

1.1 reading

Part 1

Girl writes English essay in phone text shorthand

Education experts warned yesterday of the potentially damaging effect on **literacy** of mobile phone text messaging after a pupil handed in an essay written in text shorthand.

The 13-year-old girl submitted the essay to a teacher in a state secondary school in the west of Scotland and explained that she found it 'easier than **standard English**'. Her teacher said, 'I could not believe what I was seeing. The page was covered with **hieroglyphics**, many of which I simply could not translate.'

The teenager's essay began, 'My summr hols wr CWOT. B4, we usd 2go2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & thr 3 :- kds FTF. ILNY, it's a gr8 plc.' Translation: 'My summer holidays were a complete **waste of time**. Before, we used to go to New York to see my brother, his girlfriend and their three screaming kids face to face. I love New York, it's a great place.'

Part 2

A

Dear Jane

Nice to hear from you – glad you're all OK. You asked about our holiday. Well, it was one of those holidays it's best to forget! It started off badly when the flight to Athens was four hours late. Then the airline lost one of our bags. John was furious as it had all his snorkelling stuff in it! At least the village was nice – pretty little white houses and some friendly local restaurants, but we were about 5 km along the coast from there.

B

Dear Grandad

Stuck in the middle of nowhere and there's nothing to do. Weather horrible so we can't even go swimming. Spend all day playing cards – boring! Wish we'd gone to New York again this year – the shopping there is great!

See you soon.

Love

Chloe

C

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing to complain about the inferior standard of the accommodation on our recent holiday with your company.

In your *Greek Island Escape* brochure, you say that all accommodation has a balcony and sea view. Ours had neither. What is more, it was a one-room studio flat, not at all suitable for our family of two adults and two teenagers. Although there were two sofas which became double beds, to describe it as 'four-bedded accommodation' is extremely misleading.

D

Dear Mr Frazer

Ref: TRP9142

Further to your insurance claim for compensation for lost baggage, I am pleased to enclose a cheque for £230.

I hope you will find this satisfactory and we look forward to helping you with your holiday insurance needs in the future.

glossary

literacy 'lɪtərəsi the ability to read and write well

standard English the form of English which is believed to be correct by most people

hieroglyphics words and symbols that are difficult to understand

waste of time time spent in an uninteresting way

1.1 reading

1 activating background knowledge

a Do you send text messages on your mobile phone? Look at the shorthand used when texting in English and guess the missing words.

- 1 CU L8r See _____ later.
- 2 RUOK? _____ OK?
- 3 HAND _____ nice day.
- 4 Ti2Go Time _____ go.
- 5 TMB Text _____ back.
- 6 PCM ASAP Please call _____ as soon _____ possible.

b Can you read this message?

My summr hols wr CWOT. B4, we usd 2go2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & thr 3 :- kds FTF. ILNY, it's a gr8 plc.

2 reading for specific information

tip

You don't always need to read very slowly and carefully. Sometimes it's enough to look quickly through a text and to find the words or the information you need. This kind of reading is called *scanning*.

a Read the newspaper report in **part 1** to find out who wrote the message and what it means.

b Read the report in **part 1** again more carefully and answer the questions.

- 1 Why did the student choose this way of writing?
- 2 What was people's reaction?
- 3 How do you think text messaging could have a negative effect on young people's ability to write correctly?

3 understanding specific information

The texts in **part 2** were written by people on the same family holiday. Read texts A–D now and choose the correct answer.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1 The family went | 3 Their main activities were |
| a to a city. | a writing postcards and letters. |
| b to an island. | b swimming and snorkelling. |
| c to a village. | c shopping and going to restaurants. |
| d to New York. | d playing indoor games. |
| 2 They stayed | 4 The airline |
| a in a hotel. | a lost all their luggage. |
| b with a family. | b lost one of their bags but it arrived later. |
| c in an apartment. | c lost all their luggage but one bag arrived later. |
| d in a small house. | d lost one of their bags and it never arrived. |

4 reading for details

Look at the texts in **part 2** again. Find two problems in each of texts A–C.

example Text A – The flight was late.

5 identifying text type and purpose

a What do you think texts in **part 2** are? Choose the correct words in *italics*.

- 1 Text A is a *postcard* / *letter* sent *during* / *after* the holiday.
- 2 Text B is a *postcard* / *letter* sent *during* / *after* the holiday.
- 3 Text C is a letter sent to the *holiday* / *insurance* company.
- 4 Text D is a letter *sent to* / *received from* the insurance company.

b Which of the texts was written by the girl in the newspaper story?