

## 9.1: Self-access quiz: Am I an independent learner?

### Teacher's notes

#### Background

This short quiz is part of an introduction to a self-access centre, but can also be used in class to raise awareness of learning independently. The design follows that of the type of quiz often found in magazines, for example, 'How ambitious/health-conscious/superstitious are you?'

#### Aims

- to raise awareness of what independent learning means
- to share an independent learner agenda
- to stimulate reflection on learning strategies
- to find out roughly how autonomous a student is

#### Material

The quiz tasksheet and self-scoring key

#### Procedure

The quiz is designed for students to use entirely on their own. It can be given during a self-access centre induction session, or as part of an EAP induction pack. It has also been adapted for an induction unit for a distance-learning foundation English course. It should be followed up in a tutorial session once the students have started to use the centre. The questions and suggestions can be the beginning of a reflective dialogue between teacher and students.

#### Follow-up

The quiz can be used in class to introduce a number of independent learning strategies in lessons in which students will be able to experience them.

## Tasksheet: Quiz

**Am I an independent learner? Circle the right answer: yes / no.**

Read each question and choose the best answer for you by circling the appropriate letter or using a tick (✓) in the table below. Don't write anything on the questions. Choose only one answer for each question. When you have finished all the questions, check your answers in the key, and add up your total score.

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
a	a	a	a	a	a	a
b	b	b	b	b	b	b
c	c	c	c	c	c	c
d	d	d	d	d	d	d

You may use a dictionary if necessary, to help you to understand the questions.

- Q1 In the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, my level of English ...
- a is different for different skills.
  - b is beginner/elementary.
  - c I don't know, and I'd like a teacher to tell me.
  - d is really bad.
- Q2 My weakest/worst skills are ...
- a everything.
  - b I don't know, and I'd like my teacher to tell me.
  - c Listening and Speaking.
  - d Reading and Writing.
- Q3 When I do English exercises which have the answers ...
- a I check my answers with the correct answers, sometimes during the exercise, and always at the end of the exercise.
  - b I wait until I get to the end of the exercise before I check my answers.
  - c I do not want to know the answers; I just want to do the exercises.
  - d I prefer a teacher to mark my answers.
- Q4 When I need to find the meaning of a word ...
- a I prefer to ask a teacher.
  - b I use a dictionary which gives meanings, examples and sentences to show how the word is used.
  - c I use a translation tool.
  - d I use both b and c.

- Q5 When I have finished an English exercise and my score is almost 100% (e.g., 19/20), this means:
- a I am good at English.
  - b I can do more English exercises at this level.
  - c I should ask a teacher what to do next.
  - d I should try something more difficult.
- Q6 When I have finished an English exercise and my score is very low (e.g., 2/20), this means:
- a I should check my mistakes carefully.
  - b I should find a similar exercise at an easier level.
  - c both a and b.
  - d I should ask a teacher what to do next.
- Q7 If I am trying to learn new words and I can't remember them ...
- a I should go for a coffee and try again later.
  - b I should sleep with the list of words under my pillow.
  - c I should try a different way to learn them.
  - d I should just try harder.

Now check your total score, using the self-scoring key.

## Self-scoring key

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
a = 3	a = 1	a = 3	a = 0	a = 1	a = 2	a = 2
b = 2	b = 0	b = 0	b = 3	b = 0	b = 2	b = 0
c = 0	c = 3	c = 0	c = 1	c = 0	c = 3	c = 3
d = 1	d = 3	d = 0	d = 3	d = 3	d = 1	d = 1

### What does my score mean?

**Less than 10** You have been depending on a lot of help from a teacher when you don't need to. But don't worry, you can improve! The self-access centre can help you to become more independent. Be careful to follow our advice, and you will find that you improve by yourself.

**11 to 16** You are quite independent in some ways, but you still tend to rely heavily on a teacher's advice. Most students are just like you. To get the most benefit from the self-access centre, think about your whole approach to learning, and be flexible. Think about and plan what you do carefully, go over your mistakes carefully, and think about what they show. Think for yourself! We will remind you about these important things as you work in the centre.

**17–21** You know how to be an independent learner. You should be able to use the self-access centre very effectively and efficiently to improve your English. Occasionally, you might need help or advice. Use the hints and notes in the materials, and ask a tutor when you need help.

### Thinking about your learning

Did you guess whether you were an independent learner correctly before you started the quiz? Look back to see.

*Nobody can really teach you English: you have to learn it.*

Look at your answers again, and read the scoring system below to understand what each answer shows about you.

### What do my answers show about me as a learner?

**Q1** If you answered:

- a = 3 You have started to think about your English as a set of different skills.
- b = 2 You are underestimating yourself because you need to be at least lower intermediate to understand this quiz. Be more confident in yourself.
- c = 0 As an adult learner, you should be able to say something about your skills yourself without a teacher.
- d = 1 Your confidence is really low! See b above.

**Q2** If you answered:

- a = 1 You are not prioritizing your needs, i.e., thinking about what you need to work on most.
- b = 0 As an adult learner, you should have an idea of what skills need the most work (see Question 1). It is probably something you hate doing, but start now!

c = 3 You have started to prioritize your needs.

d = 3 You have started to prioritize your needs.

Q3 If you answered:

a = 3 You know that you need feedback on your work, and that you can get this quickly. This helps you work efficiently at your own speed.

b = 0 This means that you don't learn what is correct or incorrect well because the answers come too long after you have done the exercise.

c = 0 This means that you never learn what is correct or incorrect.

d = 0 Does this mean you don't trust yourself to be honest?

