

Sample Questions for the Module Humanities, Cultural Studies and Social Sciences

Subtest „Understanding and Interpreting Texts“

The subtest “Understanding and Interpreting Texts” presents short texts on which questions are to be answered.

This test measures the ability to read, understand, and correctly interpret different kinds of short texts with different content as well as to establish links between text elements and synthesise information from the text.

Instructions

Working time: **45 minutes**

The following exercises are intended to test your ability to understand, interpret, and draw the right conclusions from the content of short texts. You will be asked to process several texts with different topics. Each text is followed by two or three questions relating to the preceding text. In each case please mark one of the four answering options on your answer sheet.

Example 1

An Experiment

40 years ago, those who were friends with students of the sociology professor H. Garfinkel had to be prepared for surprises: his students would sometimes, without the least warning, behave very unusually. And so it was that one of his students, for example, involved her husband in the following dialogue while he sat watching TV in the evening, after he had casually remarked that he was tired:

“How d’you mean you’re tired? Physically, mentally, or are you merely bored?”

“I don’t know, I think mostly physically.”

“D’you mean your muscles and bones hurt?”

“I guess so, yes! Don’t be so pedantic!” After a brief pause, he commented:

“In all these old films, the people are always well-dressed even when they’re at home!”

“What are you saying? D’you mean all old films, or only some of them, or only those you’ve seen?”

“What’s the matter with you? You know exactly what I mean!”

How did the husband probably feel at the end of this dialogue?

- (A) He was curious.
- (B) He was content.
- (C) He was irritated.
- (D) He was bored.

Degree of difficulty: low

Example 2

A Communication Model

A simple model of communication between two people consists of a “broadcaster”, a “message”, and a “receiver”. The broadcaster sends the message to the receiver. A message may have spoken parts and/or non-spoken parts (e.g. intonation, facial expressions, gestures). Parts of the message may be “explicit” (expressly formulated) or “implicit” (indirectly communicated in the form of hints). Implicit messages are often communicated as non-spoken statements.

If the spoken parts and the non-spoken parts of a message match, one calls this a “congruent message”. If the spoken parts and the non-spoken parts contradict each other, the message is “incongruent”.

Which of the two following statements is or are correct according to the above text?

- I. Someone who is silent is not communicating a message.
 - II. Someone who is speaking dialect is communicating an incongruent message.
- (A) Only statement I is correct.
 - (B) Only statement II is correct.
 - (C) Both statements are correct.
 - (D) Neither of the two statements is correct.

Degree of difficulty: medium

Example 3

Lunch in the Courtyard, freely adapted from a tale by Johann Peter Hebel

The servant had a master whom he sometimes could not please whatever he did. And so it was that the master came home one day and sat down to lunch. The soup was either too hot or too cold or neither of the two. So he took the bowl and, together with its contents, threw it through the open window into the courtyard. And how did the servant react? With great presence of mind he threw the meat he was about to set down on the table after the soup down into the courtyard, followed by the bread, the wine, and finally the tablecloth with all that was remaining on it. “What on earth are you doing?” asked the master, rising angrily from his chair. The servant, however, responded: “Forgive me, master, if I did not guess your true intention. I was convinced you wanted to dine in the courtyard today. The air is so delightful, the sky so blue, and see, master, how sweetly the apple tree blooms and how cheerfully the bees are buzzing!” - The soup had been thrown down for the last time! The master realised the error of his ways and, cheered by the sight of the beautiful spring sky, smiled to himself about the quick-wittedness of his servant, thanking him in his heart for the well-taught lesson.

Which of the following statements is or are correct according to the above text?

- I. After this incident, the master never again threw soup out of the window.
- II. The master thanked the servant for teaching him a lesson.

- (A) Only statement I is correct.
- (B) Only statement II is correct.
- (C) Both statements are correct.
- (D) Neither of the two statements is correct.

Degree of difficulty: high

Solutions

Subtest „Understanding and Interpreting Texts“

Example 1

The solution is (C). The fact that the husband is irritated is shown particularly by the last sentence. But his irritation is already indicated earlier, when the husband says: “Don’t be so pedantic!”

Example 2

Here the correct solution is (D), both statements are incorrect.

Statement I: according to the text, non-spoken messages can also be sent (e.g. using facial expressions or gestures).

