
UNIT 21 READING COMPREHENSION - 1

Structure

- 21.0 Objectives
- 21.1 Introduction
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Answers

21.0 OBJECTIVES

To read and comprehend texts about some aspect of Business; to enlarge your general and business vocabulary and revise some aspect of grammar.

21.1 INTRODUCTION

Given below (Text - 1) is an account of a rather 'novel' way of inculcating managerial skills in the business executives, through outdoor experience. Gone are the days of 'boardroom brainstorming'. Now managers hone (sharpen) their skills under the open sky, undertaking hazardous adventures. In Text 2, we have another passage entitled 'A Survey of Campus Recruiters'. Along with Reading comprehension, we have also given you exercises in vocabulary enrichment, grammar and writing. Please attempt all the in text questions, as they will help you in understanding the passage better.

21.2 TEXT - 1

Read the text below with the help of the glossary and find the correct answers to the questions that follow.

This can't be right. It is a Terrible Realisation that bursts like a fire cracker inside Rajat Ratnakar's skull. What the hell is he doing here dangling from a multi-coloured rope, about 30 metres over a mountain stream, sporting a white helmet with bright chunky metal mountaineering equipment decorating parts of his body. He feels unreal, stuck in a psychedelic moment, where fatigue has gripped him like a potent intoxicant, leaving him hallucinating and totally out of control. This can't be him, Rajat Rugged Ratnakar, hotshot manager, master of the cubicled corridors of his universe, legendary trouble-shooter and the kind who only wears custom-tailored, single-breasted worsted suits. But here he is, miserable and defeated, wriggling in a sweatshirt under a grey sky with a bone-chilling wind flapping around his track bottoms. And no, this isn't an exotic holiday that he can brag about later in the cocktail circuit. This is a training programme, for God's sake. An asinine training programme that puts his life at risk to make him better at his job. "How the hell is this going to help me?" he shouts out to the clouds.

That's easily answered. Ask any number of companies in corporate India—Motorola, Reckitt Coleman, Tata Lucent, Larsen and Toubro, Maruti Udyog Limited, American Express, Siemens, Citibank and they'll tell you how the huge outdoors has become

their latest training laboratory. Corporate life has seen the future and it lies in experiencing cathartic encounters in the wild. Training programmes on developing management skills—you name it, high performance team building, improving decision making, redefining goals, giving and receiving feedback or building trust have shifted from the durbar halls of five-star hotels to the slippery slopes of the Himalayas. Today, more and more city-slick executives are joining such four-to-six day training camps that cost about a lakh of rupees for a group of 15. Training involves clambering over 100-ft rock faces, swirling about in white-water rapids, or following a crude handmade map through thick forests with a rucksack on their back. Ask them and they'll tell you, wide-eyed, they're risking their lives, in a manner of speaking, to sharpen managerial skills. "Everybody's wisened up to outdoor training. It's catching on like a forest fire simply because it provides lasting results," says P.K. Sarangi, an HRD consultant.

Why outdoors? For one big thing, the outdoors can be manipulated. You can twist it around to simulate an environment of uncertainty, of cutthroat competitiveness and in-your-face experiences of emotional intensity that can send you reeling. Just like back home in a high-performance job. Says Bhupen Srivastava, an organisational behaviour consultant at the International management Institute, Delhi: "By adding risk or raising the stakes, one gets spontaneous responses to real problems, not the contrived ones you get in a classroom situation. Out there in the open, there are no parameters, no constraints, no distractions, just an all-pervasive raw and writhing sense of experience. The trick is to take that experience, process it and facilitate some kind of learning that the executive can link with his office environment," explains Srivastava.

