picture, with even fewer words than linear notes. Web notes work very well for subjects that have clear facts you need to understand.

The example below shows how web notes can look using the same subject ‘Bullying’.

**Why/Who**
- No ‘typical victim’ all diff.
- Often victim = physically weaker/younger than B
- B uses any excuse for 1st attack.

**Why do some people bully?**
- think it’s fun
- feel powerful
- racists
- jealous/pick on others
- unhappy/insecure
- bullied themselves at home
- children who are bullied at school have higher than average chance of becoming B themselves

**Response**
Is important – confident resp. will often deflect the attack.

**Show fear** – weak spot and B may repeat attack over and over.

Note – abbreviations, bullet points, headings and subheadings are still useful.
Exercise 1

Linear Notes and Web Notes

Use this text to practise using the skills you have read about so far in this section.

1) Use the piece of writing to make a set of linear notes.

   Remember to try using headings, subheadings, underlining, and indenting in your notes.

2) Use the piece of writing to make a set of web notes.

3) Which way of making notes did you prefer to use and why?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

To get used to making notes, you need to practise your skills as often as you can.

**Drinking and Alcohol**

All kinds of people are alcoholics, young and old, rich and poor, professional people and factory workers, home workers and office workers. Only about three to five percent are so called ‘down and outs’. The rest have families, friends and jobs, but drinking affects some part of their lives. Their family life, their social life or their job may suffer. It might be all three. An alcoholic is someone whose drinking causes a continuing and growing problem in any area of their life.

Alcoholics drink because they think they have to. They use alcohol as a crutch and an escape. They are emotionally dependent on alcohol and truly believe they can't live without it. They are also physically addicted and have withdrawal symptoms when they try to stop.

Alcoholics Anonymous is an organisation which helps alcoholics to face up to and cope with their problems. It consists of groups of people who help each other to stay sober. They offer help to anyone who has a drinking problem and wants to do something about it.


Exercise 2

Summarising

In about 40/50 of your own words summarise what this article is about. In another short paragraph give your opinion about the article.
Different types of text use different sorts of language, structural and presentational devices.

Study the examples of different types of text given and the explanations of the different devices used.

Text 1

Explanations

Explanations or explanatory texts are written to explain how or why something happens. It often consists of a description of the subject followed by an explanatory sequence. The present tense is often used and connectives of cause and effect (e.g. so, therefore) and time (e.g. then, later) are common.

As we are always trying to improve our service to you as an existing member of the Omega Club, we have recently opened a new Helpline service. Now there is only one number you have to remember to get directly through to our friendly, helpful staff. If possible, have your membership number to hand before you ring as that will help us deal even more efficiently with your question and speed the service up even more.

You can even ring the service outside office hours and just leave a message so that we can get back to you the next day. So, don’t forget, if you have a problem just ring 0115 900 1234.
A Recount Text

A recount text may be fictional or non-fictional. It tells you a story and can be written for entertainment or information. For example a novel, which would usually start with scene-setting, introducing characters and a problem, and going on to recount the solving of that problem, bringing it to some kind of a conclusion, would be an example of a fictional recount. A newspaper account of an event, or a biography, which tell events in a chronological order would be examples of non-fictional recounts. The language is often descriptive and many descriptive language features such as adjectives, powerful verbs, adverbs and similes may be used. The following description has been taken from a recount text.

The sobbing mother stood distraught on the riverbank as lifeguards dragged the apparently lifeless body of her son out of the freezing water and onto the muddy bank. For what seemed an eternity, the professionals applied artificial respiration to the boy. From her position on the bank, her son’s body looked like that of a rain soaked rag doll. Burning tears stung her eyes. Then suddenly, as if by magic, a strangled half cry and dreadful gurgling noise emitted from the boy. He was alive!!
Instructional Text

Instructional texts are written to enable the reader to achieve a goal; to lead them through a process. They usually contain imperative verbs (verbs which command you to do something). The layout is often quite distinctive to this form of writing; it often consists of numbered or bulleted points.

Examples of instructional texts are recipes, assembly instructions and travel directions. These are instructions taken from an alarm clock radio.

Setting the alarm time

1. Set the Function switch to the OFF position.
2. Press and hold down the Alarm button.
3. Release the alarm button at the required alarm time.
4. If you would like to be woken by the radio rather than the alarm sound, set the Function switch to Radio.
Exercise 3 Recognising Different Textual Features in Different Types of Text

1) Using a highlighter, in Text 1 – the explanatory text – highlight all the present tense verbs which are often a feature of explanations.

2) Next underline all the connectives used.
List them here:

What kind of connectives were they?

3) In Text 2 – the recount text – highlight as many adjectives (describing words) as you can find.

4) How did they help you to understand the description better?

5) What were the other language features used which helped the reader to enjoy the text more?

