

ADDING UP THE UNDER-SKILLED



I. REFLECTING UPON THE TEXT

TASK A

1. The text you are going to read is about literacy. Literacy can be understood as the ability to read and write that all human beings have. In order to know your level of literacy, answer the questions below.

YES NO

- a. Have you ever filled in an application form?
- b. Have you ever exchanged foreign currency?
- c. Have you ever had a loan to finance your studies and calculated the interests charged?
- d. Have you ever written a letter of complaint?
- e. Have you ever calculated the taxes that your parents pay?

2. If you are a literate person, then you will be able to recount events or tell stories. Tell us how good you are at it.
- a. Retell to your classmate's about the last film you saw.
 - b. Explain how to find your favourite restaurant in the yellow pages.
 - c. Make a summary of the last newspaper article that you read.

TASK B

1. Read the following advertisement "Home Equity Loans."

FIXED RATE . FIXED TERM			
HOME EQUITY LOANS		14.25%	
		Annual percentage Rate	
		Ten Year Term	
SAMPLE	MONTHLY	REPAYMENT	SCHEDULE
Amount Financed		Monthly payment	
	\$40,000	\$627.09	
	\$25,000	\$391.93	
	\$10,000	\$156.77	
120 months 14.25% APR			

Taken from "TIME", September 20th, 1993

Based on the above advertisement, work out the amount of interest charged for a loan of \$10,000.

Choose the steps you would follow to calculate the interest from the alternatives given below.

- a. You multiply the monthly payment by the number of months, then you add the amount of the loan.
- b. You multiply the monthly payment by the number of months and then you subtract the amount of the loan.
- c. You multiply the monthly payment by the number of months, then you divide the result into the amount of the loan.

2. Now, choose the total amount of interest you would pay for the \$10,000 loan.

- a. \$18,812.40
- b. \$1,800.40
- c. \$8,812.40
- d. \$1,881.24

II. FACE TO FACE WITH THE TEXT



TASK A

Read the text "**Adding up the Under-Skilled**". Below you will find some statements adapted from the text. Find another way to say the same thing that the underlined words mean.

EDUCATION

ADDING UP THE UNDER-SKILLED

A survey finds nearly half of U.S. adults lack the literacy to cope with modern life

By Paul Gray

FOR YEARS U.S. EMPLOYERS HAVE BEEN grouching that more and more aspiring workers lack the know-how to get the most basic jobs done. Last week such complaints received alarming confirmation. *Adults Literacy in America*, a 150-page survey conducted by the Educational Testing Service based in Princeton, New Jersey, and released by the U.S. Department of Education, reported that roughly 90 million Americans over age 16—almost half that category's total population—are, as far as most workplaces are concerned, basically unfit for employment.

Who is included in that definition? Those who can sign a credit-card receipt but are incapable of writing a letter when they think their bill is wrong; those who can pay the

correct change at the supermarket but have difficulty calculating the difference between regular and sale prices; those who can scan a newspaper story but cannot paraphrase its content.

ETS based its findings on the performance of 26,000 people chosen to represent a cross section of adults in the U.S. Over a period of four years, all subjects were interviewed and given between 35 and 40 tests, drawn from a bank of 185 prepared for the survey. The tasks simulated real-life situations, calling upon basic reading and math competence and the ability to interpret charts, graphs and timetables, and were assigned degrees of difficulty on a scale of 0 to 500. Thus totaling the sums on a bank-deposit slip rated a 191; calculating the costs, including handling and shipping, of a

catalog order garnered a 382.

After tabulating the test scores, ETS designated five different grades and projected that 42 million American adults fall within the lowest category; 52 million fill the next rank, which is still below the level required to perform a moderately demanding job. Perhaps the worst news from the survey was the hubris expressed by those who were tested: when asked if they read well or very well, 71% of those in the bottom grade said yes.

If the ETS survey is accurate, the U.S. is not only significantly populated by people unprepared for current and advancing technologies, but most of them do not know that they do not know. - *Reported by Janice C. Simpson/New York*

TIME, SEPTEMBER 20, 1993

1. Approximately 90 million Americans over 16 years old are basically unfit for employment.

Nearly

2. These people are unable to write letters of complaint when they think that their bill is wrong.

3. They are also incapable of computing the difference between regular and sale prices.

4. Others cannot retell the content of an article in their own words.

5. Tests were used to evaluate basic reading and math's competence.

6. The tests simulated everyday life situations in which the subjects would have to interpret charts, graphs and timetables.

7. The findings show that 71% of the subjects interviewed were not aware that their reading abilities were deficient.



TASK B

Read the text "Adding up the Under-Skilled" and say what the following figures refer to.

Figures	Direct Reference
1. 150	_____
2. 16	_____
3. 90 million	_____
4. 26,000	_____
5. 35-40	_____
6. 185	_____
7. 0 to 500	_____
8. 191	_____
9. 382	_____
10. 42 million	_____
11. 52 million	_____
12. 71%	_____



III. JUDGING AND PROPOSING SOLUTIONS

TASK A

Based on the following newspaper announcement, four women were pre-selected for a job. To get the job they had to pass three tests.

- The first one was to write a letter.
- The second one was to solve a basic mathematical problem.
- The third one was to have an interview.

NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION COMPANY
Is looking for a
BILINGUAL SECRETARY
 English-Spanish
 P.O. BOX 2569

FIRST TEST: WRITING A LETTER.