Add to that a natural process of bonding. The process of making team which stay in close proximity for 24 hours a day an entire week, sharing intense experience, facilitates a brotherhood. It's like life under a huge magnifying glass. Suddenly you feel you've known these guys all your life, their responses to situations become predictable and every action goes through close scrutiny and criticism. Besides, the outdoors, experts believe, help in self-growth. Says Rekha Bharadwaj, a behavioural consultant and HRD manager in BHEL: "It helps you confront your fears and self-imposed limitations." She's seen it work all the time. A manager who gets vertigo just jumping over his garden gate suddenly starts believing that Everest isn't unachievable after scrambling up a 100-ft rock face. Of course, rock climbing is just used as a symbol. Behavioural experts link such self-imposed limits with office situations. "How often do we in office refuse particular tasks saying "I can't handle this?" asks Bharadwaj.

Using the outdoors to bring out the best in people isn't new. Across the globe, right after the Second World War, organisations (mainly the armed forces) have been using it as a medium to toughen people. The innovation is how outfits which run such outdoor camps design exercises that lead to providing new insights into effective managerial behaviour. Says Tarun Chandana, Chief Executive of **Discovery**, one of the better known organisations in outdoor training with a permanent camp in the Kumaon hills: "Our exercises are made to evoke candid responses which are then analysed deeply."

For instance, one such preliminary exercise is an event called Trust Fall. Here, an executive stands blindfold on a stone ledge with his back towards a 5-metre fall. On the slope below, his team members wait for his "leap of faith" as they stand, hands outstretched, ready to break his fall. It is chilling in its simplicity. Imagine leaning out backwards in the dark into a abyss, praying your team is there for you. A few realise that they just can't get themselves to do it. After the exercise, everybody is asked to write about how they felt. This is an effort to find ordinary words that translate the powerful feeling they experience. Straight away there is an intense reflective session of how important trust is in team dynamics. Many of them realise how, consciously or unconsciously, they have had to learn to trust people in their

team. "It sets the tone. Those guys who feel they've come up here for a five-day holiday from the heat quickly realise we mean business," adds Chandana.

(From INDIA TODAY) 27.4.98

GLOSSARY

psychedelic	reproducing effects (as distorted images or sounds) resembling those produced by drugs.
hallucinating	perceiving or experiencing things which have no reality.
brag	boast
trouble shooter	a person skilled at solving problems
cocktail circuit	places where one socialises
corporate India	the India of big companies
cathartic	purgation or purification that brings about spiritual renewal or release from tension
encounters	meetings, especially sudden.
spontaneous	not planned or suggested by something outside.
parameters	factors which control the way a thing is done.
writhing	stressful
bonding	developing a closeness
vertigo	a feeling of losing one's balance
candid	frank
chilling	frightening
abyss	a hole so deep that it seems to have no bottom.
reflective	thought - provoking

Check Your Progress 1

- (i) In the first paragraph we have the description of
- The dream or fantasy of an executive in a single breasted worsted suit.
 - The exotic holiday of a corporate officer in a cocktail suit.
 - The punishment meted out to a legendary troubleshooter.
 - An open air training programme for business managers.
- (ii) Executives go in for cathartic encounters in the wild because
- it's the 'in' thing at the American Business Schools.
 - it really helps to hone their managerial skills.

- C. a four-to-six day training camp costs only a lakh of rupees for a group of 15.
D. its catching on like a forest fire.
- (iii) Training programmes for managers are being organised out of doors because
- A. they have had enough of the durbar halls of five star hotels.
B. internationally reputed organisational behaviour consultants have suggested it.
C. it helps them to see business problems as jungle adventures.
D. the hazards there arouse immediate reactions to real problems instead of contrived boardroom solutions.
- (iv) Outdoor sharing of risky life
- A. causes vertigoes in some office bound managers.
B. reveals your weakness as under a huge magnifying glass.
C. fosters a team spirit and selfgrowth.
D. causes men to scramble up a 100 ft rockface as if they were mountaineers.
- (v) Outdoor training organisations provide exercises that
- A. arouse reactions which are later discussed threadbare leading to new insights.
B. are similar to those of the armed forces in the Second World War.
C. test effective managerial behaviour of senior executives.
D. have now spread across the globe.
- (vi) The real value of undergoing a Trust Fall is that
- A. you really enjoy the five day holiday.
B. realise the hard way how important is reliance on each other for people working together.
C. learn to write in ordinary words about powerful feelings.
D. you learn to pray that your team is there as you lean out backwards into an abyss.