6) In what kind of recount text might you find this description?
Exercise 3 (cont’d)

7) How did the layout of Text 3 differ from the other two?

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........................................................................................................................................

8) How was the text introduced? Why was this helpful?

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........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

9) In Text 3 –the instructional text - highlight all the imperative verbs which tell you what to do.

10) Where in the sentence did these verbs *almost always* appear?

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........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

11) Which instruction was the exception?

........................................................................................................................................

12) Why do you think some of the words in the instructions were printed in bold italics?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
### The Generic Structure of Different Types of Text

Pages 10, 11 & 12 gave you examples of the features of three different types of text. Here is a chart with further types of text and their features which may help you complete Exercise 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Text</th>
<th>Layout Features</th>
<th>Language Features</th>
<th>Sentence Structure</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Text</td>
<td>Introductory paragraph 1 paragraph for each side of the argument Paragraph for conclusion</td>
<td>States opinions of 2 sides</td>
<td>A lot of use of connectives eg. however, therefore …</td>
<td>Presenting an argument for and against going to war against another country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation Text</td>
<td>Description of subject followed by an explanatory sequence Sometimes diagrams used</td>
<td>Connectives of time and cause and effect Present tense</td>
<td>A variety</td>
<td>How an engine works Why you have been given a specific medication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Text</td>
<td>Subheadings Often bulleted or numbered points</td>
<td>Imperative verbs</td>
<td>Short sharp sentences common Often begin with verb</td>
<td>Recipes Instruction manuals Travel directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Text</td>
<td>A short opening paragraph to set the scene Several middle paragraphs to describe the problem and set in motion the solution Final short paragraph to conclude</td>
<td>Chronological sequence therefore connectives like next, later etc common Description usual and therefore adjectives, adverbs, powerful verbs and language features like similes often used</td>
<td>A good narrative will have a wide variety of simple and complex sentences. May contain speech</td>
<td>Fictional - prose or poetry which tells a story Non-fictional – a newspaper story or a biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive Text</td>
<td>May contain or describe pictures or images Usually short texts</td>
<td>Persuasive language and vocab. – use of over emphasis or exaggerated language e.g. superlative adjectives Reasoning connectives e.g. therefore, however</td>
<td>Long sentences, full of adjectives and adverbs</td>
<td>Advertisements Political pamphlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Text</td>
<td>Headings and subheadings often used Non-chronological text written to describe or clarify</td>
<td>Usually continuous present tense used Generalised characters described e.g. the police rather than a specific named policeman</td>
<td>Simple sentences most common in formal register</td>
<td>Guide books Newspaper report on a court case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 4  

Making a Vocationalised Collection of Different Text Types

Start making a collection of different kinds of texts associated with your vocational area or an area of interest to you.

Put them together in a portfolio.

Cut out, or photocopy, examples from each which show the language, layout and presentational features characteristic of that genre or type of text.

Highlight in some way these features and annotate them to explain why you chose them.

Example:

Type of text: Instructional text

Vocational area: Hospitality and Catering

**Recipe for Cheese and Onion Quiche**

- **Roll** out 175g of short crust pastry to fit an 18 cm flan dish.
- **Line** the dish and **bake** blind for 20 mins @ Gas Mk 5.
- Meanwhile **grate** 125g of strong cheese.
- **Chop** 1 small onion.
- **Whisk** 2 eggs together with 300 ml of milk.
- **Remove** the pastry from the oven.
- **Add** the ingredients and **bake** for a further 15 mins. @ Gas Mk 5.
- **Decorate** with sliced tomato and parsley.
### Information

What kind of reading do you do for pleasure?

Some people prefer fiction, others non-fiction.

Many people rarely open a book but are avid newspaper or magazine readers.

What makes us enjoy the kind of reading we prefer?

**Try keeping a record of what you read and look for common factors in those texts you enjoy.**

**For example**

It may be that you think you enjoy all sport articles in your favourite newspaper but on closer examination, you find it is the writing style of one particular sports writer that particularly appeals to you. If this is the case, try to identify what it is that appeals to you about the way s/he writes.

You may enjoy historical fiction but have you a favourite author? What is it about that author that makes his/her writing more enjoyable for you?

If you don’t read much for pleasure … try!! You never know you might enjoy it! Becoming familiar with different styles of text does help you when you are trying to write for yourself.
Exercise 5  

Reading for Pleasure

Experiment with reading a range of texts for pleasure.

Keep a reading record of titles and authors and devise your own ‘enjoyment rating’ system.

Use this list as a reference when choosing future reading material.

This is a suggested format of a reading record …… but feel free to devise your own either on paper or on screen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type of reading matter e.g. book, paper, magazine etc</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Enjoyment Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information

Directories list information alphabetically. This makes it easy to access the required information.

