

## RATEr practice tasks

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### [RATEr Reading practice tasks](#)

#### **Instructions:**

Read the text below and then write down the correct answer.

#### **Task 1**

##### **BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER – RIGHT INTO SCIENTISTS' NETS**

All pet owners will happily explain to you their dog or cat's character traits -- probably in far more detail than you ever wanted to know. But the idea of animal personality is not one that's been formally studied all that much. A new study has classed a species of bird into groups of more and less aggressive males. Researchers gauged the response of male collared flycatchers to female birds, to a strange object, and to other males. They found that each type of individual displayed consistent behaviour in each of these situations.

However, they also found that the birds more likely to take risks also were the ones most likely to be trapped -- and thus studied further -- raising important questions about the skewed sample set presented when researchers base their findings on animals caught in traps. It's kind of like when talk show hosts say "95 percent of 13-year olds (who responded to our online survey) are smoking pot!!!" -- leaving out the part about it really being 95 percent of the particular 20 teenagers who felt like responding to our survey.

##### **Why is research into birds caught for research purposes unreliable?**

- A:** Because birds caught in the wild behave differently from birds that are used to humans.
- B:** Because male birds are more aggressive to birds and strange objects than female birds.
- C:** Because researchers fail to collect a representative sample of the population.

#### **Task 2**

##### **Preservation of Wild Places May Help Protect Human Health**

In eco-immunology, a young new field of scientific research, the main goal of researchers is to understand how the spread of disease in wildlife is exacerbated by human and environmental elements (like climate change). These researchers are also trying to **1**\_\_\_\_\_ how deadly diseases move from animal to human populations. In the last 30 years there have been more than 300 infectious diseases that have passed

from animals to humans including AIDS, Ebola and Lyme disease.

**2**\_\_\_\_\_ the emergence of diseases in wild populations is still not well understood, scientists have gained some new insight into this process. According to the article “In Wild Animals, Charting the Pathways of Disease” from the New York Times, when the natural habitats of a species is disturbed the resultant stress on their immune systems can lead to a **3** \_\_\_\_\_ chance that diseases could be spread to humans. This is yet another way that the disturbance and loss of wild places may **4** \_\_\_\_\_ an impact on human health.

Studies of bat viruses by researchers such as Jonathan H. Epstein of the EcoHealth Alliance and Dr. Plowright of the Center for Infections Disease Dynamics, have indicated that in a natural **5** \_\_\_\_\_, bats spread viruses to each other over and over. In an undisturbed ecosystem this helps the bats build their immune defences.

When however, the native wild habitat of a species is replaced with cities and suburbs, the stress on a species immune systems **6** \_\_\_\_\_ higher amounts of the virus to excrete in their waste. In a new environment, the virus-rich bat waste is **7** \_\_\_\_\_ to new “naïve immune systems” that are unable to fight the virus. This can lead to widespread disease, **8** \_\_\_\_\_ as the Hendra virus.

Researchers are learning changes in balance between diseases and the immune system can affect the **9** \_\_\_\_\_ web of life, or an entire ecosystem – including humans. These studies are shedding new light on the effects of human changes to wildlife habitats. Keeping nature intact and practicing sustainable development can aid in conserving not **10** \_\_\_\_\_ ecosystem health, but human health as well.

**Choose the word that fits best:**

1. decide / denote / design / determine
2. although / because / however / if
3. better / greater / higher / wider
4. have / hold / keep / show
5. world / domain / setting / spot
6. causes / changes / makes / shows
7. expired / exposed / extended / extrapolated
8. example / kind / such / so
9. entire / inclusive / resulting / single
10. by / like / only / with

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**Key**

*Task 1: C Because researchers fail to collect a representative sample of the population.*

*Task 2:*

*1. Determine, 2. Although, 3. Greater, 4. Have, 5. Setting, 6. Causes, 7. Exposed, 8. Such, 9. Entire, 10. Only*

## RATER Writing practice tasks

### Task 1: Complete the sentences

(target time: about 10 minutes)

**You recently took a field trip. You are not satisfied with the field trip. You write an email to complain to the teacher who organised it. Complete the following email to your teacher. Use the provided pictures to complete the sentences. If there is no picture, you can make something up.**

Dear Mrs Reeves,

I am writing to let you know that I was not happy about the field trip we took recently. The trip was very disappointing because of several circumstances.

First of all, the bus was supposed to leave at 10 a.m.

1. Because \_\_\_\_\_ we were not able to leave until 10:30 a.m.
2. Then, we lost even more time due to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The idea of the trip was to study local wildlife in a nature reserve, but \_\_\_\_\_.