VOCABULARY

Check Your Progress 2

- 1 Match the word/phrase from column I with the correct meaning from column II.

I	II
A. bursts like a fire cracker.	1. a powerful drug.
B. trouble shooter	2. a very talented executive
C. dangling from	3. highly sophisticated urbanised people working in the corporate sector
D. potent intoxicant	4. huge waves
E. hotshot manager	5. with wonder and astonishment
F. legendary	6. a person skilled at solving difficult problems
G. cityslick executives	7. hanging by
H. clambering	8. about whose achievements stories are told

- I. rapids
J. wide eyed
9. explodes
10. climbing using hands and feet.

2. Fill in the gaps in these sentences with words/phrases from the list below:

The best Indian Business Schools like IIM Ahmedabad had academically doled out to their students **A**, _____ but that does not make of them **B** _____ managers. They lack the ability to meet **C** _____ situations. These young executives are often found wanting in the **D** _____ capacity. The obvious cause of all this is that the IIM's lack contact with the **E** _____. Marketing brings them face to face with **F** _____ competitiveness. The new entrants to the executive cadres are hardly aware of the desire to repose **G** _____ in their colleagues. **H** _____ with those around them is necessary for the growth of a team spirit. Management Sciences are being taught while business **I** _____ has been dropped, which shows that business realities are being ignored. If the fresh MBA is to develop into a **J** _____, his class room windows must be thrown open to the actual happenings in Corporate India.

decision making, high performance, troubleshooter
bonding, real life, corporate sector, cut-throat, trust,
history, corporate sector, management skills.

3. We have in the text the adjective **legendary** formed from the noun **legend**, and the adjective **slippery** formed from the verb **slip**. Unfortunately there is no such rule for the use of **ary**, **ery** or **ory** at the end of such words.

Now form adjectives from the given words:

articulate, circulate, defame, mandate, prepare, participate, rudiment, station, rotate

4. In the text the word '**facilitate**' is used several times. We have in English many words formed with '**ate**' at the end.

Given below are the meanings of several such words and the first letter of the words each one of them denotes. Write in full these words. They have all to end in '**ate**'.

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| i) to absorb ideas/information in one's mind | assimilate |
| ii) to link people/things in one's mind. | a _____ a _____ |
| iii) to divide into two | b _____ b _____ |
| (iv) to estimate something in numbers | c _____ c _____ |
| (v) to mark the units of measurement on a measuring instrument | d _____ c _____ |
| (vi) to fix ideas firmly in somebody's mind | e _____ i _____ |
| (vii) to combine two things in such a way that one becomes fully a part of the other | d _____ i _____ |

- (viii) to form an idea of the value of something e _____ e _____
- (ix) to throw one's self on the floor face downwards f _____ p _____
- (x) to change something into another language g _____ t _____

5. Sometimes two nouns are used together to form a phrase: the first one functions as an adjective to qualify the second e.g. fire crackers

Find at least eight more such phrase from Text (1)

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____

GRAMMAR

Words like 'training' and 'learning' are verbal-nouns (or gerunds). They can be used as :

- (1) subject of a sentence
Training involves climbing over 100 ft. rock faces.
- (2) objects to several verbs
It facilitates learning.
- (3) after prepositions

Add to that a natural process of bonding.

The infinitive (eg. to read) is often used in the same way.

The interesting thing is that at most places, the gerund cannot replace the infinitive e.g. 'to laugh' cannot replace 'laughing' in 'I couldn't help laughing' nor could 'to shop' take the place of 'shopping' in 'women enjoy shopping'.