Telephone books and the Yellow Pages are both directories.

Surnames in the telephone book are ordered alphabetically.

For example:

- **SMITH J.N,** 198 West Road, Nottingham ......................... (01111) 987654
- **WILSON I.S,** “Manor House”, Chapel Street, Chesterfield .... (01246) 123456

However, when a surname is the same the order depends on the first initial.

So

- **JONES B,** 12 Wakefield Road, Leeds ......................... (01432) 645546
- **JONES Q.A,** 87 Mansfield Road, Lincoln ......................... (01765) 911111

It follows on that, if both the surname and first initial are the same, then the second initial determines the order.

Exercise 6

See if you can put the following names in the order they would appear in the telephone book.

1) **PATEL A.C,** 99 Coal Miners’ Way, Norwich ......................... (01763) 111222
2) **HOOD R,** “Major Oak” Acorn Road, Sherwood Forest .... (0115) 510000
3) **ROBERTS R.R,** 11 Robertson Road, Reading ......................... (0116) 101010
4) **OWENS D.C,** 101 Liverpool Street, Blackpool ......................... (01981) 321123
5) **SINGH P.I,** 52 Church Street, Bedford ................................. (01843) 246810
6) **PATEL A.H,** 100 St.Peter’s Lane, Southampton ......................... (01234) 432432
7) **HOOD A.G.S,** 87 Pond Street, Birmingham ......................... (01186) 191919
8) **BLAIR A.G,** 10 Drowning Road, London ......................... (01091) 099191
Information

The Yellow Pages categorises professions, trades and services and lists these categories alphabetically.

For example:

St. Stephen’s Primary School would be listed under the Schools category.
Ashfield Doctors’ Surgery would be listed under the Doctors category.

Exercise 7

Can you link the following circumstances to the related category you would look under in the Yellow Pages?

1) Your tooth was driving you crazy
   PLUMBERS

2) Your computer had a virus on it
   ACCOUNTANTS

3) You needed some legal advice
   DENTISTS

4) You wanted a holiday
   SOLICITORS

5) You pet dog was ill
   RESTAURANTS

6) Your finances were in a mess
   TRAVEL AGENTS

7) You had a water leak
   VETERINARY SURGEONS

8) You fancy eating out
   COMPUTER MAINTENANCE
Information

Using Different Sources for the Same Information

Information is available to us in many different forms. The same information may be presented in slightly different formats suited to its media.

Television, Teletext, the Internet, newspapers and radio are all sources of information.

For example:
Below is an extract taken from a newspaper and a website. They both show screening times at a local cinema.

From the newspaper extract…
The last showing of Crocodile Island starts at 3.20pm

From the website extract…..
The first showing of A Beautiful Brain is 11.30 at the weekend and 1.30 during the week
Exercise 8

Different Sources for the Same Information

Using the NEWSPAPER extract on the previous page, can you identify which of the following statements are true?

1) DONKEY THE MOVIE is suitable for children.
2) The latest showing of DINOSAUR PARK is 3.20pm.
3) The first showing of THE DAME OF THE RING is 2.05pm during the week.
4) SIX is screened at 6.05pm.
5) MOVIES FOR KIDS starts at 10.00 all week.

Using the WEBSITE extract on the previous page, can you identify which of the following statements are true?

6) PLANET OF THE MONKEYS is nominated for an Oscar.
7) Group tickets before 5pm are £22.00.
8) The latest showing of A BEAUTIFUL BRAIN is 9.00pm.
9) MADE IN NEW YORK is only suitable for adults.
10) THE EXERCISE is exactly two hours long.

Do you find the newspaper or the website easier to interpret?
Information

The Internet is a huge source of information which can be accessed through a computer. Almost anything you can think of can be found somewhere on the internet.

Information is located by a specific address. Often a website will have links to other websites. Clicking on these links accesses more specific information.

For example:
below is shown a screen shot of the bksb website.

Clicking on 👈 would link to About bksb

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Exercise 9

Using the screen shot of the bksb web-site, can you join the number with the correct link?

Number 1 has been done for you.

1. Technical Support
2. Events
3. Downloads
4. FAQs
5. Products
6. About bksb
7. Australia
Information Locating Specific Information from a Text Book

To find the information that you are looking for quickly and easily from a text book you will need to use the index and the contents. A text book is often split into a number of chapters and within each of these chapters are separate sections, each with their own heading.

The contents are found at the beginning of the book and list the chapters along with the page number at which they start. In some text books, chapter sections are also listed.

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEGINNERS</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stance</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grip</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The INTRODUCTION chapter would start on page 8 and the BEGINNERS chapter would start on page 19. The Equipment subheading would start on page 9, the Stance subheading would start on page 20 and the Grip subheading would start on page 24.