4. As a result, we had to \_\_\_\_\_ instead.

5. Furthermore, some students \_\_\_\_\_, so we had to leave again after only an hour in the museum.



6. The trip cost us 80 euro's, but \_\_\_\_\_.
7. I think it would only be fair if \_\_\_\_\_.

I am looking forward to your reply.

Kind regards,

\_\_\_\_\_

**Sample answer task 1:**

1. *several students were late*
2. *the fact there was a traffic jam*
3. *when we arrived, it turned out the reserve was closed*
4. *we had to observe prepared animals in a museum*
5. *were fighting*
6. *I don't think this trip was worth that much money.*
7. *we could get a refund.*

**Task 2: Writing an email**

*(target time: about 15 minutes)*

***You've been working in the university library until 9.30 pm to finish a project, because another member of your team did not complete her share of the work. This is not the first time that happened, so you decide to send her an email.***

***Write an email to your friend in which you explain the problem to her. The email should contain the following elements:***

- an informal salutation and ending;
- a clear description of the situation;
- why this is a problem to you;
- how you feel about this;
- a suggestion for a solution.

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**Sample answer task 2:**

*Hi X,*

*The last couple of days I have been working on our project. The project is finished now, but I had to do your share of the work as well. This was very inconvenient for me, because I was already busy with some other deadlines this week. You promised to do the other part, so I feel kind of deceived now. This week has been very exhausting for me, and I think it is not fair that I had to do all the work. I suggest that you will do all the work when we have to do another project together.*

*Best,*

*Y*

### Task 3: Describing data

(target time: about 20 minutes)

You are studying Media Sciences at University. For one of your courses, you have done research on the use of mobile devices among teenagers and adolescents. You looked at the differences between age groups, the use of different devices and online activities.

Look at the information in Figures 1 and 2.

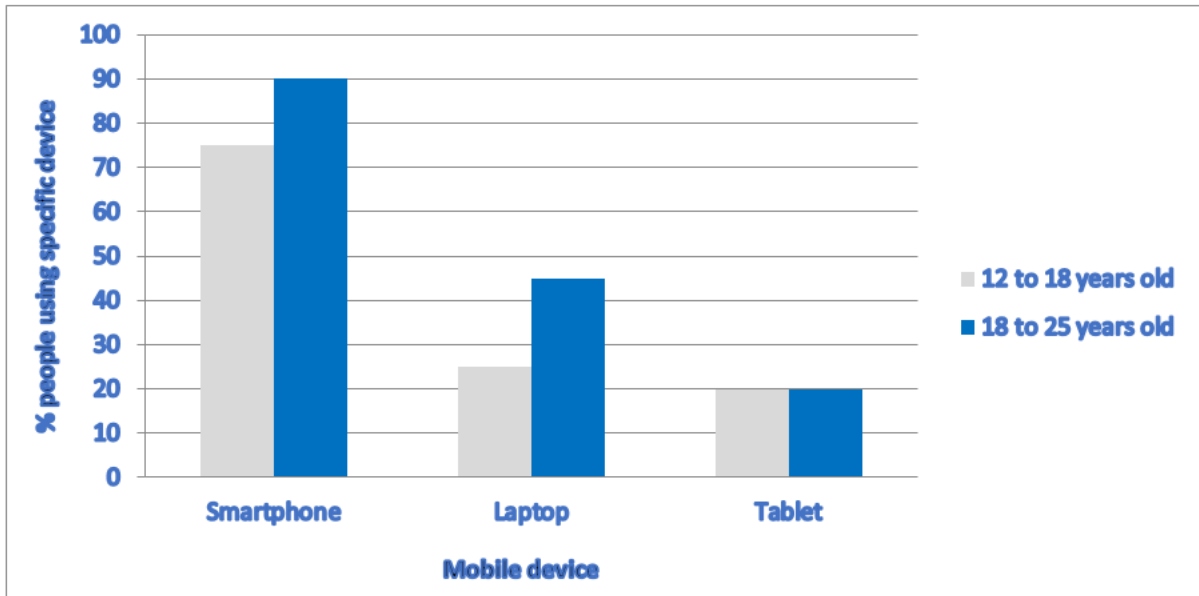


Figure 1. Mobile device usage among teenagers and adolescents in 2016, by age group and percentage of people using a specific device. Source: CBS (edited)

