

# Understanding and Summarising a Text



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## Practice texts for lesson quiz

### Text A: questions 6 to 10

#### Guugu Yimithirr—an unusual Australian language

Guugu Yimithirr is an indigenous Australian language, spoken in northern Queensland; the majority of speakers live in the town of Hopevale. The English word 'kangaroo' originates from Guugu Yimithirr, but the language is perhaps more notable for entirely lacking 'egocentric' directions. This means that there are no words for 'left', 'right', 'backwards' or 'forwards', and speakers of Guugu Yimithirr give directions exclusively using points of the compass. For example, you might hear "Your pen is on the table, just north of the fruit bowl." While this sounds strange in English, a Guugu Yimithirr speaker would see nothing unusual in it. Linguists and anthropologists investigating this unusual trait discovered that Guugu Yimithirr speakers use subtle environmental cues to orient themselves to the points of the compass; specifically, they use the position of the sun, the position of landmarks, or the way that plants grow. In this way, they are always aware of where north, south, east and west are, although they can temporarily lose this ability if they move a large distance, for example if they fly to another region. A group of Guugu Yimithirr speakers who were flown to Brisbane—a journey of around 2000km—were unable to identify compass directions for around one week after their journey; thereafter, they became oriented and were able to communicate direction and position as they usually would.

### Text B: questions 11 to 15

#### It's not what you say – it's what you don't!

Euphemisms are metaphorical expressions which we say in order to avoid using words that sound unpleasant or uncomfortable. English is not alone in having plenty of them, but they are certainly in common use, particularly in Britain, where the cultural sensitivities of the 19th century still linger in many parts of society. Back then, if you needed to go to the toilet, you couldn't simply announce the fact using the word 'toilet'. Women might say they were "going to powder their nose" while men would "go to the little boys' room" and people of either sex could "spend a penny"—this being the original price of using a public lavatory in London. All three euphemisms, and many more, are still used regularly.

English probably has an indirect way of avoiding almost any topic you can think of, from embarrassing intimate things like romance—"are they stepping out?"—to the most intrusive of matters to the English mind: how much money someone earns—"I bet he takes home a packet". Yet, there is no subject more laden with euphemisms than the one thing that's going to happen to every one of us. Whether he "goes to meet his maker", "kicks the bucket", "pops his clogs", "bites the dust" or "breathes his last", when an Englishman dies, the last thing he wants is for anybody to actually say it.

### Text C: questions 16 to 20

From Bowie to McCartney, Oasis to Coldplay and a thousand other acts you've probably never heard of—Toots and the Maytals, anyone?—if you make your living from music, there is only one place to play the ultimate gig: a field in the south-west of England in the last week of June. This is the Glastonbury Festival, the largest music event in the world, which takes place nearly every summer, come rain or shine, and attracts both the biggest star names and the largest crowds. Though it started fairly small in 1970, these days over 100,000 people attend, the majority of whom stay for the full five days, camping overnight in tents.

It's not just about music. To give it its full name, the Glastonbury Festival of Contemporary Performing Arts promises a diverse programme, including circus acts, experimental theatre and new-age dance, but also yoga sessions, palm readers, demonstrations of vegan cooking, and the usual crowd of money-makers found at any large public gathering. The thousands surely come for the headline bands, but many veterans claim it's the bits away from the main stage that really create the memories. After all, when Paul McCartney plays, you'll be standing half a mile away; it's the closer encounters with pioneers of reggae like Toots and the Maytals—as you munch on your veggie burger—that make Glastonbury the glorious experience it is.