Check Your Progress 3

- I. Put the verbs in brackets into the correct form (gerund or infinitive)
 1. The manager is looking forward to (see) you.
 2. The public has been warned (not touch) the wire.
 3. Now the child wants (go).
 4. They helped us (push) the car.
 5. Please forgive me for (interrupt) you but would you mind (repeat) that last sentence.
 6. He keeps (ask) me the time and I keep (tell) him (buy) a watch.
 7. The peacemaker tried (pacify) him but he went on (grumble).
 8. After (hear) the conditions I decided (not sign) the agreement.

9. The early man used (make) a fire by (rub) two sticks together.
10. Don't forget (lock) the door before (go) to bed.

Another point to be remembered is that the 'ing-form' (the infinitive +ing) also functions as an adjective. e.g.

Training programmes have shifted to the slopes of the Himalayas.

Also, when two actions by the same person occur simultaneously, one of them is expressed by the use of the participle (infinitive+ing)

e.g. The salesman drove away. He whistled as he went. /The salesman drove away whistling as he went.

The accountant opened the almirah. He took out a file.

Opening the almirah, the accountant took-out a file.

II. Join the following pairs of sentences using the present participle.

1. He switched on the T.V. He sat down to watch it.
2. She looked through the book of dress designs. She came upon a very attractive dress.
3. She put on her swimming suit. She waded into the pool.
4. He raised the trapdoor and showed them the secret exist.
5. It was a fine day. We decided to go swimming.
6. He did not want to borrow money. He decided to pawn his jacket.
7. He fired, he wounded one of the soldiers.
8. There were ants in the grass. I did not like sitting down.
9. They risk their lives. They sharpen their managerial skills.
10. They burn the midnight oil. They ensure their success in the exams.

WRITING

Check Your Progress 4

1. You have just joined a corporate house in a far away city as a junior accounts executive. The CEO of this company's branch has impressed you greatly. Write a letter to an M.B.A. friend back home. Describe to him your CEO. Before doing so, study the description of Rajat Rugged Ratnakar. You might have to collect some more phrases about managerial abilities, a person's resourcefulness and dress description. The main body of the letter should be around 150 words.
2. Imagine you are working under Tarun Chandana of 'Discovery' in Kumaon Hills. Produce a short write up (about 150 words) about 'Discovery' concentrating on:
 1. the utility of outdoor training for young managers.
 2. the plus point of 'Discovery';
 - (a) its location and easy accessibility.
 - (b) its able, experienced highly educated staff.

21.3 TEXT -2 — A SURVEY OF CAMPUS RECRUITERS

The findings of the XLR's survey can also tell you whether you are in the mainstream or the backwaters - in terms of your expectations from the Business School graduates you hire.

Does the ability to fit into a team, and still function at the top most level of his/her competence count as the most important feature you look for in an MBA? It does for most recruiters. Solo trailblazers are not in as much demand as they once used to be. At one level, that's a testimony to the increasing dependence on team play, especially at the junior managerial levels, with the objective of using collective responsibility and cross personal synergies for critical tasks. At another level, it also marks the problems that companies have been facing in trying to integrate young MBAs with older, non-MBA managers. Under these circumstances, teams are, obviously, the ideal device for leveraging the skills of an MBA.

To justify their seven figure salaries, MBAs are expected to perform on the job. The ability to start delivering immediately, instead of spending time orienting themselves to the company's culture and goals, is considered second only to team work. Third, tellingly, are interpersonal skills. Few CEOs want their company boats to be rocked by the brash young MBA who steamrolls system, antagonising people in the process. Two other skills that companies want their management trainees to display are leadership and problem solving abilities.

Do you expect your latest recruits to create pockets of entrepreneurship within your company? You're either ahead of the times or are ignoring more important issues, entrepreneurship, and the associated qualities of independence which are considered irrelevant by a large number of companies as far as their management trainees are concerned, however much they may value the same skills among their middle and senior managers.