Statement II: messages are – according to the text – incongruent if the spoken parts and the non-spoken parts contradict each other. Statements in a dialect are spoken statements.

Whether there is in contradiction between the spoken and non-spoken message remains open to question.

Example 3

The solution is (A).

Statement I: this is exactly stated by the sentence “The soup had been thrown down for the last time!”, which is contained in the text.

Statement II: the text only says that the master thanked him “in his heart” for the well-taught lesson, not that he expressed his thanks openly.

Subtest „Using Representation Systems Flexibly“

The subtest “Using Representation Systems Flexibly” shows the content of a text diagrammatically or, in the reverse case, a diagrammatic illustration has to be put into words.

This test measures inductive reasoning (the ability to draw generalised conclusions on the basis of individual instances) in the linguistic field as well as the ability to derive what is concrete from the abstract and vice versa. In addition, it measures the ability to capture the meaning of diagrammatic illustrations and to put their content into words.

Instructions

Working time: **55 minutes**

To help understand a text, a diagram is helpful to visualise the essential content.

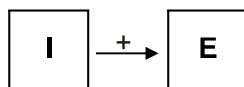
When it comes to **effects**, one notes down the key variables from the text and uses arrows to show the effects occurring between the variables. “+” and “-” are used to indicate whether the effect is positive or negative.

Here is an example of a positive effect:

Text: The bigger the income (**I**) of a family, the bigger is also its expenditure (**E**).

OR: The lesser the income (**I**) of a family, the lesser is also its expenditure (**E**).

Diagram:



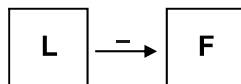
i.e. an increase in variable **I** leads to an increase in the target variable (in this case **E**) or, alternatively, a decrease in variable **I** leads to a decrease in the target variable **E**. Thus, both variables follow the same trend.

Here is an **example** of a negative effect between two variables:

Text: The more a student studies (**L**), the lower is his fear (**F**) of the examination.

OR: The lesser a student studies (**L**), the greater is his fear (**F**) of the examination.

Diagram:



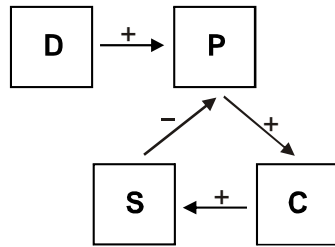
i.e. an increase in variable **L** leads to a decrease in the target variable **F** and vice versa. Thus, the two variables follow an opposite trend.

Since more than two variables are usually described in a text, diagrams generated from texts are frequently more complex.

Here is an **example** of various effects occurring between four variables:

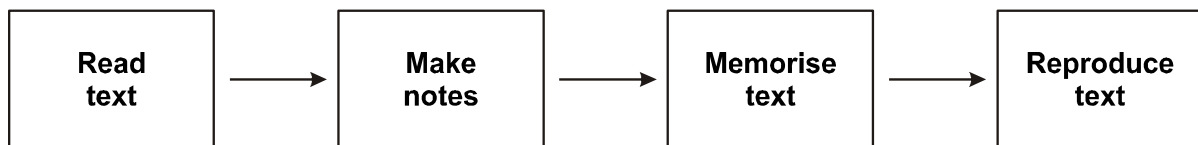
Text: Over the last few years, the demand (**D**) for PCs rose continuously. This led to an increase in prices (**P**). The general increase in prices led to more and more companies (**C**) coming into the PC market and the supply (**S**) of PCs increased. This in turn affected prices (**P**): they fell.

Diagram:



Chronological processes are shown using arrows (without the signs “+” and “-”). Here is an example:

Text: To help understand a text, it makes sense to first read the text and then make notes. One can then memorise the content of the text using the notes. Afterwards one tries to reproduce the essential content of the text from memory.



There are **relations** which are shown by other arrows or line connections. These are explained in the corresponding exercises.

The following exercises in each case comprise up to three questions on a particular topic. In finding solutions to the exercises you will possibly also have to take previously given information into account, for example solving Exercise 3 may require information given in Exercises 1 and 2. If exercises are linked this way, you will always be informed of this.