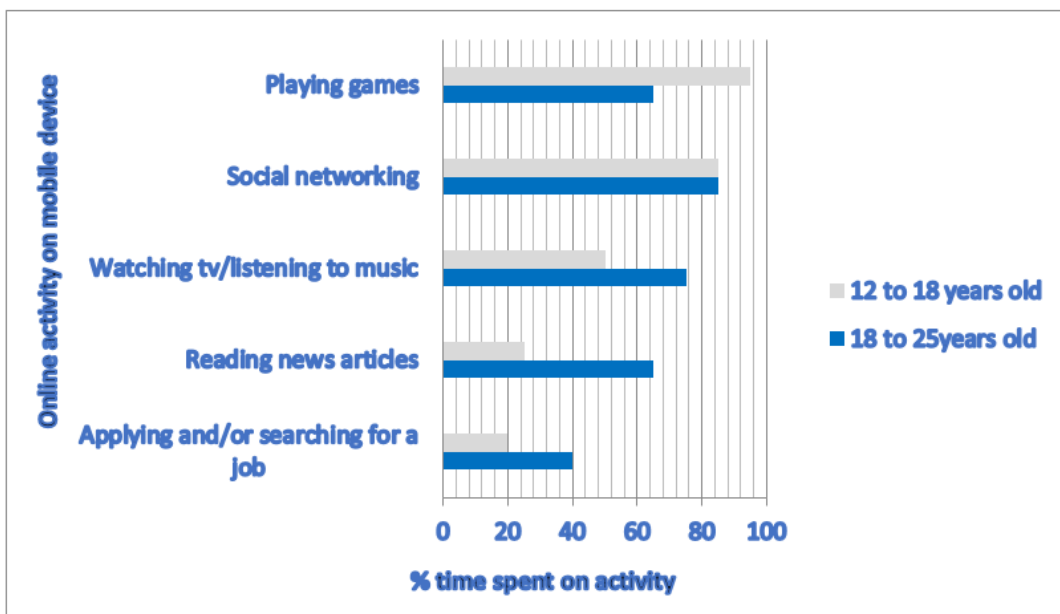


Figure 2. Time spent on online activities on mobile device among teenagers and adolescents in 2016, in percentages. Source: CBS (edited)

**You have to write a brief research report (125-200 words) for a course in Research Methods. Your report should contain at least the following information:**

- **How you did the research (you can make this up);**
- **What the three most striking results are. You should use both figures;**
- **A suggestion for further research.**

**NB: do not write lists / do not use bullet points.**

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**Sample answer task 3:**

*In order to examine the mobile device use among young people, I designed a survey in which I included questions on the use of various different of devices and the amount spent on different types of online activities. The questionnaire was filled in by 60 teenagers (12-18 years old) and 60 adolescents (18-25 years old).*

*The results of the survey show three striking findings. First of all, adolescents use smartphones and laptops more than teenagers do. Secondly, teenagers seem to use their mobile devices much more for playing games than adolescents. Additionally, adolescents tend to use their mobile devices much more for reading news articles.*

*For future research it would be worthwhile to investigate the use of mobile devices by other age groups like younger children and adults to find out more about how people's behaviour changes in the course of a lifetime.*

## **Task 4: Giving your opinion**

*(target time: about 15 minutes)*

**You read the following article in your university newsletter:**

### **Ban on online games on campus**

I believe University should put a ban on all online gaming websites accessed through University Wi-Fi. As a teacher, I notice all too often that students, instead of taking notes, are playing online games on their laptops during lectures. Since we can't stop students from using the internet altogether, I urge the University Board to develop some kind of game block application that prohibits students from accessing these websites while making use of University Wi-Fi.

- Prof. Marcus W. Bolton

***You decide to write a response to the university newsletter in which you:***

- ***give your opinion about banning gaming websites at University, and***
- ***give at least two arguments to support your opinion.***

***Your answer should be between 65 and 100 words.***

***NB: do not write lists / do not use bullet points.***

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### ***Sample answer task 3:***

*I think Prof. Marcus W. Bolton has a good point. Students should not play games on their mobile phones during lectures. The professor puts effort in preparing lectures, so if students attend, they should also put effort into learning something from the lectures. Furthermore, the professor can also get demotivated and distracted when he/she notices that students play games during lectures.*

## RATeR Speaking practice tasks

### Task 1

*You have a meeting with your thesis supervisor. He is asking you about your progress. Look at the pictures.*

**Before:**



**Now:**



*Listen to your supervisor and react. Use both pictures in your answer.*

*- Voice: Thank you for meeting me. How are you doing with your thesis?*

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#### **Sample answer task 1:**

*At the start of my project, the writing was going very well, but now I'm having some problems with my computer.*