Q4 If you answered:

a = 0 It's difficult, even for a teacher, to give you everything you need to know about a word. What do you do when you don't have a teacher?

b = 3 If you do this, you don't waste time, and you work well on your own. This type of dictionary helps you to use words properly, not just catch some of the meaning.

c = 1 Although you are working independently, you may not be getting enough vocabulary information to use the word properly in English.

d = 3 This is an excellent strategy, especially when you are not confident enough yet to use only an English dictionary. You can get the meaning in your own language, and also find out how to use the word properly.

Q5 If you answered:

a = 1 You are only 'good' at the level of the exercise!

b = 0 Don't waste your time! You should try something more difficult.

c = 0 Think for yourself! Work on something you need more.

d = 3 Yes, it's important not to waste time on work which teaches you nothing. You need an exercise in which you make some mistakes; mistakes teach you a lot.

Q6 If you answered:

a = 2 Yes, see what you can learn from your mistakes.

b = 2 Yes, this will give you what you need at your level.

c = 3 This is a combination of two good learning strategies.

d = 1 You should be able to work out what to do yourself but, if you are really worried, it is OK to find a teacher to help if you can.

Q7 If you answered:

a = 2 Sometimes a coffee break helps your concentration.

b = 0 This really does not work!

c = 3 Good. Be flexible and try different ways of learning. You will meet many different ways of learning in this course.

d = 1 It sounds good, but it isn't. Students who say I will work harder, and who keep trying to learn in the same way, never succeed. You need to change your way of learning.

## 9.2: Correction code and error log

### Teacher's notes

#### Background

This is a typical EAP teacher's correction code, together with an error log. Most teachers use one during the supervising/facilitating stages of giving feedback on writing. A correction code and error log can be adapted for use by students at all levels. The ones presented here have been used mainly for pre-sessional, foundation, and in-sessional work. The contents will change constantly as the teacher and the students change their focus. It is important that correction codes do not focus too much on surface features at the expense of text organization and purpose, cohesion and meaning.

#### Aims

- to raise awareness of the criteria used to assess writing
- to provide a basis for self-correction and proofreading
- to provide a focus for individual and class reflective discussion with the teacher\*
- to provide a way of noticing patterns in a student's errors, and also longer-term improvement

#### Material

A correction code (tasksheet), to be used by the teacher when checking all kinds of student writing for feedback, and by students when correcting their work. It includes an exercise to help students to learn the meaning of the code in terms of error types. For this purpose, it is better to use items from texts generated by the class if possible, in order to make learning more personally relevant.

A personal error log, to show the frequency of different error types. This log, usually printed on the back of the correction code, is completed and kept by students.

#### Procedure

- 1 The documents and the principles on which they are based should be introduced at an early stage in the course, ideally before the first piece of marked writing is returned. At this stage, the students need to learn the code by first learning how to apply it themselves, using a task similar to the one given, but with a text from the class to make the exercise more relevant.
- 2 The code should become so familiar that it can be used in board work. It is important that the correction code does not take the place of other important types of feedback, such as feedback on task achievement. It also needs to be flexible, and adapted to suit the teacher, the students, and their specific focus; therefore it will change as the course proceeds.
- 3 Students should be encouraged to use the error log, firstly to remind them of their most frequent proofreading errors, and, secondly, to focus on weak areas in their writing as part of a regular review process.

\*See Chapter 9: *Student autonomy* for an explanation of reflective discussion

- 4 As students become more independent, they can negotiate the nature of teacher feedback, and the correction code will change accordingly.

## **KEY**

The corrected sentence reads:

Most people believe that working in groups is good and there is some evidence to support this opinion.

## Tasksheet: Writing correction code

Symbol	Meaning	Symbol	Meaning
WW	wrong word, think of another word	s/pl	singular or plural?
NNS	not native speaker: the meaning is clear but it is foreign usage (check collocation)	art	wrong use of article (e.g., the, a, some, no article)
WC	wrong word class, think of another word in the same family	vbts	wrong verb tense
style	too informal, not academic, inappropriate for purpose	s → v	subject–verb agreement (often add s for he, she, it in present simple)
?M	meaning unclear	sp	check spelling
[ ]	not necessary, miss this out	caps	problem with capitals
WO	change the word order	punct	punctuation problem (.,)
L	information is not linked properly (usually wrong linking word)	^	word or words missing
Coh.	cohesion poor (e.g., wrong pronoun reference or <i>which</i> is in the wrong place)	Rep.	unnecessary repetition of information
O	organization of ideas is wrong (try general to specific or given to new information)	✓	this is very good
Para	poor paragraph organization	✓✓	this is excellent
Irr.	information irrelevant to task/purpose of text		

### Task 1

Cover the key and try to mark the text, using the correction code in the same way that a teacher would.

Whereare, most of people believe that working in group is good There are some views to support this opinion.



## KEY

sp / L

✓

s/pl

Whereare, most [of] people believe that working in group is good

punct

WW

✓

There are some views to support this opinion.

## Error log

Checklist of errors in writing

Name .....

Date .....

Writing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Number of words	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
WW							
NNS							
WC							
s/pl							
v/bts							
s→v							
sp							
caps							
punct							
style							
?M							
[ ]							
^							
WO							
L							
Coh.							
O							
Irr.							
Rep.							
art							
Para							
✓ or ✓✓							
Total errors							
I need to work on ...							

Adapted, with thanks, from the error log used by Kenneth Anderson and Tony Lynch at the Institute for Applied Language Studies, University of Edinburgh.