For the first test the applicants had to write a letter in which the sales' manager of National Distribution Company, Mr. Kennedy, had to tell Peat Mitchell Industry, that he had received order No.0109 of August 19th, but that they had not indicated the way in which the merchandise was to be sent, either by parcel post or shipping by freight. They also had to remind them that parcel post is quicker.

To write the letter the applicants had to follow the established patterns.

- The headings and salutations
- The main subject of the letter
- Background details of what happened
- Concluding comments
- Closing and signature

1. Taking into account the above requirements for writing a letter, the manager pre-selected three of the four letters. Help him to choose the best one.

- ___ a. Vilma's letter
- ___ b. Andrea's letter
- ___ c. Marianna's letter



NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION COMPANY
P.O. BOX 2569, Santafé de Bogotá

August 29, _____

Peat Mitchell Inc.
67, Park Avenue
North Merrick, N.Y., 12677
U.S.A.

We received your order of August 19 and have everything ready to send.

You did not indicate how shipment should be made. The order is large enough to warrant shipment by freight.

However, the difference in forwarding expenses if it is sent by parcel post, is relatively small, of course, the latter method is quicker.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Jacques Kennedy
Sales Manager

NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION COMPANY
P.O. BOX 2569, Santafé de Bogotá

August 29, ____

Peat Mitchell Inc.
67, Park Avenue
North Merrick, N.Y., 12677
U.S.A.

We received your order No.0109 of August 19 and have everything ready to send.

However, you did not indicate how shipment should be made. The order is large enough to warrant shipment by freight. Tell us how you would like your merchandise to be sent.

Please let us know your preferences by return mail, so that we can ship the merchandise to you without further delay.

Yours faithfully,

Jacques Kennedy
Sales Manager

NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION COMPANY

P.O. BOX 2569, Santafé de Bogotá

August 29, _____

Peat Mitchell Inc.
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Please let us know your preferences by return mail so that we can ship the merchandise to you without further delay.

Yours faithfully,

Jacques Kennedy
Sales Manager

2. So far although one of the applicants got the highest score, all of them were allowed to take the second test and the interview.

SECOND TEST: MATH'S PROBLEM

The applicants had to write down the steps and calculate the 3% discount in dollars of \$20,000,000 Colombian pesos for a monthly shipment service to the USA.

Based on these steps, choose which of the three applicants answered correctly.

- a. Divide dollars by 100
- b. Exchange \$20,000,000 into dollars
- c. Find out the price of the dollar
- d. Multiply dollars by 3

- Vilma's (a, b, d and c)
- Andrea's (b, c, a and d)
- Marianna's (c, b, d and a)

3. Following the correct steps write down the total discount in dollars.

Total Discount in Dollars

4. The following is the questionnaire to be answered by the applicants. Read the answers of each applicant and select the best ones.

- a. Vilma's
- b. Andrea's
- c. Marianna's

THIRD TEST: INTERVIEW

a. What special honours or recognitions have you received?

Vilma: I haven't got any awards so far.
Andrea: Well, let me think. No, I haven't.
Marianna: Not yet... Unfortunately.

b. What other studies have you done?

Vilma: English courses in different institutions.
Andrea: I've taken computing and accounting courses.
Marianna: Oh! let me see. I took a business summer course in Atlanta City.

c. What type of experience did you get from your last job?

Vilma: I'm sorry. I would not like to talk about it.
Andrea: There was a lot of good team work. Everybody was so friendly, responsible and committed to their work.
Mariana: My last job was... boring. However, I tried to cope with it.

d. What are your expectations as a secretary in this company?

Vilma: I would like to learn more about my job and to earn a good salary.
Andrea: I would like to contribute to the company with my knowledge, share my experience and to learn many things from co-workers.
Marianna: I would like to get to know the company and get acquainted with my co-workers so that I can earn the most from my job in this enterprise.

e. How do you see yourself in five years' time?

Vilma: I imagine myself directing the staff department of this company.
Andrea: I have just started to study business administration and I think I will be finishing my studies by then.
Marianna: Well, by that time I hope I will be very committed to my work in this company.

5. Based on the three tests, say who the winner is and justify your answer.

The applicant who got the highest score is _____.



SELF-EVALUATION FORM

- NAME OF THE ARTICLE: _____

- AUTHOR: _____

- SOURCE: _____ DATE: _____

- PURPOSE OF THE TEXT: _____

- KEY WORDS _____

- TASKS I LIKED BEST _____

- THINGS THAT I HAVE LEARNT: _____

- OPINIONS ABOUT THE TEXT: _____

- TOPICS I WANT TO GO INTO MORE DEEPLY: _____

- EXTRA ARTICLES I HAVE READ : _____

STRATEGIES APPLIED:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grouping | <input type="checkbox"/> Associating/elaborating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Placing new words into a context | <input type="checkbox"/> Using imagery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Semantic mapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Using keywords |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recognizing and using formulas and patterns | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting the idea quickly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reasoning deductively | <input type="checkbox"/> Analysing expressions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transferring | <input type="checkbox"/> Summarising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highlighting | <input type="checkbox"/> Selecting a topic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using synonyms | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning for a language task | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-monitoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking risks wisely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discussing your feelings with someone else | <input type="checkbox"/> Asking for correction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asking for clarification or verification | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperating with peers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developing cultural understanding | <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posing hypotheses | <input type="checkbox"/> Solving problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making decisions | |