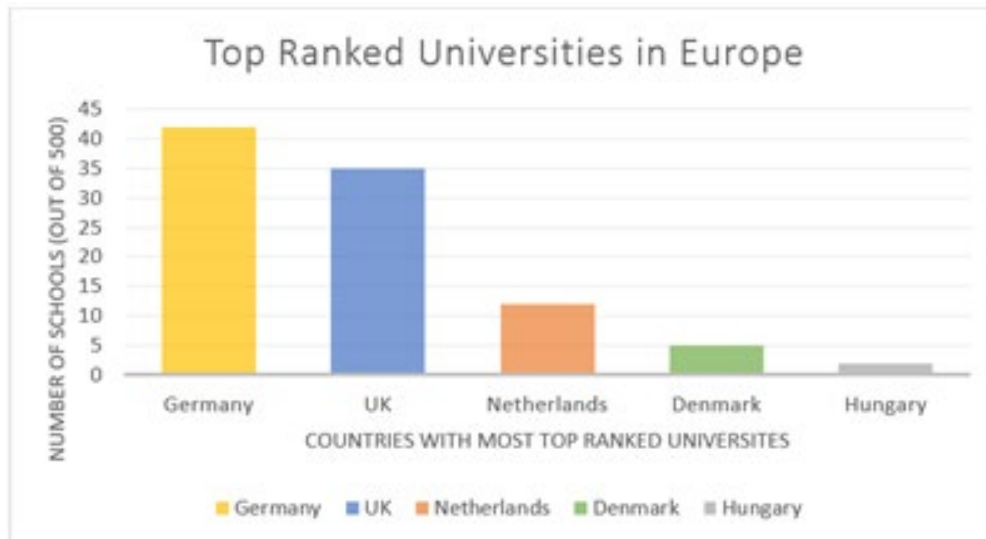
### Medium length tasks

In this part you will be presented with medium-length speaking tasks. Your answers in this part of the test should be longer than in part 1. Three to four sentences is enough. The speaking time is 60 seconds.

### Task 2

*You are giving a presentation on the top ranked universities in Europe. You present the following bar chart from a recent study. Look at the information below.*





#### University tuition fees per country

Germany	€ 20.000
UK	€ 10.350
Netherlands	€ 2.060
Denmark	Free
Hungary	Free

***In your presentation, tell your fellow students about the information you have found. Make sure you mention:***

- ***The subject of your presentation;***
- ***Two striking findings (use the graph);***
- ***A possible explanation for your findings (use the table).***

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#### ***Sample answer task 2:***

*My presentation is on the top-ranked universities in Europe. I've found a recent study which shows the number of top ranked universities in European countries. As you can see, Germany has the most top-ranked universities, followed by the UK. Hungary has the smallest number of top-ranked universities. A possible explanation for these differences could be the tuition fees per country. The table I found shows that people studying in Germany and the UK pay the largest sum of tuition. This money could be invested into*

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*upgrading the universities and improving the quality of the classes, making these universities higher ranking than those with lower, or no tuition fees.*

### Task 3

*You have been going to university for over half a year now and realize university just isn't for you. You call your parents to explain the situation.*

*Your answer must include:*

- *An explanation of the situation;*
- *3 reasons why you want to quit (use all 3 pictures);*
- *What you want to do now.*

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#### **Sample answer task 3:**

*Hi mum, I am calling to tell you that I want to quit university. I just hate it that I have to read so many books. Moreover, I don't want to get out of bed so early every morning. But most importantly, it costs too much money to study. I'd rather work for a bit and then travel the world.*

### Task 4

*You are in the class committee that organizes a Career Day, a day on which you and your fellow students will visit a company that operates in the field in which you all study. There are two companies to choose from. Look at the following information.*

Company 1	Company 2
 5 km	 50 km
<i>Sorry . . .</i> <b>NO JOB OPENINGS</b>	<b>WE'RE HIRING!</b>
	

- *Describe which company you are going to visit and why;*
- *Discuss all three elements in your motivation.*

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**Sample answer task 4:**

*I would go for Company 1. First of all, the company is very easy to reach: it is only 5 km away from the university. Even though the company isn't hiring anyone right now, there is a chance that they will have jobs available when you are graduated. Plus, if you are hired by this company, you will receive a good salary.*

## RATEr Listening practice tasks

**Instructions:** First read the questions carefully. Then listen to [this video](#) and answer the questions.

### **Q1 What does the teacher say about writing a report?**

The best way is to:

- A. write a first draft and then review the structure
- B. first structure the content and then start writing
- C. only modify the structure if necessary

### **Q2 What does the speaker say about land use?**

The speaker says:

- A. we should rely less on using land for its value
- B. productivity does not reflect the true value of land
- C. we should release more land back to nature

### **Q3 Listen to the text and fill in the missing words in the summarised sentences:**

- I. Over the past two million years, the human brain has become \_\_\_\_\_ times as heavy.
- II. The main task of a prefrontal cortex is to be a \_\_\_\_\_ of experiences before we try them for real.
- III. The researcher says that there is plenty of \_\_\_\_\_ to describe the situation of these people.
- IV. After a year, people who win the lottery are just as \_\_\_\_\_ as people who became paralysed.

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### **Key**

Q1: B. first structure the content and then start writing

Q2: B. productivity does not reflect the true value of land

Q3: I. three, II. simulator, III. data, IV. happy