Time was when recruiters acting under instructions from their CEOs chased the hottest marketing, finance and production talents on campuses. But today, they're looking for value addition not in these classic line functions, but in two critical support areas: human resources management and information technology.

(From 'Business Today'. Dec.1997)

Check Your Progress 5

1 Fill in the gaps with words/phrases given below:

- i) At one time the best Business School grads were those emerging from IIM Ahmedabad.
- ii) The recruiters from most companies are not at all anxious to have _____
- iii) The fresh MBAs are required to function _____ side by side with fitting into the team at the work place.
- iv) The Kerala fishing industry is well _____ with the local landscape and seascape.
- v) He is able to switch from one company to the other because whatever outfit he may join, he starts _____ immediately.
- vi) The successful marketing manager was often _____ and rubbed his colleagues on the wrongside.
- vii) The two big companies of cable operators in Delhi _____ the innumerable small fry in the trade and thus acquired a monopoly.
- viii) The founders of the big Indian business houses displayed great _____ skills.
- ix) The RD managers shop for talent at the IIM _____.
- x) These days company recruiters chase the hottest _____ talents.

Information technology, steamrolled, enterpreneurial, campus, Business School graduates, integrated, delivering, brash, very efficiently, solo trailblazers.

2 Fill in the gaps with suitable prepositions from the list given below:-

1. MBAs are expected to perform _____ the job.
2. New entrants have to orient themselves _____ the company's culture.
3. Brash young managers rub people on the wrong side and antagonise them _____ the process.
4. In the middle of the meeting our assistant manager brought _____ the subject of the big merger.
5. The staff had to work long after office hours to deal with the backlog _____ others.
6. Using the outdoors to bring _____ the best in people is not new.
7. The executive learns things from outdoor experience that he can link _____ his/her office environment.
8. Recruiters fight tooth and nail with their competitors _____ the brightest talent.
9. The CEOs expect system management to be at the forefront of their management initiatives _____ the next five years.
10. They act under instructions _____ their CEO's.

out, with, for, over, from, to, in, of, up, on.

Check Your Progress 6

Write a paragraph on "All that I learnt at my Business School".

List the conventional skills that are usually taught at Business schools.

Write another paragraph headed "What I did not learn at my "Business School" i.e. the new demands made on the young MBAs (100 words each).

21.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have given you two reading passages with business themes. We have tried to help you understand the passages by giving you comprehension question and vocabulary exercises. We have also revised some grammar items, i.e. non-finite verbs and prepositions. Finally we have given you written work. We hope that you have attempted the in text questions.

ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

(i) D (ii) B (iii) D (iv) C (v) A (vi) B

Check Your Progress 2

- 1 A (9), B(6), C(7), D(1), E(2), F(8), G(3), H(10), I(4), J(5)
- 2 A(management skills), B(high performance), C(real life), D(decision making), E(corporate sector), F(cut throat), G(trust) H(bonding), I(history), J(troubleshooter).

**Business Communication:
Reading Skills**

- 3 articulatory, circulatory, defamatory, mandatory, preparatory, participatory, rudimentary, stationery, rotatory.
- 4 i) assimilate, ii) associate iii) bifurcate iv) calculate v) calibrate vi) inculcate vii) integrate viii) estimate ix) prostrate x) translate.
- 5 trouble shooter, sweat shirt, track bottoms, rock faces, cocktail circuit, durbar halls, water rapids, five star hotels, forest fire, self growth, class room situations.

Check Your Progress 3

1. seeing, 2. to touch 3. to go 4. to push 5. interrupting, repeating 6. asking, telling, to buy 7. to pacify, grumbling 8. hearing, to sign 9. to make, rubbing 10. to lock, going

Check Your Progress 5

Business School graduates, ii. solo trailblazers iii. very efficiently iv. integrated v. delivering vi. brash vii. steam rolled viii. entrepreneurial ix. campus x. information technology.

2. 1. on 2. to 3. in 4. up 5. of 6. out 7. with 8. for 9. over 10. from