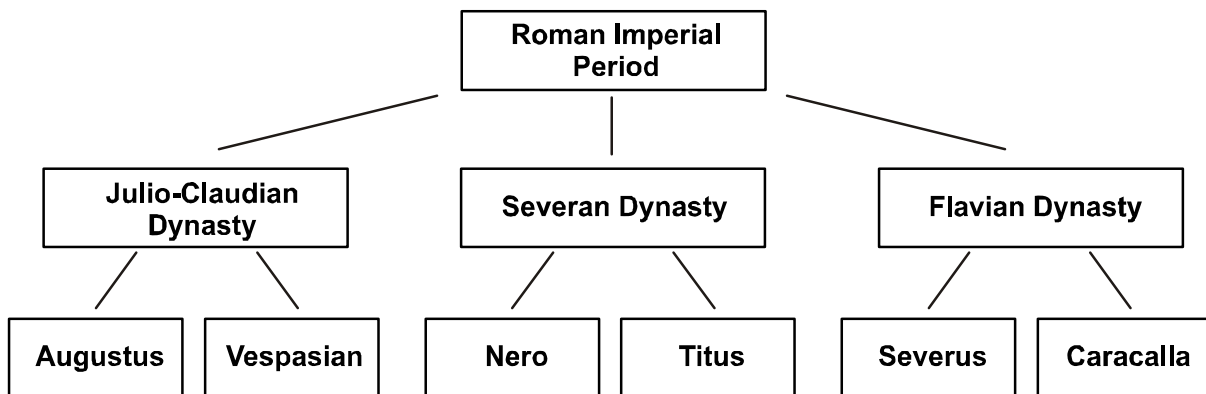
Solve the exercises using only the corresponding information given. Specialist knowledge is not required for correctly solving the exercises.

Example 1

The Roman Imperial Period

The Roman Imperial Period can be divided into the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the Severan dynasty, and the Flavian dynasty. Vespasian and his son Titus reigned in the Flavian dynasty. Severus and his son Caracalla belonged to the Severan dynasty. Augustus and Nero were emperors of the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

The following diagram is intended to show the described affiliations. Affiliations are shown by connecting lines.



Which of the following statements is or are correct?

- I. The Julio-Claudian dynasty is shown correctly.
 - II. The Flavian dynasty is shown correctly.
- (A) Only statement I is correct.
 - (B) Only statement II is correct.
 - (C) Both statements are correct.
 - (D) Neither of the two statements is correct.

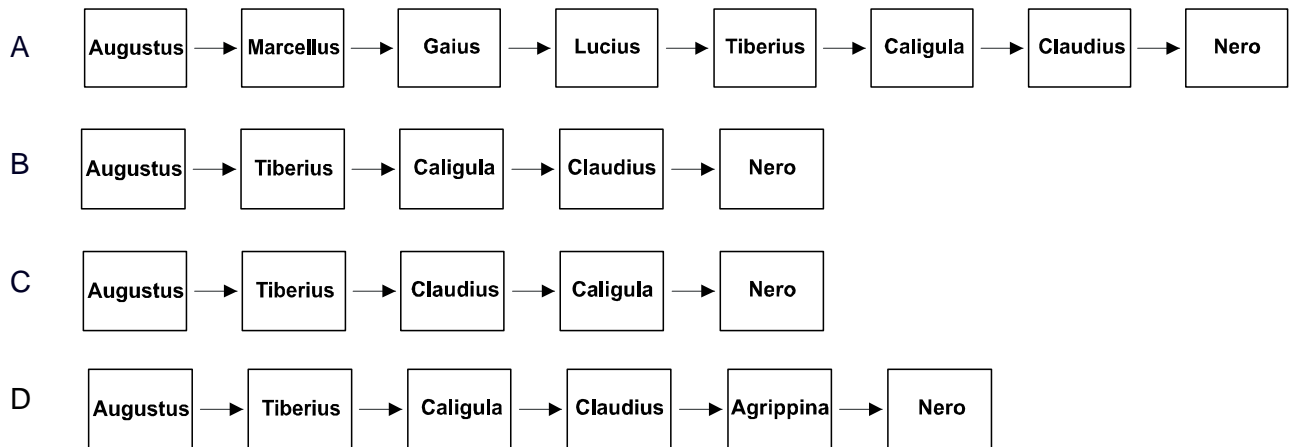
Degree of difficulty: low

Example 2

The Roman Empire

Augustus ruled over the Roman Empire from 24 BC to 14 AD. Tiberius, Augustus' stepson, was initially excluded from succession to the throne by Augustus. Only after the death of Augustus' nephew Marcellus, and the deaths of the two grandsons Gaius and Lucius (neither of whom reigned), did Tiberius come to power in 14 AD. Claudius, initially passed over in Caligula's favour, was the only legitimate candidate after Caligula's murder and became emperor. Nero, who became Claudius' successor through the efforts of his ambitious mother Agrippina, is described by historians as a tyrant and passionate actor who, in fulfilling his role, killed his mother.