Exercise 10

This is a reference from a football book...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RULES &amp; REGULATIONS</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referee</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITIONS</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goalkeeper</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midfield</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TACTICS</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long ball</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answer these questions from the information given.

1) What page would you find information on the role of the referee?
2) What subheadings are in the “Tactics” chapter?
3) In which chapter would you find information on defence?
4) What page does the “Positions” chapter start?
The index is found at the end of a book giving an alphabetical list of subjects to be found in the book with references and pages on which to find them.

For example:  
British Open Championships, 100, 103, 195  
Bunkers, 34, 59  

Information on the British Open Championship would be found on pages 100, 103 and 195 while information on Bunkers would be found on pages 34 and 59.

Names are often listed with the surname first e.g. John Smith would be listed under SMITH, John.

Exercise 11

This is a reference from a guitar book...

Answer these questions from the information given.

1) What page would you find information on Bob Dylan?
2) What pages would you find information on major chords?
3) What is on page 89?
4) What is on page 10?
Information Locating Information from an Encyclopaedia

Encyclopaedias are books giving information on all subjects and are usually arranged alphabetically. Owing to the amount of information, there are often many volumes within an encyclopaedia.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica contains brief information on a vast number of subjects. These are ordered alphabetically within their relevant volume.

For example: This is a picture showing the different volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Subjects beginning with letters found between J and M in the alphabet would be found in volume 3.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A-E</th>
<th>F-I</th>
<th>J-M</th>
<th>N-R</th>
<th>S-T</th>
<th>U-Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Britannica</td>
<td>Britannica</td>
<td>Britannica</td>
<td>Britannica</td>
<td>Britannica</td>
<td>Britannica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume 1</td>
<td>Volume 2</td>
<td>Volume 3</td>
<td>Volume 4</td>
<td>Volume 5</td>
<td>Volume 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Exercise 12 Encyclopaedia Britannica

Using the picture of the Encyclopaedia Britannica above, answer the following.

In which volume would you find the information on…

1) Snails   5) Monarchs
2) Charles Darwin   6) Zoology
3) Shakespeare   7) Bridges
4) Geology   8) Engineering

Have a look in the reference section of your library for an encyclopaedia and try using it.
### Skimming and Scanning

Skimming and scanning are two different ways of reading. To **skim read** is to read quite quickly and shallowly, just to get the rough idea of what you are reading about. With skim reading, you will be able to describe what you have read roughly and you will not be able to give many details.

On the other hand, to **scan** is to search through a piece of writing for an item of information. With scan reading, you will ignore anything that is not important to you and concentrate on finding exactly what information you are looking for.

Sometimes you may need to reread the text, or part of the text, really well to be able to understand the specific information given in the text. This is called detailed reading.

In your studies you will often have to use all these ways of reading: skimming first to get the main idea and then scanning for particular information. You will need to use skimming and scanning for work involving research, note taking and comprehension work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skimming</td>
<td>general gist and overall impression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanning</td>
<td>locating information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed reading</td>
<td>specific information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Exercise 13

Skim read the piece of writing in the box below and jot down here your first thoughts on what the piece is about:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

AIDS/HIV

AIDS is caused by a virus call HIV. HIV damages the body’s defence system so that it cannot fight other infections. Sometimes people live for many years with HIV but others may get a fatal disease quite quickly. HIV is not passed on through everyday social contact. It is passed on in 3 main ways:

- through unprotected sexual intercourse
- by drug users sharing needles
- by a mother with HIV infecting her unborn child

It is possible for HIV to be passed on by contact with another person’s blood. However, in most countries all blood products are tested and therefore you should not get HIV from blood or blood products in hospital. You should however, avoid sharing toothbrushes and razors.

You cannot get HIV by shaking hands or hugging a person with HIV. You cannot get HIV by sharing objects like cups, cutlery, glasses, food, clothes, toilet seats or door knobs. HIV has been found in saliva but it is thought unlikely that the virus could be passed on by kissing or though tears or sweat.
Exercise 14

Scan read through the piece of writing about AIDS/HIV to locate the information you need to be able to say if these statements are true/false.

Go back and read the text around the key words carefully. Then answer these questions.

1) You can get HIV from sharing drug needles. True / False
2) People with HIV always die very quickly. True / False
3) HIV is a virus. True / False
4) You can get HIV from sharing someone else’s glass. True / False
5) You cannot get HIV from another person’s blood. True / False
6) There are 4 main ways that the HIV virus is passed on. True / False

Information

Sometimes, even in scientific texts such as this, meaning is inferred rather than being explicitly stated.

For example in this text, why do you think it specifically mentions all the ways people can’t get AIDS?

Discuss this with your group and/or tutor if possible

Exercise 15

Explain your opinion, about what you think may be implied in the text, concerning people’s thoughts about contracting AIDS.