Which of the following diagrams correctly shows the imperial succession?



Degree of difficulty: medium

Example 3

Arable Farming in the Roman Empire

In the Roman Empire, there was not much fertiliser available in the form of dung for its fields since there were frequently no larger herds of cattle near the farms. The further away the cattle herds were from a farm, the less dung was available for the fields. The less dung there was for fertilising, the more frequently the farmers had to let the corn fields rest.

The following diagram shows the effects of the distance of the cattle herds from the farm, the availability of fertiliser in the form of dung, and the frequency of resting periods when growing corn crops.

Cattle = distance of the cattle herds from the farm
 Dung = availability of fertiliser in the form of dung
 Rest = frequency of resting periods when growing corn crops



If there was less fertiliser in the form of dung, nitrogen-rich plants were cultivated and used as fertiliser. However, due to the low rainfall frequency in the Roman Empire, this was not always possible: the fewer the rainfalls, the less nitrogen-rich plants could be grown. Nevertheless, intensive irrigation significantly increased the cultivation of nitrogen-rich plants and so shortened the resting periods for growing corn.

What additions have to be made to the diagram to show these effects correctly?

Cul = cultivation of nitrogen-rich plants
 Dung = availability of fertiliser in the form of dung
 Irrig = intensity of irrigation
 Rain = rainfall frequency
 Rest = frequency of resting periods when growing corn crops

Which of the following statements is or are correct?

- I. Cul is positioned between Dung and Rest and is linked to both by $\xrightarrow{-}$. One $\xrightarrow{-}$ points from Dung to Cul, one $\xrightarrow{-}$ points from Cul to Rest.
- II. Rain and Irrig are each linked to Cul with a $\xrightarrow{+}$. Both arrows point to Cul.
- (A) Only statement I is correct.
(B) Only statement II is correct.
(C) Both statements are correct.
(D) Neither of the statements is correct.

Degree of difficulty: high

Solutions

Subtest „Using Representation Systems Flexibly“

Example 1

The solution is (D), i.e. both statements are incorrect. The Julio-Claudian dynasty is not shown correctly, for though Augustus and Nero belonged to this dynasty, Vespasian did not. The Flavian dynasty is not shown correctly either, for though Vespasian and Titus belonged to this dynasty, Severus and Caracalla did not.

Example 2

(B) is the correct solution here. Marcellus, Gaius, Lucius, and Agrippina never reigned, therefore (A) and (D) cannot be correct. (C) includes all the emperors, but the order of succession Claudius/Caligula is incorrect.

Example 3

The solution is (C).

Statement I: the new information interrupts the link between Dung and Rest through the insertion of Cul. The lack of dung alone does not in itself lead to more frequent resting periods in growing corn. Only if, in addition, insufficient amounts of nitrogen-rich plants are grown, does the number of resting periods in corn cultivation increase.

Statement II: both rainfall frequency and intensive irrigation have a positive impact on the cultivation of nitrogen-rich plants.

Subtest „Recognising Linguistic Structures“

The subtest “Recognising Linguistic Structures” comprises sentences in a fictive language and their German counterparts. The information provided is to be used to derive the meaning of individual words, semantic relations between the terms, and several grammar rules. Subsequently the newly acquired knowledge is to be used to formulate new sentences in the fictive language.

This test measures the ability to recognise structures and inherent laws in language patterns and use these laws in new contexts. In addition, it is a matter of recognising semantic relations expressed by word order or other linguistic characteristics.

Instructions

Working time: **50 minutes**

In the following exercises, you will be shown several expressions in invented foreign languages and their English translation. This will allow you to derive the meaning of individual words and some grammatical rules in the respective foreign language. This information will help you answer the subsequent questions. In each case two exercises relate to a certain language. Therefore please only use the provided expressions to answer the questions.

You may proceed on the assumption that

- there are no exceptions to the rules (e.g. irregular verbs) and
- only those rules apply which may be derived from the provided expressions.

Example:

koloa = I lie
kolOe = he lay
satoe = he stands

Question: What is “I stood” in the foreign language?

- (A) satoa
- (B) kolOa
- (C) satoe
- (D) satOa

Answer (D) is correct since:

- I. The expressions for “I lie” and “he lay” differ only as regards the last two letters; hence “kol” must be the root of the verb “lie”.
- II. The final letter of the expressions “he lay” and “he stands” is in both cases “e”; hence an appended “e” means “he”.
- III. The two present tense forms (“I lie” and “he stands”) both have an “o” as the penultimate letter; hence “O” as the penultimate letter must indicate the past tense and “a” as the last letter must mean “I”.

Consequently: “I stood” in the foreign language must be “satOa”.

Example 1

palo ko = I sit
palo tu = she sits
karo tu = she stands

“I stand” is expressed in the foreign language by:

- (A) tu ko
- (B) ko karo
- (C) karo ko
- (D) karo palo

Degree of difficulty: low

Example 2

tundo ramodopo novot = The pupil called his uncle.
namidu kavino suvavot = The saleswoman greeted the teacher.
tundu kavinopu tetavosir = The schoolgirl is asking her teacher.
hidamo tundo nosir = The caretaker is scolding the pupil.

“The uncle greeted his caretaker” is expressed in the foreign language by:

- (A) novot suvosir hidamo
- (B) namidu hidamopu suvavot
- (C) novot hidamopo suvasir
- (D) ramodo hidamopo suvavot

Degree of difficulty : medium

Example 3

puna selveui = The child is coming from the hut.
puna tipveu = The cat is going to the hut.
lom fanveui = The farmer is coming from the field.
borro selveu = The child is walking to the meadow.

“The child is walking to the field” is expressed in the foreign language by:

- (A) lom selveui
- (B) lom selveu
- (C) lom fanveui
- (D) puna selveu

Degree of difficulty: high

Solutions

Subtest „Recognising Linguistic Structures“

Example 1

Answer (C) is correct since:

The expressions for “I sit” and “she sits” only differ as regards the second word (“ko” and “tu” respectively), so the first word “palo” must have the meaning “sit”. Correspondingly, the word “ko” means “I” and “tu” has the meaning “she”. This is confirmed by the third expression: “tu” again means “she” and “karo” hence means “stand”. “I stand” can therefore only be expressed by “karo ko”.

Example 2

Answer (D) is correct since:

1. If one looks for the word “greeted” in the foreign language, one comes across “suvavot”, for the word “kavino” in the second sentence must mean “teacher” (cf. the similar word in the third sentence) and “namidu” must mean “saleswoman”. The latter becomes clear from this word’s position in the sentence, compare the first and the third sentences.
2. “The caretaker” must hence be “hidamo”. From the transition from “kavino” (“the teacher”) to “kavinopu” (“her teacher”) and from the ending of “ramodopo” (“his uncle”) it follows that “his caretaker” must be “hidamopo”.
3. What remains is the task of transforming the already identified word “ramodopo”, meaning “his uncle”, into a corresponding word for “the uncle”. This is done by leaving off the ending “po”.
4. Hence the sentence sought in the foreign language must be “ramodo hidamopo suvavot”.

Example 3

In this exercise one must first recognise that in the foreign language it is only the end syllable of the second word which stands for “come” or “go” respectively. On closer inspection of the expressions, it becomes clear that only the letters “veu” can have the meaning of “going somewhere”. By contrast, the verb form with an attached “i” describes “coming from somewhere”. A comparison between the first and fourth expressions shows that the extension of “veu” to “selveu” and from “veui” to “selveui” has the meaning of “the child is going to” and “the child is coming from” respectively. From the second and fourth expressions one can now work out that “tip” must mean “cat” and “fan” must mean “farmer”. By comparing the first and second expressions, one finds that the word for “hut” in the foreign language is “puna”. From expressions three and four it can then be seen that “lom” means “field” and “borro” is the word for “meadow”.

“The child is walking to the field” can hence only be “lom selveu” in the foreign language. This means (B) is the correct solution in this exercise.